10 *Space–time coordinates of subjectivity in Fiji*

CHRISTINA TOREN

> We can ... say of temporality what we said ... about sexuality and spatiality, for example: existence can have no external or contingent attribute. It cannot be anything - spatial, sexual, temporal - without being so in its entirety, without taking up and carrying forward its 'attributes' and making them into so many dimensions of its being, with the result that an analysis of any one of them that is at all searching really touches upon subjectivity itself. (Merleau-Ponty 1962:410)

1 Introduction[1]

This paper concerns the space–time coordinates that inform Fijian villagers' relations with one another, how they implicate and are implicated in their ideas of person and kinship, and become dimensions of a specifically Fijian subjectivity. These space–time coordinates are derived from an interaction between one's age at a given time, the status one accords oneself, and the status accorded one by others—this being evident, for example, in any gathering, in a person's seating position relative to others on the above/below axis that is applied to the internal space of village buildings. The interaction is lived (and thus evinces itself) as a dynamic embodied knowledge of the four-dimensional nature of one's relations with others. Anyone who is born and grows up in a Fijian village is bound to constitute this awareness over time as a function of inter-subjectivity and thus as an aspect of his or her own subjectivity. The constituting process (or, in other words, the process of making meaning or constituting knowledge) is itself an aspect of autonomous human being and is perforce historical because it at once preserves ideas over time and in so doing inevitably transforms them.

I argue that, for any one of us at any given time, mind is a function not of the brain, nor even of the nervous system, but rather of the whole person in inter-subjective relations with others in the environing world. My model of the constituting process is derived from a

[1] The data in this paper were collected in Sawaieke, chiefly village of the *vanua* of Sawaieke (comprising eight villages), on the island of Gau, Lomaiviti (central Fiji); despite significant regional differences in language and details of ritualised behaviour, the analysis below should be generally applicable to most of central and eastern Fiji.

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synthesis of certain of the ideas of Maturana and Varela, Piaget, Vygotsky and Merleau-Ponty.[2] From Maturana and Varela I take the idea that all living beings are autopoietic, i.e. autonomous and self-producing, at once products and producers of the biological processes that are proper to them; so the structural organisation of an organism functions to specify those changes of state in the environment that produce changes in the state of the organism. It follows that the activity of the nervous system is determined by the nervous system itself and not by the external world; thus the organisation of the human nervous system functions to constitute the world that particular human beings inhabit.[3]

From Piaget I take the idea of cognitive schemes as 'self-regulating transformational structures', i.e. to be a function of human autopiesis.[4] A cognitive scheme is constituted over time via the complementary processes of assimilation and accommodation, whose mutual adjustments give rise to an equilibrated, and thus relatively stable, structure that is nevertheless always and inevitably open to further modification, such that meaning is always emergent, never fixed. Piaget's genetic epistemology describes an a-historical human being who acts directly on the world of objects and material processes. I argue, however, that because we are biologically social creatures our understanding of the world is always mediated by relations with others; in other words, any given person has to constitute his or her understanding of the environing world of objects and other people out of meanings that have already been made, and are still being made, by others. Thus I agree with Vygotsky that the process of language acquisition is crucial to the form of the child's understanding, and with his observation that during the early years of the child's use of its native language, 'the child's and the adult's meanings of a word often 'meet', as it were, in the same concrete object, and this suffices to ensure mutual understanding'.[5]

And finally, from Merleau-Ponty I take the understanding that human intentionality is always a function of inter-subjectivity, always embodied and historical and that the validity of our analyses in the social sciences resides in our being able empirically to reveal the historical embeddedness of the material processes that constitute embodied mind. So I am in sympathy with the related idea from Bourdieu that the primary task of the anthropologist is to understand how exactly people come to be 'enchanted' by ideas they themselves have made.[6]

If mind is a function of the whole person in inter-subjective relations with others in the environing world, it follows that any given person's practices and ideas are at once informed by, and differ from, all those others by whom they are surrounded—their peers as well as their parents and other adults and younger persons; indeed what a person does or has to say on any given subject today is bound to differ, more or less subtly, from what they did or said last

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2 For a full account of this model, see Toren (1999a).

3 See Maturana and Varela (1972, 1988).

4 Piaget (1971:113).

5 Vygotsky (1986:111). Note that in acquiring their native language children do not merely take on, as it were untransformed, the meanings adults hold before them; Bowerman (1982) shows that the development of meaning takes place largely before and outside the acquisition of language forms, and that children have gradually to work out the categories of meaning implicit in the structure of their language on the basis of experience with language itself. Her work suggests that semantics (i.e. meaning in language) is not isomorphic with an embodied, but inarticulable, understanding of the world.

6 Bourdieu (1977:4); Toren (1990) is an extended analysis of how ritual and ritualised behaviour inform the process of 'enchantment'. The present paper is a re-working of material in Toren (1990) in the light of the theory developed in *Mind, materiality and history* (Toren 1999).

week or what they will do or say tomorrow. Bearing in mind the autonomy of any given human being and the always dynamic and transformative nature of the processes that make one who one is, one can show how people continue to produce the historical specificity that is called 'culture', such that what it is to be a Fijian villager today is at once a legacy of the past and an emergent product of the present.

Kinship is the medium of any given Fijian villager's relations with others and certain key ideals of kinship are materially manifest not only in the conduct of certain categories of kin with one another, but in houses, in the disposition of houses vis-a-vis one another in the space of the village, and in the gardening land that at once divides and unites villages in a single *vanua* 'country, land or confederation'. The meanings made material in house, village and land do not, of course, declare themselves. Rather it is by virtue of the routinely ritualised aspects of their day-to-day behaviour as they live and work in the house, the village and the *vanua*, that people willy nilly imbue these spaces with meanings, in such a way that the meanings themselves become coercive of behaviour. But for any given person this microhistorical process of constituting knowledge happens over time; if we take the perspective of the infant and the growing child we can, perhaps, understand something of how the constituting process is mediated by the inter-subjective relations with others that inform the child's conditions of existence. I begin, however, with an analytical perspective.

2 Hierarchy and equality

Fijian social relations are perhaps best described as the continually emerging product of a creative tension between hierarchy and competitive equality, each of which is held by adults to be a principle of human relations. Indeed, one can argue that in the Fijian case, hierarchy and competitive equality are fused aspects of a single idea of antithetical duality where each kind of social relations depends for its very continuity on the other.[7] In the village, hierarchy and competitive equality are expressed in terms of one's position relative to others in time and space.

One's status in the community at large, itself derived from an interaction between rank (chief or commoner), seniority (older or younger), and gender (wife or sister in relation to a given man), marks out one's place above (*i cake*) or below (*i ra*) others in any gathering in house, village hall or church. This above/below axis is applied both to a single horizontal plane, for example one end of the floorspace of the village hall is above and the other is below, and to the vertical; for example, it is polite, when moving among others, to adopt the respectful posture called *lolou*: one bends from the waist, ducks one's head down, and walks in a stooping posture, all the time murmuring an apology, *tulou, tulou*.

The above/below axis is constituted out of a transformation in ritual of another spatial construct—*veiqaravi* lit. 'facing each other', also 'attendance on one another'. This term describes the disposition of houses in the space of the village; houses are usually grouped according to clan (*vakamataqali*) and to *yavusa* (*vakayavusa*, the *yavusa* being a group of clans united by ritual ties and inter-marriage).[8] Moreover, in any given part of the village,

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[7] See Toren (1994a).

[8] Shelley Sayes argues that *yavusa* are not so much 'descent groups' as 'a group of *mataqali* who have remained together in the same locality ... kinship through intermarriage often might have been their only ties' (Sayes 1982:87). Here, however, marriage provides for the constitution of kinship, just as kinship (the relation between brother and sister) creates the possibility of marriage (between the respective children of the

houses are oriented such that the land door of one house faces onto the sea door of the house beside it. *Veiqaravi* may here be taken to refer to the balanced reciprocity in exchange that obtains across houses, clans and *yavusa*; the term also, however, denotes 'attendance on chiefs' when the reference is to a chiefly ceremony, and 'worship' when the reference is to a church service. Thus the very term *veiqaravi* contains the tension between competitive equality and instituted hierarchy that allows balanced reciprocal exchange across houses to be transformed in ritual into tribute to chiefs.

Clans and *yavusa* may be ranked hierarchically in accordance with the ritual services they are obliged to provide to other clans and *yavusa*, however the precise order of this ranking differs according to any given speaker's point of view. At the same time, people also relate to one another as 'land' and 'sea', where exchange relations are again at once reciprocal and balanced and where again, from one point of view they are thus regarded as equals, while from another sea appears to be superior to land.[9] All relationships can be conceptualised and referred to as kin relations; at its widest extension one's kin include all other ethnic Fijians. With the exception of the equal relation between cross-cousins, all kinship relations are hierarchical and require varying degrees of respect and avoidance. The antithesis between hierarchy and competitive equality here references that between non-marriageable kin (where the paradigmatic reference is to the hierarchical house and clan) and marriageable kin (who as cross-cousins are equals across houses and clans).

The term for kinship is *veiwekani*; this reciprocal form of the base *weka* may also be translated as 'being in relation to one another'; ideally all ethnic Fijians are one another's kin. **Within** generation, relationships are designated by fully reciprocal terms, e.g. *veitacini*, 'taci to one another' 'same-sex siblings', *veiganeni*, 'gane to one another' 'siblings across sex', *veitavaleni*, 'tavale to one another' 'same sex cross-cousins', or *veidavolani*, 'davola to one another' 'cross-cousins across sex.'[10] **Across** generation the base term designates the senior party to the relationship, e.g. *veitinani* and *veitamani* refer respectively to the relation between a mother (*tina*) and her children and a father (*tama*) and his children.[11] But in the case of a child and its parents' cross-siblings—its mother's brothers and father's sisters, the term *veivugoni*, 'vugo to one another' is again fully reciprocal (a matter I return to later). This Dravidian terminology is used in reference and address to everyone one knows within and across villages and chiefdoms and routinely extended to take in previously unknown people.

The tension between hierarchy and competitive equality given respectively by relations between kin within the house and kin relations between cross-cousins as affines across houses can be historically related to chiefship. High chiefs are associated on the one hand with relations within the house and on the other with affinity. By virtue of drinking the installation *yaqona* 'kava' a high chief becomes the leader of the community, whose image in *yaqona* ritual is that of 'the house' writ large. The fundamental organising concept of social relations is the house which, by definition, depends on the existence of other houses for its continuing

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brother and sister), or their children's children, who are affines (i.e. affinal ties are explicitly encompassed by kinship).

9 See Toren (1990:74–89, 1995a). Cf. Sahlins (1976:26–42).

10 The word *tavale* used to apply only to male cross-cousins, *dauve* to female cross-cousins and *davola* to cross-cousins across sex; nowadays, in my experience, *tavale* is used in all cases indiscriminately.

11 This accords with the way the terms are used by a third party; when used by ego, *veitinani* and *veitamani* refer respectively to ego's relations with mother (*tina*) and father (*tama*), while *veiluveni* designates ego's relation to those he or she calls child (*luve*).

existence.[12] People relate to one another as kin, but while kin relations **within** the house are axiomatically hierarchical—husband above wife, older sibling above junior sibling—kinship **across** houses references the equal relationship between cross-cousins. Further, *all* exchange relations are competitive and ultimately those of balanced reciprocity even while the rituals of chiefship render them as tributary and apparently unequal.

In *yaqona*-drinking the paramount is seen to take precedence over and to be above others just as, within the house, a man is seen to take precedence over and to be above his wife. The perceived subordination of wife to husband itself depends on the ritual transformation of the equality of cross-cousins into the hierarchy of marriage and is effected not only in the marriage ceremonies themselves, but on a daily basis in the conduct of every meal.[13] The exchange relations between spouses are complementary and balanced; but at meals the wife sits below her husband, serves him, and eats only when he has finished. The ritual transformation of balanced reciprocity across houses into tribute to chiefs that takes place on a daily basis in *yaqona*-drinking has the appearance of being fully effective only in the ceremony of the installation *yaqona*, in which the chief becomes one who has 'all the ancestors at his back'.[14]

This brief overview is an artefact of analysis; one might argue that it describes objectively the social relations within which a Fijian village child has perforce to operate and whose meanings he or she has to constitute anew in the course of growing up. What it does not convey is the conditions of existence as these are lived by the growing child—a lack I try partially to redress below in the form of edited extracts from my fieldnotes from 1981–83. Throughout, fictitious names are used to disguise people's identities.

3 Learning one's place in house and village

The typical Fijian village house consists of one large rectangular room with four doors symmetrically placed in the centre of each side. Wooden houses often have three doors (the end door, *darava i kubu*, being omitted) and concrete houses may have only two. The door of the cooking irons (*darava i sue*) is the common entrance. This door marks the lowest part of the space that is *i ra*, below. Everything to do with meals is relegated to this area; one must not bring food into the house by any door other than the common entrance, nor indeed use the other doors at all unless one is classed as belonging to the house (*i taukei*, also translated as 'owner') or of high enough status for their use to be a prerogative of that status, or unless one is specifically invited to enter by the honoured door (*na darava dokai*). This usually, but not always, faces the sea and is also called the sea door (*darava e wai*); the door directly opposite it and facing inland may be called the land door (*darava e vanua*). The taboos on the use of these doors may once have been connected with *na kau tabu*, the forbidden or sacred beams that support the roof on both long sides of the house. To some extent all doorways are tabooed: one must never sit on a threshold in such a way that one's body is inside the house and one's legs and feet outside; nor may one wear shoes inside the house—they must be removed outside or immediately inside the entrance and to one side of it. Decorous behaviour

[12] Toren (1994b) shows how applicable to an analysis of Fijian social relations is the idea of the house as developed by Lévi-Strauss (1983, 1984).

[13] See Toren (1990:52–64).

[14] See Toren (1990:100–118).

inside the house is at all times enjoined by adults on children, who are not allowed to run or jump or dance or loll on beds or, by and large, to engage in any activity inside the house that entails standing up.

The end of the house furthest from the common entrance is curtained off as a sleeping area, private to members of the household. The remaining floor space is covered with pandanus mats—finer mats at the end called above (*i cake*) near the sleeping space, coarser at the end below (*i ra*) near the common entrance. The horizontal axis formed by the poles above and below defines the internal space of all buildings in the village including the village hall, the church and any temporary shelter erected for occasions such as Christmas, New Year, weddings, funerals and so on.[15]

Most activities within the house are a kind of public activity in the sense that, unless wind is driving rain inside, the doors are left open and passers-by can both see into the house and be greeted, invited to eat and so on by those inside with whom they are able to speak. For meals the cloth is laid on the mats along the above/below axis and the house members take their places there in accordance with their status: the senior man sits at the pole above and is served largely with the best food, below him might be an unmarried younger brother and on the other side of the cloth his sons in their due order according to age; the wife of the senior man occupies the pole below with her eldest daughter opposite her and any child who is still an infant beside her. One may begin to eat after grace has been said, but women as wives delay their own meal to wait on their husbands. The food served at meals is carefully apportioned such that one both sits and eats according to one's status; thus even on special occasions such as Christmas there are foods that never come into children's hands.

> 23 December 1981 A number of small children are hanging about as we butter buns etc. [for the tea for young men's annual, pre-Christmas weeding of the graves] but they are not given any; only the tiniest (age 17 months or so) get a biscuit. Neither do the children ask for anything—they are accustomed early on it seems to waiting to be given food. Nor do they ever ask for second helpings of *icoi* [the fish, meat or green vegetables that are served with root vegetables] at meals. The odd two or three children (under three-years-old, say) wander into the hall [where the tea is being served] and are given something by their fathers or by one of the women. Men quite unselfconsciously eat all the best things—i.e. cakes—leaving none at all for the women. Women eat a lot themselves but they do not keep back any of the best things, these all go to men.

The extent to which one can eat freely and control access to food (and especially to desirable food) is a crucial marker of the respective positions of household members vis-a-vis one another. The significance of children's daily experience of seeing who eats what and how much is apparent at once in their never asking for food and in the way they assert their own control over younger children by dispensing desirable tidbits when in a position to do so.[16]

Hierarchical relations between kin are expressed and in part constituted in varying degrees of respect and avoidance, with the obligation devolving upon the junior party; across sex, these are all incest relations characterised as forbidden to each other (*veitabui*) and where they are especially emphasised, as in the relation between brother and sister, and between mother's brother and sister's child, they should not speak to one another, nor should they occupy the

[15] The only building in a village where there is no above/below axis is the village store which, significantly, is typically situated at one of its borders.

[16] See Toren (1998) for an historical analysis of the way that eating informs Fijian ideas of personal effectiveness.

same space unless well-separated by a good number of other persons. These *veitabui* relations do not, however, come into effect until a child is past puberty; and gender informs this process since as far as I could see, girls as young as eleven often do not address men classified as their mother's brothers while boys may continue to be on terms of real familiarity and affection with such men well into their teens.

As soon as it can talk, a child is instructed by its mother or other adult, to greet those whom the adult cannot address:

Raica! Oya Momo Sakiusa. Kacivi koya 'Tutu Sakiusa, mai kana!'
look there father-in-law Sakiusa call him, grandfather Sakiusa here eat
'Look! There is father-in-law Sakiusa. Call him, "Grandfather Sakiusa, come and eat!"'

In this example, the mother names both her own relation to the man indicated and the child's relation to him. The toddler/young child is routinely told in similar terms to greet and to invite anyone who passes by to eat, a kind of instruction that informs the child's learning of kinship terms and the practices proper to their usage.

The toddler/pre-school child spends most of its time in and around its own house and the houses of those kin who live nearby and close kin who may live on the other side of the village; women in Gau do not garden, so a child is not accustomed to being much taken out of the village. Nevertheless, by the time a child is four years old or so, when it is likely to have a younger sibling or two, it knows most of the village pretty well (that is, around 40 to 50 houses) and is used to being greeted familiarly by everyone, and to going in and out at will of any house belonging to its closest kin. Even so, the child is always shy (*madua*) and usually will not answer questions out loud or address its elders unless specifically required to do so, as, for instance, when it is instructed by its mother or other adult to deliver a verbal message. Young children's demeanour with their elders suggests an early and fast-developing embodied knowledge of their subordinate status.

> 15 October 1981 ... Ratu Maciu [aged 25] is playing with Jone [aged three-years-old]. Ratu Maciu is *momo* [classificatory mother's brother] to Jone who [...] allows himself to be pulled about by Maciu, is almost entirely passive, says nothing at all in my hearing... He protests only when Ratu Maciu tries to do something he doesn't like ... Later he goes with Ratu Maciu and Jo, who are cutting wood and bamboo to make a new toilet shelter, and sits quietly nearby, watching. At lunch he is still there. Ratu Maciu slaps him quite hard a couple of times for no apparent reason—as one might offhandedly slap a contemporary—and places the hot spoon from his tea on Jone's calf. Jone begins to cry and Maciu laughs, holds him by the ankle while the child struggles on his stomach to get away.

Within sex, between children and young people who are contemporaries, this kind of slapping etc. is usual and signifies an affectionate competitive equality; between older and younger children, as between adult and child, it carries in addition a strong suggestion of the authority of the elder. There is a certain ambivalence here, however, which in the example given above is entirely consistent with the logic and the emotional tone of the relation between mother's brother and sister's son—the explanation of which resides in the wider set of relations in which it is embedded.

The very idea of the clan as clan is constituted in exogamy and in Fiji it is cross-cousins who bring the clan into being. The corollary of this is that across clan hierarchy can and does become, openly, a contested issue and the equality of cross-cousins is made to play against the hierarchy of siblings in such a way as to leave the issue always unresolved. Any given person

lives this tension in the transformations that take place over time in the relation between any child and its parents' cross-siblings. Both within and across sex, a child is often a great favourite with its real mother's brothers and real father's sisters—much indulged, affectionately teased and generally allowed great liberties; if the marriage is endogamous to the village this may be especially true for a boy with his mother's brothers. But at some point in the child's mid- to later teens this relation is abruptly transformed into the strictest of all cross-generational relations. Respect, avoidance and obedience are all enjoined on the junior party in relation to mother's brother. At the same time, it is this relationship that allows the junior party as *vasu* to take without asking anything he or she wants from men of the mother's clan, i.e. from mother's real and classificatory brothers. In other words, the *vasu* relation combines the licence allowed cross-cousins with the extreme avoidance and respect that is characteristic of relations between brother and sister and it is this binding of antithesis that allows the term *veivugoni* to be fully reciprocal, where other terms for cross-generational relations name the senior party.[17]

> 14 April 1982 ... The other day watching four-year-old Timoci ... We women are all in the hall [preparing pandanus for mats] and he goes happily from person to person to sit in their laps and be hugged and held but he is very quiet, it's difficult to get answers out of him ... Children are constantly told to *dabe ra* [sit down] though women will tolerate it if they don't as, on rare occasions, will men; but both men and women constantly tell children fairly severely that they are *siosio* [inquisitive] ...
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> I sit for a while drinking *yaqona* [kava] under the mango tree outside Ratu Anare's house; there are a number of children there, some belonging to his younger brother ... the youngest one—perhaps 18 months or more but a small, thin child—stomps about the mat doing pretty much what he wants, ignoring all instructions to *dabe ra* [sit down], not to go above the *tanoa* [the central bowl in which *yaqona* is mixed and from which it is served], not to be *siosio* [inquisitive], to leave people and things alone. But he has to be quietly stubborn and defiant to achieve this; very often he is pulled into people's laps, but he gets up after a moment and goes off silently about his own devices.

Children's silence in adult company is marked; from casual observation I should say that, as a mode of inter-subjectivity, it is acquired very early—in part, perhaps largely—as a function of observation of somewhat older children.

> '14 April 1982 cont'd.' Ratu Lui, direct grandson of Ratu Anare and probably also about 18 months, is a more passive child, happy to be kept still with food and cuddles ... He is sitting, playing some of the time with his grandfather, but he is not intrusive. At present everyone is asking him (Lui) the same questions:

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[17] Lévi-Strauss argued in 1945 that in the 'atom of kinship' constituted in the relations between brother, sister, father and son, relations between men and women in the senior generation will stand in correlative opposition to relations between men across generations (1977:46). In Fiji this should mean, for example, that reserve between B and Z is opposed to familiarity between H and W as reserve between F and S is opposed to familiarity between MB and ZS. This set of oppositions does not, in fact, obtain as such. Nevertheless, when we take the point of view of a male ego as a child who becomes a young person who becomes an adult, we can see that at any given point in this process Lévi-Strauss's thesis holds e.g., the father's sternness to the young child contrasts with the playful familiarity of the mother's brother; while a progressive relaxation in the relation between F and S over time contrasts with increasing avoidance between MB and ZS. The relations between a male ego and his father's sisters undergoes a somewhat less pronounced and elaborated change in contradistinction to the relation between him and his mother. Cf. Lévi-Strauss' discussion of how, for the Lele, the system of relations in the atom of kinship changes as a function of 'succeeding phases of individual life' (1978:100.)

Evei *na* *mata-mu?*
where article eyes-your
'Where are your eyes?'

He blinks.

Evei *na* *liga-mu?*
where article hands-your
'Where are your hands?'

He puts up his hands.

Evei *na* *ulu-mu?*
where article head-your
'Where is your head?'

He touches his head.

Lui seems somewhat bored with this game, surfeited, but everyone asks him nevertheless. I don't see mothers playing this or any other game with their young children or babies though infants are given lots of cuddling and loving by them, as by all their classificatory mothers and grandmothers. On the whole children are told to *tiko lo* 'be quiet or be still' if they pester their mothers and I have yet to hear a young child (infant to four-years-old) ask any question other than of the greeting variety, e.g.

Lako *ki* *vei?*
go to where
'Where are you going?'

Adi Luisa, three-years-old, always asks me:

'Tiko *evei* *o* *Manueli?'*
stay where article Manuel
'Where is Manuel?'

[My son, then eight years old, who had at this time returned to England.] But she never follows up on my answer, though I try to get her to do so.

11 June 1982 ... Adi Titilia (five-years-old) does not come right into the house where men are drinking *yaqona* when she comes to give the money she has fetched for him to her father. She stands hesitantly among the young men right at the bottom of the room, holding out her arm, the money clutched in her hand, and waits for him to call her to him. When she comes to him [walking *lolou*] he tells her to *dabe ra*! [sit down!] and to *tiko vakamalua*! [be still!]. Neither does Pita (seven-years-old), nor any of the other boys who have gone on various errands, enter the house directly when they return. Each one knocks (the doors being closed because of the cold wind) and then puts his head round the door, kneeling on the doorstep. If they have to come in they crawl to the man to whom they have to speak, do not walk upright. Only Ratu Lui (20 months or so) walks about at will, even up above, close to the private area of the house and behind the men who are sitting above the tanoa. He is made much of by men as well as women, seized and kissed at every opportunity. Adi Luisa (an extraordinarily large child of two-years-old, sister to Titilia) is not so adventurous or rather is not allowed to be. She's a tough little girl, spends a lot of time hitting adults, other children, dogs, throwing stones and anything else she can lay her hands on and generally throwing her weight around. I have yet to see her rebuked by her mother for this behaviour but neither is any other child

> unless they are tormenting a child who is very much younger than they are (e.g. a three- or four-year-old hitting a child of 18 months). Children of eight to nine years old are by right of being older allowed to chastise five- to six-year-old children. Adi Luisa walks about at the bottom of room exchanging blows and being cuddled by some of the young men sitting there; the young men make a fist, make as if to punch the child and then draw back. [Judging by her enunciation, clarity etc. she can talk well and certainly understands what is said to her, but in none of these encounters does she speak, even when a young man addresses a question to her.] The children never seem to be at all threatened by these mock displays of force.

The behaviour of the young men in this example is very much that of the cross-cousin variety (or of the mother's brother in relation to a very young child, as described above) and thus, while their gestures may look aggressive, the children seem to be able easily to distinguish them from those that are genuinely threatening.

> Adi Luisa is told constantly by various adults to *dabe e ra* [sit down] but takes little notice of this instruction.
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> 3 July 1982 ... Young children rarely actually speak to adults although they understand speech perfectly well and know exactly what to do when instructed to do something. For instance, Mili (three-years-old, close to four) is happy to come and sit on my knee for long periods and often calls out my name as I pass her in the village, to say *yadra* [good morning] or *moce* [good-bye] when instructed to do so from inside the house by her mother. This kind of instruction is routinely given to children by adults and older children, or even to adults by one another,
>
> *Raici Tama-i Adi Tagici, kacivi koya mai.*
> look father-of Adi Tagici, call him here
> 'Look, there is Adi Tagici's father, call him here.'
>
> This in respect of invitations to
>
> *mai kana, mai gunu ti, mai gunu yaqona*
> here eat, here drink tea, here drink kava
> 'come and eat, come and drink tea (often, 'have breakfast'), come and drink kava.'
>
> Mili will never answer questions out loud, for example:
>
> *Lesu mai-vei nikua?*
> return from-where today
> 'What have you been doing today?' (lit.'Where did you come back from today?')
>
> She just gazes ahead or at you with enormous eyes until you make the question—one that can be answered by a nod or by *deguvacu* [raising the eyebrows to signify 'yes'], for example:
>
> *Ko qito kei iratou na gone nikua?*
> you play with those-few article children today
> 'Did you play with the children today?'
>
> She is not afraid of me as some of the littlest children are. Neither is Timoci, but neither of them will converse out loud with me. But then children are so rarely encouraged to talk with adults; they are cuddled, told to

dabe *ra*
'sit down',

instructed to do things

lai sisili!
'go (and) bathe'

or

kauta *mai* *na* *voivoi* *oqori*
bring here article pandanus beside-you
'bring me the dried pandanus beside you'