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THREE BOASIAN WOMEN: MARGARET MEAD, RUTH BENEDICT, AND RUTH LANDES

Gerald Sullivan

Banner, Lois W. *Intertwined Lives: Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict and Their Circle*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 540 pp.

Caffrey, Margaret M. and Patricia A. Francis. *To Cherish the Life of the World: Selected Letters of Margaret Mead*. New York: Basic Books, 2006. 429 pp.

Cole, Sally. *Ruth Landes: A Life in Anthropology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. 298 pp.

Molloy, Maureen A. *On Creating a Usable Culture: Margaret Mead and the Emergence of American Cosmopolitanism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008. 224 pp.

Young, Virginia Heyer. *Ruth Benedict: Beyond Relativity, Beyond Pattern*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005. 382 pp.

Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Ruth Landes each made significant contributions to American anthropology that have been obscured by enemies and by time. Recent reappraisals of their work suggest that these women and their ideas are of much more than antiquarian interest. They



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either prefigured or provided sophisticated visions on a variety of issues including processes of embodiment, cultural selection, and improvisation in the face of power. A reexamination of these women's work and times may yet provide anthropology with a cautionary yet useful past as well as revivify the greater Boasian project.

Keywords: Benedict, cultural selection, deviance biology, improvisation, landes, mead

SETTING THE STAGE

Between 1921 and 1940 the Anthropology Department at Columbia University awarded 39 doctorates: 20 to men and 19 to women (Cole 2003:259 n6). No other department came close to this remarkable feat; the University of Chicago, for example, granted only one doctorate to a woman in those years, while Berkeley's best-known female student of the era, Cora du Bois, was a refuge from Columbia. The books under review here concern three of the Columbia women: Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Ruth Landes.

If one were to attend solely to the celebrity of Benedict and Mead, one might conclude from this rate of degree completion that the second-generation Boasian women were prominent and influential within the discipline. Benedict, granted, taught at Columbia from the early 1920s until her death in 1948; her students, among them Mead, Landes, Eric R. Wolf, Sidney Mintz, Stanley Diamond, Victor Barnouw, and one of our authors, Virginia Heyer Young, were comparatively many and often enough prominent. Mead was continually employed, but at the American Museum of Natural History, rather than in an academic department; she did not teach regularly, as far as I know, until the 1950s. Landes was for many years employed sporadically, in ways that would be familiar to many an adjunct or visiting professor working on a short-term contract, before finally entering into permanent employment, which she thought of as exile, at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada (Cole 2003:237ff). Like Landes, most of the second-generation Boasian women were among the itinerant or underemployed for a good number of years; male students, especially married men, fared differently.

Benedict's and Mead's work included prominent books that brought them to the attention of a broad public—and some scorn within the academy—as well as many pieces written for specialist audiences. Several of these books, for example: *Coming of Age in Samoa* (Mead 1928), *Patterns of Culture* (Benedict 1934), *Sex and*

Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (Mead 1935), and *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Benedict 1946), have been in print more or less continually since their initial publication. For all the publicity, Mead's and Benedict's ideas have not necessarily been well understood within the discipline and, in my view, have been in some significant cases unfairly attacked, at times for personal rather than intellectual reasons.

I am not thinking here solely or even mostly about the so-called Mead-Freeman debate. In 1983, Derek Freeman of the Australian National University published *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*. In this book, Freeman made two sorts of arguments. First, in response to the eugenicists, Franz Boas turned against all forms of biological explanation. Mead, Boas's student, followed her teacher, producing in 1928 just the sort of argument Boas sought. The storms and stresses of adolescence were not so much biological as cultural artifacts, common among American but not among Samoan adolescent girls. Second, according to Freeman, Mead was wrong both about the Samoan ethnography and, along with Boas, about the preeminence of cultural over biological explanations for much of human behavior. In 1999, Freeman extended his argument claiming that Mead had been hoaxed while working in Samoa by two of her interlocutors. A young and naive Mead believed as she had been told that Samoan adolescents enjoyed a life of casual sexual encounters.

By 1999, Freeman's claims had long drawn serious scholarly attention (see for example, Feinberg 1988; Côté 1994; Orans 1996; Shankman 1996), much of it showing Freeman to have been a sloppy and sometimes also a dishonest scholar. Nonetheless, Freeman is often cited by those who wish to use Mead as an easily dismissed stand-in for anthropology generally and especially for the argument that culture's powers are integral to human nature. The Mead-Freeman debate, therefore, is not without its importance outside the discipline. Within anthropology, this debate stimulated a renewed interest in Mead and perhaps in the history of anthropology as an important part of anthropology yet again.

Rather than Freeman, however, I am primarily thinking about enemies, detractors and simplifiers of argument. Darnell's (2001:10) characterization of Columbia and the Boasian communities as a "feminist haven" is ambiguous at best and on occasion they were more poisonous than merely disagreeable. Mead and Benedict had enemies, powerful and longstanding ones, within American anthropology, notably a circle that formed around Edward Sapir. Despite significant and obvious differences between them, Sapir (1994:181)

began to treat Benedict and Mead as if they were interchangeable. A criticism of one of them, whether appropriate or not, could be tendered against the other without further scholarly efforts. At times this sort of lumping of Mead and Benedict together has been undertaken on the basis of partial use of secondary sources (e.g., Fischer 2001:xxii).

Landes, too, wrote innovative books, among them *The Ojibwa Woman* of 1938 and *The City of Women* of 1947, both of which were republished during the 1990s and are now available again in editions with introductions written by Sally Cole, Landes's biographer; these books deserve a wider and appreciative audience. Much of Landes's work, however, was not published until decades after the research and writing was completed. Reviewed by younger scholars raised in a different era of anthropology, her books on Ojibwa religion, the Sioux of Mystic Lake, Minnesota, and the Potawamoni of Kansas all appeared dated when they were finally published in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Landes, like Mead and Benedict, had enemies within American anthropology and elsewhere, notably in Landes's case, Melville Herskovits.

Benedict, Landes, and Mead all knew each other, but this should not be taken to mean that they agreed. Despite their disagreements, between them they raised matters concerning relations between wholes and their parts; cultural selection; living with and within myth; the unity and diversity of a single human species; how we become the sorts of people we become; gender; power as well as human resilience, innovation, and fragility. Between the efforts of their enemies and the passage of time, these women and their work have frequently become more honored than read. Hence their very real contributions to anthropology's grappling with enduring issues have too often been obscured or even forgotten altogether, passed by as others pursued the fetishes of recent research and more recent vocabularies. Rereading these women's books is not so much an antiquarian exercise as a voyage of rediscovery of these matters, which often enough Benedict, Mead, and Landes were among the first, when not the very first, to broach in anthropology. Reexamining their discussions may well help provide continued coherence to American anthropology's project comprised of four, or five, interpenetrating sub-disciplines.

Two of the books under review here, Sally Cole's on Landes and Virginia Young's on Benedict, appear as part of the expanding series of critical studies in the history of anthropology, edited by Regna Darnell and Stephen O. Murray and published by the University of Nebraska Press. As a set of biographies and commentaries upon

anthropologists by anthropologists, the series is an important, if sometimes uneven, contribution to anthropology's ongoing reintegration of its past.

The centennial of Mead's birth, celebrated with, among other honors, two days worth of presidentially invited sessions at the American Anthropological Association's meetings in Washington, DC, in 2001, has also contributed to this reintegration of anthropology's past. The other three books under review here—Lois Banner's book on Benedict, Mead, and their circle in New York; Margaret Caffrey and Patricia Francis's selection of Mead's letters; as well as Molloy's examination of Mead's relation to Sapir and several prominent New York intellectuals—are all contributions to a revived interest in Mead and in her voluminous archives.

BEGINNING WITH BANNER

Lois Banner's book (2003) was the first to appear after nearly all of Margaret Mead's papers became available for scholarly study at the Library of Congress in November 2001. The book is an event of note, for this if for no other reason. Banner, an historian at the University of Southern California, has also examined materials in other archives pertinent for the study of Benedict and Mead. The book ends rather abruptly with Benedict's death in 1948; Mead would live on for just over three decades, dying in 1978. Of "their circle" between these deaths, Banner wrote almost nothing.

Mead and Benedict are generally understood as having jointly developed the so-called "culture and personality" or "configurationist" school of American anthropology. Often mythologized, their work prefigured American engagements with semiotics and structuralism as well as introduced the analysis of gender. Benedict in particular deserves credit for developing a notion of cultural selection to which I shall return below. Mead, perhaps the greatest student Sapir did not want, developed a range of then largely unprecedented methods to study individuals in culture, a notion Mead took from Sapir (Sullivan 2005); she also understood psychology to arise in the interactions of specific persons (Sullivan n.d.). Finally, along with Gregory Bateson, her third husband, Mead developed her so-called theory of the squares, a properly morphological theory, which understood personality to arise and be reproduced in the ongoing processes conjoining biological, hence psychological, disposition (temperament), the accidents of life, culture, and the person's response to all of these (see Sullivan 2004a, 2004b, 2005, n.d.).

Benedict and Mead were colleagues, friends and, at least early in their relationship, lovers. Banner uses this latter element to develop a pattern of emphasis upon homosexuality that, I suggest, should be regarded as both a strength and a weakness of her book. For example, well into the book, Banner (2003:349) wrote, “[W]hat interests me about the Hanover Conference [of 1934] is a packet of background materials for it on the subject of homosexuality, prepared by Lura Beam, a well known sex researcher.” Banner says little about these materials (her discussion is a paragraph long). To my knowledge, this is the only place in her book where Banner used the first person, rather than the ostensibly more inclusive “one.” The Hanover Conference was Mead’s introduction to big-time interdisciplinary social science. At this particular conference, Lawrence Kelso Frank of the Rockefeller Foundation’s General Education Division brought together a number of representatives of various disciplines to work on an outline for researching the problem of the relation between personality and culture. Mead wrote much but not all of *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935) while at the conference.

If what interests Banner throughout the book, and not just about the interdisciplinary Hanover conference, is homosexuality; what interested Mead while she was at the conference, at least enough to write Bateson about it, Banner tells us, was a packet of materials put together by Earl Engle of Columbia University’s Medical School. Engle summarized then current research on hormones and so-called constitutional types. Banner devotes two paragraphs to this, but does not develop much further her suggestion that Engle’s exposition on hormones and constitutional types had much connection to Mead’s developing notion of gender (cf. Banner 2003:349ff, 402) or her long-standing interest in the processes of human development. Nor does Banner take up Mead’s subsequent 1935 meeting with C. H. Waddington or Mead’s interest in Waddington’s emphasis upon phenotypic development (see Waddington 1935, 1940). Granted, Mead did not take up hormones or embryology directly in *Sex and Temperament*, but that book does describe the formally similar matter, as Bateson would have it, of divergent developmental sequences in three cultural environments.

There is no question that Mead and Benedict engaged for extended periods of their lives in serious, though not always exclusive, same-sex relationships. Both women also wrote about homosexuality. Banner hopes to show some formative or generative relationship between Mead and Benedict’s same-sex relationships and their scientific endeavors. To this end, Banner explores

changing ideas about girls' friendships between the 1880s (when Benedict was born) and the 1920s (when Mead graduated from college), as well as Mead and Benedict's childhoods—to the extent these can be known. This discussion of their childhoods remains necessarily, even to my mind, annoyingly speculative. Many things might have or might not have happened, but the limitations of the available records mean we can know little about, say, Benedict's relations with her grandfather; we can not know one way or the other whether this man molested his granddaughter, a possibility that Banner (2003:59) suggests “can't be ignored.” This is perhaps the most obvious, even egregious, example of Banner's speculation, but it is not the only example. The word “might,” merely suggesting possibility, appears frequently in the early portion of the book. There is little or no reason to doubt, however, that Benedict's father died early, that she saw his body laid out, that her mother went into lifelong mourning, that Benedict was fairly deaf from an early age, that she found the sorts of activities deemed suitable for young, intelligent women stultifying, that her marriage was not a great success, and so forth, all of which could lead an intelligent person to depression over the years.

We can know more about Benedict and Mead's young adulthoods in the era after they and those in their circle began writing letters or keeping journals, or later, writing memoirs. Some of this material is interesting; they were part of a vibrant New York-based world of poets and intellectuals. Some instances are probably less interesting, for example, that Mead's first husband, Luther Cressman, showed Mead's friend, Marie Eichelberger, his penis because she asked to see it as she had never seen one before (Banner 2003:221).

Banner also takes up Mead and Benedict's relations with other anthropologists, notably Sapir. For a time Benedict and Sapir exchanged poetry; she was often around when Sapir and his young children visited New York. Mead and Sapir had a short-lived but fateful affair while Mead was married to Cressman. Sapir wanted Mead to leave Cressman for a marriage to Sapir and a life raising his children. Mead, however, wanted to go to Samoa, a fieldtrip that Sapir tried to stop but which Mead, knowing Sapir had tried to do so, undertook anyway. Relations between Sapir on the one hand and Mead as well as Benedict on the other soured further, especially after Sapir attacked Mead by name as incompetent in his *New Republic* review of Franz Boas's (1928) *Anthropology and Modern Life* and published an essay on the then New Woman, which contained only somewhat veiled personal criticisms of Mead and Benedict (Banner 2003: 280ff, 498 n108).

Sapir, perhaps the most intelligent and accomplished of the first generation of Boas's students, was a formidable enemy in what was still a very small community. In the late 1930s, after Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* was published, Sapir (1994:181ff) used his Yale seminar on the psychology of culture to launch an assault on Benedict in particular and, by extension, Mead, arguing that psychology only arises in encounters between persons. Against Mead, this assault was at best ill-founded (Sullivan n.d.). That Sapir ([1933] 1949) held that phonemes have psychological reality for the speakers of languages, his assault against Benedict, with her interest in the patterns of events, myths, and ceremonies, seems at best mostly odd. If phonemes are psychologically real for speakers, would not myths be psychologically real for those who live with and within them? It fell to Clyde Kluckhohn (1941:117) to defend Benedict in the Sapir memorial volume. But by then, those of Sapir's younger colleagues who had organized the memorial volume—Leslie Spier, Irving Hallowell and Stanley Newman—"did not see Mead as relevant to Sapir's work or close to him personally" (Darnell 1990 429, n7). Mead went undefended.

Banner's account is convincing not so much about these scholarly disputes as about Sapir's palpable disapproval of the sorts of sexual arrangements Mead and Benedict found congenial, to use a Benedictine term. Mead and Benedict worried about scandal; their knowledge of his disapproval no doubt contributed to their discretion. Banner makes this last point, but Molloy (2008) extends it in her observations concerning the ways in which Gregory Bateson, Benedict, and Mead all went about the business of isolating Reo Fortune through tales told about Fortune's conduct on the Sepik in 1933 in order to protect Mead's career. Perhaps they did so, but then perhaps not.

To the extent that she reminds us that a people's questions arise from the fabric of their lives, Banner succeeds. The experience of knowing one's own actions will lead to trouble because others know or because others would disapprove, along with one's consequently wearing a mask, has proved both chilling and enlightening for many—Bateson, Benedict, and Mead included no doubt. This sort of experience gave their attention to what Mead and Benedict called "deviance" real depth.

DEVIANCE, THE FIRST TIME, OR BANNER CONTINUED

For the moment let me note that some (e.g., Roscoe 2003) have suggested that deviance is just a catch-all category for things that do

not fit a Meadean or Benedictine over-interpretation of the patterns of events, myths and ceremonies. This criticism would seem to accord well with the notion that Mead and Benedict were each in their own way cultural determinists of a rather naive sort. Mead and Benedict were both more than enough interested in what we would now call “human agency” for this criticism to need some rethinking. Whatever the quality of their analysis of various cultural patterns, Benedict and Mead were interested in lives lived in and against the shadows of those variable patterns at least from the time they began discussing Mead’s Samoan researches. Mead credited Benedict with teaching her to ask this sort of question. According to a more mature Mead (1959:206), she and Benedict “spent hours discussing how a given temperamental approach to living could so come to dominate a culture that all who were born in it would become the willing or unwilling heirs to that view of the world.”

Deviance, as this notion appears in chapter nine, entitled “The Girl in Conflict,” of *Coming of Age in Samoa* (Mead 1928:158) was a sign that, at least in Benedict and Mead’s emerging thought, culture would not so much be overdetermined and overdetermining as that cultural forces (wholes) give shape to the meanings of behaviors, events, and emotions (parts). Deviance, so understood, foreshadows Benedict’s explorations “beyond pattern, beyond relativity” as Young (2005) would have it. It also begs the question of why so few care to unpack the trope of culture as “personality writ large” and why rather many commentators have treated this trope as if it were transparent.

Mead was a prolific and innovative ethnographer (see Sanjek 1990:215ff), undertaking field researches in Samoa, Manus, among the Omaha, Arapesh, Mundugumour, Tchambuli, Balinese, and Iatmul before joining Benedict in the post-World-War-II “culture at a distance” work. Benedict, as Young (2005) points out, was among, if not, the first to transform diffusionist attempts at culture history into comparative studies of cultural integration and disintegration. Whatever the sources of their questions, Mead and Benedict addressed those questions to particular ethnographic materials and cultural worlds. Banner is much less sure when she comes to consider such materials and worlds. An historian rather than an anthropologist or a social theorist, Banner has read a good deal of anthropology. Nonetheless, her accounts of anthropological ideas are oddly flat. Her sense of how ethnographic factoids come together in the patterns of cultural life at times confuses the important and the trivial, as perhaps with the incident between Cressman and Eichelberger alluded to above; those who want greater ethnographic and

theoretical sureness should consult Molloy (2008) and, especially, Young (2005).

This is perhaps clearest in the chapters Banner devotes to the years in which *Patterns of Culture* and *Sex and Temperament* were written. Relentlessly comparative in a style no longer, if ever, common, these books will always raise questions for those who desire ethnographic accuracy in all things above all else, whatever ethnographic accuracy may be, given the inevitably recursive nature of anthropological knowledge. Being able to find fault with Mead's ethnography might simply mean that Marshall Sahlins, as myth would have it, is right to have considered that inevitably we are all proved wrong, and that happiness is dying before some young soul does so prove. No other anthropologist's ethnography has been so relentlessly critiqued as Mead's; few other anthropologists could survive such critique. On the other hand, any anthropologist unable to find fault with Mead and Benedict's ethnographic analyses might not be the brightest button in the box.

But finding fault or not finding fault with Benedict's and Mead's ethnography may also be beside the point. In *Patterns of Culture*, Benedict uses ethnographic examples, no matter how badly drawn, to set out a theory of cultural selection, analogous in its operations to Charles Darwin's ideas of natural and sexual selection; Benedict used the word "selected" repeatedly to describe a cultural choice to borrow some but not other traits as these traits diffused across a culture area and a further choice of how to adapt those chosen traits to some specific cultural purpose perhaps different from the purposes to which others had put that particular trait. But despite this very explicit argument, many are and have been drawn solely to her figure of the arc of human possibilities. In *Sex and Temperament*, Mead announced not just a notion of gender but implicitly (for Mead never published her theory of the squares) an approach to the question of the unity and diversity of our single human species, the processes "by which . . . living persons . . . embody . . . culture" (Bateson and Mead 1942:xii; cf. Csordas 1995) and to the agency of children (cf. Hirschfeld 2002:616ff). These were brave books written by brave women, read, if badly, by many. These books were not read by those many because the authors of these books were sometime or even predominantly lesbian; many have found same-sex relationships congenial, but only two such persons were either Benedict or Mead.

MOLLOY AND THE PROBLEM OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Maureen Molloy, an anthropologist and Professor of Women's Studies at Auckland University in New Zealand, makes a similar

point about Banner's analysis, noting with Michel Foucault that sexuality has in the twentieth-century West often been taken to be a privileged truth of life. For Molloy (2008), Mead, who acted as educator, contributed to this sense of sexuality as truth of life. Mead's role in this becomes then a legitimate object of study.

Molloy also takes issue with Micaela di Leonardo's (1998) characterization of Mead, contending that di Leonardo's excoriation of Mead leaves her or other readers wondering if understanding Mead anthropologically would require placing Mead in her time and place as much as finding her an agent (morally deficient or otherwise) of the American imperium. Rather than following either Banner's or di Leonardo's lead, Molloy situates Mead in the world of New York intellectuals and small magazines such as *The New Republic*, *Seven Arts*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Dial*, and a host of others. Mead learned to read such magazines from her father; she asked that copies of those I have listed, and many others, be sent to her in the field.

These intellectuals, men like Herbert Croly, Van Wyck Brooks, and Randolph Bourne, sought to diagnose a particular malaise. As the United States became more prominent among the powers of the West, how might Americans bring into being a culture worthy of such prominence? As the population of the United States became more urban, how could Americans make of that culture something authentic, "genuine" in Sapir's (1924) terms, not just of the place but also for its people, especially the intellectuals? How could they bring themselves into alignment with their milieu and their milieu into alignment with themselves? Part of this crisis, Molloy tells us, was a crisis of masculinity for the high arts were not a realm of action and were in that sense, for these men according to Molloy, effete or feminine.

Molloy charts the relations between many of these intellectuals and the circle of anthropologists around Boas. This is not, then, a question of ideas being in the air; these sorts of ideas were prominent in the very circles in which a young Mead and a somewhat older Benedict moved. Molloy has in mind a deep similarity between Croly's and Brooks's dream of a society in which the individual develops into a miniaturized version of the nation while the nation assumes characteristics of the individual, and an analogy drawn by Mead and Benedict in which culture is "personality writ large" and by implication, personality is culture writ small. The scare quotes are Mead's (1959:206); in Benedict's (1932:12) original version, one finds not only clear differences of time and scale between cultures and persons, but also only a tendency toward, not an inevitable, internal coherence.

Having situated Mead in this world of intellectuals and small magazines, Molloy then turns to four of Mead's ethnographies: *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), *Growing Up in New Guinea* (1930), *The Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe* (1932), and *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935). The first, second, and fourth of these books were popular successes published by William Morrow. Morrow asked Mead to use materials from some of her public lectures to draw out the lessons for Americans to be found in her description of Samoan female adolescence; with those final chapters, Mead launched a career as commentator and public intellectual. The third book, Mead's only venture into the ethnography of North America, and far less well known than the others, was brought out by Columbia University Press. These books are not technical in the fashion of Mead's *Kinship in the Admiralty Islands* (1934), itself written in response to professional criticisms. The four books Molloy focuses on all display a flair, an accessible, even popular style, a breadth of generalization, and a mass of detail.

In four chapters, each devoted to one of Mead's books, Molloy discusses Mead's fieldwork; she thinks, on the basis of Mead's notes, that Mead was a better fieldworker than her books might lead others to suppose, though Molloy is apparently not as impressed by Mead's methodological innovations as Sanjek (1990:215ff). Molloy touches on the ways, beginning with Mead and Fortune's trip to Manus, that Mead collaborated with another and divided labor both in the field and subsequently in the writing. She also takes up the reviews Mead's four books received. The three books brought out by Morrow received good, even excellent, reviews in the popular press and small magazines; they fared less well in the scholarly journals, with opinion being mixed—some like Benedict being very supportive and others being quite disparaging. Mead took the bad reviews hard. Molloy suggests that it is possible Mead and Fortune's marriage began to suffer when she found it necessary to write *Kinship in the Admiralty Islands*, thereby changing the division of labor between herself and Fortune.

The Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe fared quite differently, receiving good reviews in the academic press. However, without Morrow's expertise, this book received less publicity and slowly faded even from professional view, except perhaps among North Americanists, though it does not appear in Darnell's (2001) bibliography. Mead certainly did not write the sorts of popular pieces to go along with it that she wrote, for example, to accompany *Balinese Character* (Bateson and Mead 1942; see, for example, Mead 1939). Nor did she write the sorts of chapters that discussed the implications

for American life—how to ameliorate the tendencies towards stormy adolescent or how to educate America's young—that brought Mead's ethnography out of the exotic distance and made it pragmatic. Molloy contends, and with good reason, that this book also came too close to America's internal empire in a time of Depression, even if Mead's history of the Omaha could have been better.

At this point Molloy's account again incorporates yet another theme she has been developing, that is, the relative shortness of the Progressive era, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, and the persistent problem of race—understood not just as a matter of white folks over and against blacks and Amerindians, but also nativists opposed to immigrants, for example Italians. Molloy is thinking not just of the Italians of Hammonton, New Jersey—the subject of studies by both Mead's mother and of Mead's Master's thesis—but also of Sacco and Vanzetti. Molloy is also thinking of another element of Mead's thought, which she contends appears explicitly for the first time in *The Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe*: biology.

BIOLOGY AND DEVIANCE

Molloy's Mead begins as a cultural determinist in *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Mead's Samoans, according to Molloy, remain a people without history, a people whose temperaments are at ease with their cultural surroundings, a people and place undamaged by their encounter with the colonial powers; such an account of Samoa accorded well with the dreams of the New York intellectuals. Over the next seven years, Molloy's Mead evolved into someone who increasingly found culture oppressive. This process is not yet apparent in *Growing Up in New Guinea*, but rather emerges in *The Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe* and reaches a full expression in a book that Molloy thinks is primarily about deviance: *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*.

All during this process, Mead was acutely aware of the milieu of New York intellectuals. Towards her wider readership, she took the position of educator, but an educator who tailored her lessons to that audience and its changing concerns as prosperity gave way to harder times. Because she tailored her lessons, Molloy considered that Mead let both her audience and herself down.

But that is only part of Molloy's tale. Throughout this period, according to Molloy, Mead considered any given culture as an isolated set of traits, traits that nonetheless can be separated from the set to which they previously belonged. Given this view, Molloy tracks what she takes to be Mead's changing valuation of culture from

benign (Samoa) to oppressive (Omaha, Mundugumour). Molloy contends that Mead's thought lacked a theory of change from within and without and that Mead was, therefore, ironically unable to account for rage and desire within the confines of her initial cultural determinism. It follows that Mead had to look elsewhere—outside of culture—to biology. This is a provocative thesis with much to be said for it, if also a bit overdrawn.

Mead's Samoa was more idyllic in the versions it took in the reviews found in the popular press than Mead's own text, especially chapter nine, "The Girl in Conflict," really allows for. That chapter begins, "Were there no conflicts, no temperaments which deviated so markedly from the normal that clash was inevitable?" (Mead 1928:158). Mead's affirmation of the presence of such temperaments and conflicts extends to some twenty-six pages. We saw, above, how Mead later recalled discussing precisely this matter with Benedict.

But Molloy's trend is generally accurate. For Mead, deviance was temperamental, that is in the social psychologist and Torres Strait Expedition member William McDougall's sense, a matter of innate predisposition or of indwelling attitude (see Sullivan 2004a). By contrast, Benedict's idea of deviance concerned behavior at odds with the locally prevailing moral order. In *Coming of Age in Samoa* and *Growing Up in New Guinea*, Mead did not develop her notion of temperament. Over the next several years, however, Mead became more and more concerned, not only with the relations between the individual and culture, but also between human biology, human development, and cultural form. Influenced by both Benedict and Bateson, Mead attended, to the extent then possible, to morphological processes which lead to the genesis and reproduction, under some circumstances, of particular albeit not necessarily stable or over determined types; I write "to the extent then possible" because the biology of the day (mid-1930s) did not yet include the so-called modern synthesis of evolutionary and genetic theory (Dobzhansky 1937; Huxley 1942), a description of DNA, a developed notion of a genome along with the technical capacity to study that genome, or an idea of a flexible brain.

The biological sciences were in a ferment in the years prior to Dobzhansky's and Huxley's publications, as yet unable to join two important elements of biological theory: Darwinian evolution and Mendelian genetics. The study of hormones and the realization that men and women might share certain of them, albeit in differing proportions, was recent. Certain psychologists, for example Ernst Kretschmer (1925[1921]), were advancing notions that body or constitutional types were likely systematically related to psychological

propensities. Others, the *gestaltists* Kurt Koffka (1924[1921]) and Kurt Lewin (1935) primary among them, were seeking a dynamic psychology of human perception and development grounded in but not reducible to biological processes. Mead and Bateson sought out people, materials and ideas they thought might prove useful, including Engle and Waddington, the *gestaltists* and Kretchmer's book (1925[1921]). Mead's thought, therefore, should be studied not only against the background of her sexual practices, the New York intellectuals and their concerns, the psychologists whose theories Mead studied as an undergraduate and a Master's candidate or sought out later, the various peoples she lived and worked among, but also as a part of this intellectual ferment within biology.

Molloy's exploration of Mead's pursuit of a theory incorporating biology, personality, and culture, beginning with *The Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe* is a contribution. My own work on this subject has effectively begun with the 1932–1933 New Guinea researches and Mead's "Summary Statement of the Problem of Personality and Culture." The original of this document can be found in Mead's field notes on the Tchambuli researches. To my knowledge, only Banner (2003:328ff), Molloy (2008), and myself (Sullivan 2004a) have written anything about the document and its place in the development in Mead's thought.

It is in great part, as Molloy insists, a curious document, perhaps insanely so. But it is firmly lodged in Boas's (1911) distinction between family lines, which have biological existence, and putative races, which do not. Mead's initial innovation was to separate temperament from sex by reference to Boas's distinction; women were and are not all alike any more than men were and are. For Mead, the concept that we would now call gender followed from this observation. So too, given a notion of cultural selection, did the possibility, but not the inevitability, of a temporary cultural stabilization of preferred temperamental type. From this notion of a culturally preferred temperamental type flowed the idea that there would be particular psychological and cultural difficulties for those persons whose temperament—and therefore the likely path along which their character would develop—was at odds with the temperamental order or, in Batesonian terms, the ethos of their culture.

In my reading of this material and all that followed from it, Mead did not become theoretically a biological determinist, as Molloy suggests, or develop a theory of a human biology beyond the influences of cultural selection. Many look to the character of the parents when choosing a spouse. Populations do become isolated or overrun. Populations have more powerful neighbors. Ecologies and patterns of

disease change. These were all matters of which Mead and Bateson were aware by the mid 1930s and further, all matters where biology can be and has been substantively culturalized. But Mead did develop a theory that reviewers who, by Molloy's account, increasingly missed significant elements of Mead's arguments, could have taken to be biologically deterministic and which could have aided less intellectually scrupulous agents of racist ideologies.

For this reason, Benedict and Boas prevailed upon Mead not to publish the theory of the squares. Both Molloy and I agree that such a decision was prudent, given the circumstances, political and scientific, then prevailing. Now that several scholars have taken up the squares theory itself with some seriousness, we who have done so shall have little choice but to attend to the difficulties and ambiguities that come not just with Mead's scientific, as opposed to pedagogical, project, but with our own as well. Looking back, Mead may have provided a way to bring the four sub-disciplines of Boasian anthropology together, though I doubt that her thought would please either those who think cultural anthropologists should learn more and be more respectful of biology or those who think that biological anthropologists should become more sophisticated about culture.

I have my disagreements with Molloy. Mostly minor, they concern anachronisms in Molloy's account about matters where she is still in some ways correct. Mead could have been more concerned about history in the sense that anthropologists are now interested in the history of colonial and postcolonial asymmetries of power, rather than in the sorts of reconstructions prevalent in American anthropology when Mead entered the discipline and from which she distanced herself. She found the "ropes" among the Mundugumour, but misunderstood them (see McDowell 1991:28). I wonder whether anyone else working in the period 1925 through 1935 attended to such matters as well as Mead did. I intend to reread Molloy's book, perhaps several times. Anyone wanting to understand Mead should do so as well.

BENEDICT: BEYOND PATTERN, BEYOND RELATIVITY

Virginia Young, Professor Emerita at The University of Virginia, studied at Columbia under Benedict. She took part in the post-war "culture at a distance" projects, working as part of the China group. For some time, or so I understand, Benedict's typewriter was in Young's possession. For her book, Young (2005) contacted others who studied under Benedict. Eventually she had four sets of notes from Benedict's late-life graduate seminars: Marion Marcovitz

Roiphe's, Eric R. Wolf's, William S. Willis's, and her own (Young 2005:xi). These notes form the basis, not only for the stimulating appendices recreating Benedict's lectures, but also for a significant reappraisal of Benedict's thought and teaching.

The initial portion of the book contains three important chapters: one on the search for a successor to Boas as head of Columbia's Anthropology Department; a second on Benedict's friendship with Mead; and a third on Benedict "beyond relativity, beyond pattern."

Benedict first encountered anthropology as taught by Alexander Goldenweiser after Goldenweiser's exile from Columbia to the New School for Social Research. Goldenweiser had run afoul of powers at Columbia because of his opposition to American entry into the First World War; later, he would depart for Oregon in the wake of a sexual scandal. Through Goldenweiser, Benedict came to the attention of Boas. Under Boas's direction, Benedict wrote her dissertation on guardian spirits in western North America; along with Hallowell's (1924) contemporaneous dissertation on bear symbolism, Benedict's thesis helped begin a decisive shift from studies emphasizing the diffusion of traits to the variable positioning of those traits from society to society.

Sapir thought very highly of Benedict's thesis. Boas thought well enough of Mrs. Benedict, as he called her in formal situations, that he brought her into Columbia's Department to teach, albeit because she was married and could therefore count on her husband for support, without pay for several years. Boas would also find Mead her position at the American Museum of Natural History, but with pay, as she was in need of support. These positions were signs of favor.

By the early 1930s, Boas's health required that he withdraw from the day-to-day running of the department. Benedict, already there, took on more and more of these responsibilities. Asked by the Dean who might succeed Boas, Benedict opined that the two best candidates were women, with Benedict succeeding Boas and Mead succeeding Benedict. Despite the Dean's apparent support, this was not to be. After a series of temporary appointments, Ralph Linton replaced Boas. Relations between Benedict and Linton deteriorated; he would later not only claim to have killed Benedict utilizing sorcery, but would also complain that she would not even die of a feminine complaint. Through all of this, Young points out, Benedict was at pains to respond with great politeness.

The argument of Benedict's thesis and her study of visions (1922) would be turned inside out, as it were. Under the influence, to varying degrees, of the Gestalt psychologists as well as Wilhelm Dilthey and Oswald Spengler, that argument became Benedict's (1934:47ff)

notion of cultural pattern, of wholes which were more than and not reducible to the sum of their parts. The local significance of any given trait—guardian spirits or visions or, as shall prove pertinent later, homosexuality or prostitution, being but examples—then became relative to its position within the cultural configuration or organization of the whole. In the 1920s and 1930s, this was a new thought and led to an unusual pedagogical practice: reading ethnographies from beginning to end rather than consulting the index to find what one was directly interested in.

Societies could borrow ideas, technologies, ceremonies and so on from their neighbors or their neighbor's neighbors; thus traits diffuse, while those who borrow diffusing traits put those traits to their own disparate purposes. That is, societies select and redefine traits; given enough time, time well beyond individual life spans, and relatively benign circumstances, each society could obtain its own particular coherence much as a person, given proper circumstances and intent, might over the course of a life time cultivate her or his personality (Benedict 1932:24). This is part of the trope of culture as personality writ large; the trope's other major portion, social pressure to conform and resistance thereto, Benedict and Mead knew personally all too well.

According to this view, individuals knowing their own world would often find in the order of that world the wellsprings of themselves. They would live relatively easily with and within the local mythos, that is, all save the deviants whose behavior would put them at odds with the good as locally understood. In *Patterns of Culture*, Benedict provided a set of shorthand terms—Apollonian, Dionysian, Paranoid, Megalomaniac—to identify the distinctions between each of the various patterns she discussed. While there followed a fad among some to speak of cultures using shorthands of this sort, Benedict was also criticized for using these means of summation and subsequently would refrain from doing so. In this discussion about shorthands, Benedict's notion of cultural selection largely receded from view.

Benedict's version of relativity was primarily concerned with the meaning or significance of things within a multiplicity of cultural patterns rather than a moral relativism as such. We should not forget that Benedict (1942, 1945) wrote scathing attacks upon racism in which she provided cultural accounts of the logic of racism as well as refutations thereof. Neither should we conclude that either Benedict or Mead were what we might think of as naive relativists.

Young's comments upon the differences between Benedict and Mead, primarily found in her third chapter, are instructive.

Occasionally they misunderstood one another or missed each other's point. More importantly, Benedict continued to see a wide variety of possible patterns whereas Mead, especially while she was working out her theory of the squares, tried to develop theories involving small sets of dialectically related patterns to which Benedict was always opposed. In this, Mead was closer to Goldenweiser's (1933[1913]) notion of the convergent evolution of social forms than Benedict was.

Benedict and Mead's two approaches, therefore, lead to different kinds of comparisons between cultures. In Benedict's thought, these comparisons lead on to considerations of the sorts of conditions conducive to human freedom as a positive good and a realm of study that she herself termed as being beyond pattern and beyond relativity. Later she would also turn her attention to human development, again beyond pattern and relativity; in a minor difference with Young, I sense Mead's influence here.

A history which begins with Benedict's concerns with realms beyond pattern and beyond relativity, especially the conditions under which freedom might flourish, and moves on to her students, perhaps Eric R. Wolf (1982) and his extended examination of the nature of power and people considered by some to be without history, or Sidney Mintz (1985) with his study of the transformation of diet as a part of the transformation of production, would be very interesting; I am as yet unaware of such a study. But Young has laid the groundwork for this type of an approach, and more, with her detailed and fair-minded book. Anyone wanting to understand Benedict's enduring relevance for anthropology would do well to begin with Young's work.

RUTH LANDES

When first employed as an academic, Sally Cole was briefly part of the Department at McMaster University. Ruth Landes, then at the end of her life, was also about—a presence in the department but one Cole more sensed than knew.

Landes was born in New York City to immigrant Russian Jews. Her New York was a cosmopolitan place; as a young woman in 1928 she was drawn to small groups of Black Jews in Harlem. This encounter led her to Boas who introduced Mrs. Landes to Mrs. Benedict in September 1931.

Landes studied under Benedict and was part of the seminar taught by Mead that culminated in the publication of *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples* in 1937. Landes contributed an essay on the Ojibwa to the volume. Benedict had arranged, with the

assistance of Diamond Jenness and Irving Hallowell, for Landes to work among the Ojibwa. Her account of these people, based on her conversations with Maggie Wilson in the early 1930s lead to Landes's first book, *The Ojibwa Woman* of 1938.

For reasons which escape me, Cole makes greater claims for the originality of Landes's methods in this study than seem to me warranted. Mead had been developing methods to study elements of social life often neglected in the work of her colleagues since she went to Samoa in 1925; facing criticism within the profession, she would publish a defense of her own methods and critical of the limits of the more usual methods then in use, at least, by American anthropologists in 1933. Most of the graduate students who took part in Mead's seminar which led to *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples* listed the study of methods as their primary reason for taking part in the seminar on the small pieces of paper Mead passed around; the originals can be found in the Mead Papers at the Library of Congress.

Landes's contribution, and it was not a minor one, was to examine the ways in which Wilson and those around her improvised a life, an Ojibwa life, in the presence of substantial Canadian influences. With this study, Landes's work began to take on a trajectory following from one example to another of shamans and the like whose encounters with spirits generated a social space around these adepts in which they and others could improvise a life in the face of greater secular powers. Explained this way, Landes's work has a more contemporary feel—seen in respect to the issues with which Landes was concerned—than many would attribute to Mead or Benedict.

Landes would develop this approach further in her fieldwork in Bahia, Brazil, and in her *The City of Women* (1947). In this book, Cole's Landes provided a study of *candomblé* spirit possession and the social worlds that surround it, which emphasized the social creativity not only of the women at the center of these spirit cults, but also of homosexual men who obtained important roles therein.

While its animating vision has withstood the tests of time and critique, this fieldwork and this book would bring Landes more than a little grief. Melville Herskovits, the leading Boasian student of the African diaspora and a supporter of the idea of the survival of authentic Africaness within that diaspora, would belittle Landes's work in a review of her book, which appeared in the *American Anthropologist* in 1948. He had earlier also unfavorably reviewed Landes's work for Gunnar Myrdal's project on race in America in 1940. Herskovits's opposition to Landes's thesis was exacerbated by an exchange of letters between them after Landes returned from

Brazil in the late 1930s. Landes also faced opposition from Arthur Ramos, a leading Brazilian scholar.

Cole's treatment of Landes's difficulties with Herskovits and Ramos, as well as the probable consequences of those difficulties for Landes securing reasonable employment, is judicious and convincing. These were powerful men with established positions in a relatively small community. In the late 1930s and early 1940s there were few anthropology jobs available. Even if there had been easier access to employment, their opposition to Landes would have been a formidable obstacle.

Cole saves much of her ire, however, for Benedict and Mead, a bit unfairly I think. After Benedict's death, Landes turned to Mead for whatever assistance she could provide. In Cole's opinion, this was a mistake; I agree, for in 1950 Mead wrote Landes a letter of recommendation that contains a warning about problems that Landes's beauty might pose for departmental tranquility (Cole 2003:232–233). Landes learned of the contents of this letter and was justly angry. This was not Mead at her best or most attractive by any means. Nor is Mead's letter made more palatable by Mead's subsequent efforts on Landes's behalf, which did result in Landes securing employment at McMaster. Nor again can Mead's letter be excused away by the difficulties she faced securing an academic position, as opposed to her museum job. Not only did the possible job at Columbia fall through, despite Benedict's presence and apparently the Dean's approval, but jobs at Princeton and later Harvard—in this last case with Clyde Kluckhohn's active support for Mead—failed to materialize, in the Harvard case, simply because the then president did not want female faculty. Nor finally might Mead's letter be made palatable by the rush of men, with their sense of entitlement, back into the academy after the Second World War, or by Benedict's lack of support on Landes's behalf, or by any disapproval—justified or otherwise—on Mead's part of Landes's behavior.

But this letter is only part of Cole's case against Mead. Mead complained to Benedict that she found Landes difficult. There were also differences, both personal and theoretical, between them. At a crucial point in her discussion, however, Cole (2003:201–202) simply misunderstands Benedict and Mead.

On 5 October 1939, Benedict sent Mead a letter describing Landes's observations concerning why and how, in the context of Brazil and the *candomblé*, certain “passive [male] homosexuals” and prostitutes, ordinarily viewed in Brazil with a degree of contempt, were able to “rehabilitate” themselves in the eyes of others, and also in their own eyes, by taking on positions within *candomblé terreiros*,

or ritual centers, otherwise appropriate for women but not for men. Cole's (2003:201–202) discussion of Benedict's text neglects to consider Benedict's express positioning of such activities in Brazil amongst practitioners of *candomblé*. Both Benedict and Mead had been thinking about the defining capacities which wholes (cultural patterns or configurations) exert upon parts (traits, in this case homosexuality and prostitution, but elsewhere, in my discussion above, guardian spirits and visions) since at least 1932 and very probably for some time earlier, perhaps even since 1925, when Mead introduced Benedict to Kurt Koffka's *The Growth of the Mind* (1924 [1921]); on Mead, Benedict, and gestalt psychology, see Sullivan n.d.).

There is no question here of Benedict abstracting homosexuality or prostitution from these particular cultural contexts, as Cole very explicitly does in her interpretation of Benedict. Cole's imputations of hypocrisy over homosexuality, ethnocentrism, or subsuming Landes within some generalized notion of deviancy simply miss Benedict's explicit point in her letter. Cole misconstrues Benedict's by then long-standing theoretical positions about the nature of significance arising out of the relationship between wholes and part as well as Mead's invocation of that position. To the extent that she then builds her case against Mead, in particular, and Benedict upon this foundation, she is misleading and misunderstands the criticisms she made of Mead and Benedict's conduct towards Landes. This is a blot on an otherwise interesting and convincing book.

LETTERS AND ARCHIVES

In her introduction to Caffrey and Francis's (2006) volume of selected letters by Mead to a wide range of people, Mead's daughter, Mary Catherine Bateson (2006:xviii ff), notes that not only did her mother live in an era when letter writing was common but also that her "mother was an archivist's dream." From very early on, Mead made multiple copies of nearly everything she wrote, both letters and field notes, as well as keeping copies of the many letters she received. This vast accumulation of materials, not including the film Gregory Bateson took among the Balinese and Iatmul (which are housed elsewhere), forms the single largest collection in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. In a very interesting way, Cole (2003:8ff) made the inverse point. One of the reasons we can know so relatively little about many of the woman who graduated from Columbia was because they were itinerant and because collections of papers can soon become very bulky.

I do not know precisely where the idea of a book of Mead's letters came from. The younger Bateson certainly must have played a role. The late Mary Wolfskill, long time head of the Manuscript Division, often spoke to me of editing a complete collection of Mead's letters as a post-retirement project. Caffrey, as I understand it, was for some time contemplating a biography of Mead, based no doubt in large part on Mead's letters. Francis has been working with Mead's papers for longer than anyone, except perhaps Mary Catherine Bateson and Virginia Yans-McLaughlin; Francis's encyclopedic knowledge of the papers and of the letters served her well when she curated the Library's exhibit celebrating the centennial of Mead's birth.

This collection is far from exhaustive. Francis has informed me that she and Caffrey, at the publisher's insistence, had to delete letters out from the selected materials up until just before the book went into press. For example, Mead's letter to Reo Fortune, in which she decided to forgo a second trip to Samoa, is among those removed from the selection at a late date. So too is a letter to Mead's sister, Priscilla Rosten, in which Mead discussed relations between mothers and children as a part of the child's development and as communication. In this letter as elsewhere, Mead emphasized that the mother's attitude had greater importance than any specific childrearing technique (see Sullivan n.d. for a discussion of this letter and of the swaddling hypothesis which also emphasized the communication of an attitude over technique per se).

Caffrey and Francis's collection does not include any of the letters found in Mead's *Letters from the Field* of 1977. It thus expands the volume of Mead's letters available in print. Specialists will, of course, continue to visit the Manuscript Reading Room of the Library of Congress. But others likely will find this collection a useful addition.

The collected letters are divided up into six categories: family, husbands, lovers, friends, colleagues, and family again. Within each chapter the letters appear chronologically. Letters to individual recipients may be found in several chapters. The editors have also provided short commentaries contextualizing each letter.

The result is a sympathetic portrait of Mead. But it is, as the editors know, incomplete, though not just because their collection is but a selection. The Mead Papers, like any archive or indeed like a field site, are a multiplex confluence of cultural engagement produced and organized according to a variety of logics and purposes. The Mead Papers are also full of gaps, some of them quite subtle even for someone very familiar with the Papers. For example, Mead wrote many letters for a wide variety of reasons, but generally to people at a distance. Caffrey and Francis's collection does not contain materials

recording conversation, though the archive does contain some such materials and not just in field settings. Many formative conversations with Benedict and others while Mead was in New York City went entirely unrecorded. Later in Mead's life, as telephone calls became less expensive, she might have had reason to call instead of write. Anyone working in archives, especially an archive as large as Mead's, must soon become aware that while nothing is transparent and context is everything, that that very context can be maddeningly difficult to sort out.

Still Caffrey and Francis's collection illuminates the changing range of Mead's interests and contacts. Some may find the letters to and about Mead's family to be of particular interest. But others, myself included, will find Mead's assessment of colleagues and the development of her ideas in correspondence with her husbands, other colleagues, and her sister, Priscilla Rosten, of greater pertinence. The final section, a collection of letters written well after Mead's position was firmly established in the academic stratosphere seems to me to be an overly long discussion of mostly family news and itineraries. Granted Mead was by that time busy with her many projects, a point this section emphasizes, but perhaps some of the space could have been given over to other subjects. The letter to John Dollard of January 12, 1935, in which Mead wrote that the concept of "the infinite malleability of the human organism ha[d] been overused" (Margaret Mead Papers Box I8 file 6) or certain of the letters she wrote to Geoffrey Gorer from Bali or her 1942 letter to Erik Erikson in which she plainly states how she used the term temperament in *Sex and Temperament* or any number of others might then have been included (my thanks to Pat Francis for bringing the letter to Dollard to my attention). Otherwise, the editors have been prudent in their selection and judicious in their comments; I do not envy them their chosen task.

This collection contains a range of references to Sapir, whose intellect Mead respected long after it was apparent that their personal relationship would not be repaired. It contains no letters from Mead to Sapir or from Sapir to Mead. While she was in Samoa undertaking the fieldwork he had attempted to stop, Mead seems to have burnt the letters she had received from Sapir; I do not know what Sapir did with her letters. From these letters it is clear that Mead saw several similarities in her relationships with Sapir and Fortune as well as her father. Looking back, Mead concluded that she withdrew from Sapir because it would have meant, among other things, that she would find herself of protecting his, and eventually perhaps their, children from elements of his overwhelming presence. Still Sapir moved her,

and remained a significant influence on her thought; her work would be the first to significantly develop his notion of the individual in culture (see Sullivan 2005).

Mead only consented to marry Reo Fortune once she came to think she could not become pregnant (see Mead's letter to Rhoda Metreaux of January 23, 1949, Caffrey and Francis 2006:43). Equally important, both Sapir and Fortune, rather unlike Mead's father, were temperamentally monogamous. She found monogamy uncongenial, often but not always preferring "a freedom from constraint" (Caffrey and Francis 2006:xxii) and the possibility of several ongoing loving relationships. Sapir used his knowledge of Mead's attitudes against her in print. If Mead's comparison between Sapir and Fortune is accurate, then her marriage to Fortune contained difficulties long before Mead wrote *Kinship in the Admiralty Islands* (1934).

Those interested in Mead's version of her relation to Fortune will find much of interest the letters to Benedict. These letters do not, to my mind, wholly support Molloy's (2008) contention, mentioned above, that Mead, Benedict, and Bateson put about stories, presumably false ones, about Fortune to protect Mead's position. But they do not undermine such an idea entirely. They do show a relationship in decline and later mended with a truce in the late 1940s. Fortune has recently found a biographer, Caroline Thomas, now at Waikato University in New Zealand, so presumably there will soon be a fuller account of this relationship from Fortune's vantage as well as a reappraisal of his sadly neglected work (see Thomas n.d and Lohmann n.d.).

Perhaps the most consistently intriguing element of this collection is that the Mead they show was not so much insecure as someone seeking ways of talking, of framing issues. Mead could be very insecure, especially when she was far from her lovers, friends, and companions, wondering when the post would arrive by boat. But she could be self-critical. More importantly, she was drawn to ideas and to those who developed them: Sapir, Benedict, Fortune, and Bateson most prominently among them; I understand that Virginia Yans-McLaughlin is contemplating a volume on this aspect of Mead's life and work, a volume I will welcome. Caffrey and Francis' volume is no replacement for a decade or longer spent among Mead's papers, but then no collection could be.

CONCLUSION

Nancy Parezo (2007:575) has recently observed that knowing about the lives and careers of anthropology's "highly charismatic foundational

figures and intellectual leaders...helps us to reflect on how anthropological knowledge and theory have been produced." Such reflection allows for an anthropology of anthropology, itself a useful form of reflection for two sorts of reasons. First, it allows for anthropology to consider its relations to the people whose lives provide the stuff of our work. Second, it allows us to consider and reconsider how we have come to form the questions that have animated anthropology. Thus, when we work in anthropological archives we enter a particular sort of field site, which takes us into the pasts of both anthropologists and their interlocutors and allows us to render that past useful once again.

The books under consideration here are part of this process of devising an anthropology of anthropology, of devising a useable past. These three women, Benedict, Mead, and Landes, each made remarkable, if now often misunderstood or underappreciated, contributions to the discipline. Each had enemies within the discipline who distorted their pioneering work. More recently, many have taken their work as read without necessarily going back and rereading these foundational texts. In some cases—for example Mead's examination of the processes of embodiment or Benedict's proposing notions of cultural selection and realms of beyond culture or Landes's vision of people improvising positions for themselves in the face of larger and unfriendly worlds—these women either anticipated later concerns or put forth what are really more sophisticated versions of ideas and concerns than those which have followed.

If we consider that they were working in a time without notions of the flexible, reorganizing brain and the like only strengthens their claims upon our consideration and invites us to reexamine the sources and contexts—ethnographic, intellectual, and personal—of their ideas. Taken in conjunction, the books under review here should stimulate a rethinking—warts and all—of these most complex mothers of current American anthropology and all those others whose lives and work gave rise to that anthropology. It may also help resolve some of the current disputes in ways that may revivify the greater Boasian project, at least I would hope so.

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review. The current version is better for their comments and editorial suggestions. Any mistakes are mine alone.

The quote from the Mead Papers appears courtesy of Mary Catherine Bateson and the Institute for Intercultural Studies. I have never met Cole. I studied under Virginia Young and worked closely with Pat Francis over the years and consider Pat a good friend. I have also met Banner, Caffrey, and Molloy on several occasions. Banner edited an essay of mine that appeared in Banner and Janiewski (2004). I first met Maureen Molloy in the reading room of the manuscripts division of the Library of Congress. She subsequently took part in two sessions I organized; in both sessions she presented early versions of work that made its way into her book.

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