INTRODUCTION: THE ESSENTIALIZATION OF MARGARET MEAD

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Margaret Mead and her contributions to Pacific anthropology play a large role in the discipline, and anthropologists need to consider her work carefully and in context. Evaluators of Mead are often guilty of simplifying her work rather than assessing its full complexity. The reasons for this phenomenon are examined here: several commentators have not read the work carefully, while others select only some aspects of it to support their analyses. Many misrepresentations are the result of a failure to consider her work in its appropriate historical context, and a few employ Mead as a symbol or trope for broader phenomena, such as cultural determinism or colonial oppression. Each of the papers in this volume is considered as an example of what can be learned when Mead's work is looked at without essentializing it: contributions such as these are beginning to appear, contributions that not only place the debate in its appropriate framework but also use it to further our understanding of anthropology, its assumptions, methods, and history in a wider intellectual, social and political context.

Although always characterized by more self-consciousness than the other social sciences, during the 1980s and 1990s the discipline of anthropology engaged in a heightened process of self-examination and reflexivity. It was a time of postmodern uncertainty; challenges from political economy and history; deepened questioning of ethics and epistemologies; and a reexamination of the social and political contexts in which anthropologists engage in research, as well as the nature of that research itself. Parts of the discipline turned to its own history in order to understand what it does and has done, and what anthropology can tell us about ourselves and our cultures, both disciplinarily and globally. Practitioners not only looked at anthropology's development (e.g., Stocking 1968), but also at themselves as cultural critics (Mar-

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cus and Fischer 1986), as writers (Clifford and Marcus 1986), and as active participants in the perpetuation of American modernity (di Leonardo 1998). I suspect that one of the reasons the so-called "Freeman-Mead controversy" generated the attention that it did among anthropologists was not only that it became a national if not international media event, but also that it came during this time of heightened self-awareness.[1] Much like those Ndembu boys confronted with monsters during the liminal period of their initiation (Turner 1967), reactions from both "sides" were exaggerated and out of tune with routine and ordinary disciplinary activity. Whatever else it has done and will do, the controversy is providing rich material for anthropologists to mine in order to understand disciplinary assumptions and practices, and hopefully it may do so for some time to come.

In examining the work of Margaret Mead and the reactions it has generally elicited from the anthropological community, one thing strikes me as particularly interesting, and that is the way in which most reactions fall into two somewhat extreme categories. For one group of vocal critics, she seems to be the devil in a dress, while for the other, she is the charismatic leader of all right-minded people. As Micaela di Leonardo (1998:18) acerbically notes, this bipolar response is not new: ". . . this mixture of adulation of and visceral repugnance against Mead is no recent popular invention." I have certainly not been immune to this kind of Manichean thinking, and at one point I found myself enmeshed in a debate with Derek Freeman (McDowell 1984). I often felt as if I were an Alice waking up in a new and strange wonderland, one in which interactions were paradigmatically apt examples of Gregory Bateson's (1958) process of complementary schizmogenesis: If he had not said what he did, I would never have said what I said, which motivated him to . . . and so on. The rhetoric, especially in the media, continued to escalate as many onlookers wondered just what was going on here, and some potential contributors to a sincere disciplinary evaluation of Mead's place in its history wisely chose not to engage. Happily, however, the dust has begun to settle and contributions such as the ones in this volume are beginning to appear, contributions that not only place the debate in its appropriate framework but also use it to further our understanding of anthropology, its assumptions, methods, and history in a wider intellectual, social, and political context.

I focus here on this dualistic reaction that characterizes the Freeman-Mead controversy. The division into two relative extremes has been facilitated by a kind of essentialism. Both sides (although the detractors of Mead to a much greater degree than her supporters) fail to appreciate the complexity of Mead's contributions and in the process "essentialize" her work in ways that seriously distort what she actually did, wrote, and accomplished. Her work is complex and voluminous, yet commentators have tended to select

certain portions or features and focus on these to the exclusion of others. Perhaps a better word might be "simplification," but I have chosen "essentialization" to describe the process because it reflects the way in which many treat her work—as if it had a single, simple nucleus, analogous to some kind of biological or natural given, or an essential core of meaning. Many fail to acknowledge the complexity present and focus only on one or two selected aspects of her work as if there were no others, as if there were only one or two important points or as if she never changed her mind or increased her understanding. This is the essence of what I mean here by the "essentialization" process.[2] An intriguing issue necessarily emerges: which aspect(s) is highlighted as the essential one? Why does one person select a particular one, while another chooses something else? Answers to these questions may reveal considerable information about the motivation, theoretical persuasion, assumptions, and, perhaps, even political leanings of the "essentializer," as well as underlying disciplinary assumptions and frameworks.

My comments here are restricted to Mead's Oceanic work, as is only appropriate for the papers contained in this volume. [3] I want to elaborate briefly on four interrelated notions: (1) Many who comment on Mead's work have not read it in its entirety, or they do not remember it accurately, or they have not read it very closely; (2) Many who have read it do so with such strong "lenses" that their essentialization distorts the actual work; a few misuse or misquote it in order to justify their own positions; (3) Commentators often neglect to put her work into the appropriate historical context. What stands out when this is done, of course, is the way in which some of Mead's theories, methods, and assumptions clash with contemporary norms and practice, and these become the focus for analysis and critique; (4) Mead's fame and perhaps even notoriety made her an easy-to-appropriate symbol for a variety of purposes; she was somehow emblematic of, or perhaps embodied, particular positions or historical processes and thus became the beacon of light for some or the main target of criticism for others, whether wholly deserved or not. [4]

The first point is simple: most anthropologists of the 1980s and 1990s rarely read Mead after perhaps an initial exposure as undergraduates; they either relied on hazy memories, or they reread the work carelessly or hastily. For example, it is clear that many recent critics of *Coming of Age in Samoa* (Mead [1928] 1961) never studied the detailed and carefully documented appendices included in the volume, and these contain fascinating information that make her depiction of Samoa in the 1920s far more complex than the ethnographic picture in the main text. Richard Feinberg (1988) argues that a careful reading of *Coming of Age in Samoa* reveals significant complexity and that the popular perception of what Mead wrote is different from what

she actually said. He concludes ". . . Mead's work emerges as complex and somewhat enigmatic, with facile conclusions standing in contrast to much rich and sensitive ethnography" (Feinberg 1988: 656). She certainly may have stressed a somewhat simplified portrait in this work aimed at a general audience, but a careful reading of what she did present in its entirety belies that picture.

Contributing to this tendency to misread Mead by simplifying her is her proclivity to write for multiple audiences, including the general public. Too many critics have equated her popular volumes with the more technical professional work, yet to do so is unfair and inadequate. As Shankman (this volume) notes, Mead purposely chose to write books accessible to intelligent laypersons as well as more technical monographs for professional anthropologists. One can certainly criticize her for doing so, or for doing it the way she did; she is vulnerable to the charge that she oversimplified to make social or political points, or perhaps that her comparisons between "us" and "them" were facile and distorted in some of these books.[5] But it is critical to note that she did not ignore her specialized, anthropological audience, and to focus only on one part of her entire oeuvre seriously misrepresents her work. Assuming that one knows what she said without reading her disparate and admittedly sometimes widely-scattered work is poor scholarship, and many are guilty of doing it. [6]

Mead's work on Samoa provides an apt illustration. Freeman's (1983) focus was almost exclusively on *Coming of Age in Samoa* (Mead [1928] 1961), and critical commentary has often been restricted to this text. But as James Côté (this volume, 60–73) notes, Mead *herself* described *Coming of Age in Samoa* as "pulp." It is unfortunately common to equate Mead's "Samoan work" with *Coming of Age in Samoa* without even acknowledging the existence of *Social Organization of Manu'a* (1930a), her more technical ethnography on Samoa. Shankman's perceptive and careful consideration (this volume) of both reveals a more accurate picture of what Mead did and did not say about Samoa, what she understood and what she did not. Although he acknowledges Mead's shortcomings, Shankman is able to provide a more balanced evaluation of her Samoan research because he considers all of it.[7] *Social Organization of Manu'a* (Mead 1930a) is an essential element that cannot be ignored.

Careful scholarship today requires that a critic not only read Mead's published works but go beyond and examine *all* of the material available that might be relevant. Luckily there is a vast amount of unpublished material available to scholars in the Margaret Mead Archives in the Library of Congress.[8] Several contributors to this volume extensively used the material in these Archives to research questions about Mead's work, and their rich anal-

yses yield a complex and fascinating picture. Côté's careful scholarship (this volume, 60–73) focuses on Mead's unpublished letters from two periods. In the late 1920s, Mead's correspondence, particularly with Franz Boas, reveals a great deal about the milieu in which the publication of *Coming of Age in Samoa* occurred and how the volume was produced, while letters from the 1960s disclose much about the relationship between, and motivations of, both Freeman and Mead. The result is a much richer understanding of Mead and the nature of the dispute Freeman had about the quality of her work. The extensive photograph collection in the Archives provides ample data for Sharon Tiffany's analysis (this volume, 19–45), in which she demonstrates that Mead's visual images of Samoan women vary in significant ways from the American cultural images of the Polynesian *femme fatale*, not only at the time Mead wrote but also in contemporary imagery. Mead's women are persons with varied emotions as well as agency; they do not slip neatly into enduring Western images of Polynesian beauties but contest the representation of these women as passive sexual objects in tropical paradise. Gerald Sullivan's focus (this volume, 91–105) also includes a detailed examination of unpublished materials from the Archives in an attempt to grasp Mead's understanding of the relationships among individual, personality, and culture. Through his work, we are able to see Mead as a young scholar in a young discipline grappling with already extant psychological concepts and theories (as well as those of biology). Sullivan's analysis reveals a nuanced portrayal of her evolving understanding of human variability that is far removed from the cultural determinist portrayed by Freeman.

A careful reading of the materials in both *Coming of Age in Samoa* (Mead [1928] 1961) and *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (Mead [1935] 1968) demonstrates that Freeman's claim that Mead was a strict cultural determinist is simply incorrect. Phillip Guddemi's close reading (this volume, 106–127) of Mead suggests, as does Sullivan's, that *contra* Freeman, she was far from being a cultural determinist who denied the importance of biological factors in human behavior. Guddemi argues that both Mead and Ruth Benedict were not philosophical or epistemological relativists, and that even though they both stressed human potential and its variability, neither advocated that the mind was a "blank slate" that absorbed whatever information the surrounding culture inscribed on it.

Freeman's insistence on Mead's deterministic stance pertains directly to the second factor in her essentialization: It is not that some have failed to read what she actually wrote, but that many who have read it choose to ignore its complexity or focus on singular aspects of it. Freeman is the most infamous example in this category. Most are familiar with his assertion that she and her mentor, Franz Boas, represent cultural determinism in its most

egregious form, and that Freeman attributes to them a radical cultural relativist position neither, in fact, ever really espoused.[9] But even if Mead had been a cultural determinist (which more than ample evidence has by now demonstrated she was not), by focusing exclusively on this issue Freeman ignored all of the other facets of her work, thus "essentializing" her. She became a symbol, a trope, for cultural determinism.

Freeman claims to have read all of Mead's Samoan work but chooses not to acknowledge its subtleties; he ignores *Social Organization of Manu'a* almost entirely, whereas the authors in this volume (especially Shankman, 46–59) demonstrate why it is a critical document in understanding Mead's Samoan materials. Let me provide just one egregious example of Freeman's "misreading," my personal favorite (see also McDowell 1984). One of Freeman's main points about Mead is that when she characterized Samoans as gentle and relatively unassertive, she ignored the fact that in reality Samoans are competitive, violent, and assertive. He writes:

> . . . just as Samoan culture has eliminated strong emotion, so also it has eliminated any interest in competition. Samoan social organization, claims Mead, places 'each individual, each household, each village, even (in Western Samoa) each district, in a hierarchy, wherein each is dignified only by its relationship to the whole,' each performing tasks that 'contribute to the honor and well-being of the whole,' so that 'competition is completely impossible' (Freeman 1983: 88).

Freeman's depiction of Mead's portrayal is perfectly clear, and he leaves the reader no choice but to ponder Mead's narrow and erroneous vision.

How many readers wondered about the veracity of these quotes and checked the original source? Here's what Mead ([1937] 1976:301–302) actually wrote:

> these illustrations will show the *two tendencies* in Samoan social organizations, the tendency to place each individual, each household, each village, even (in Western Samoa) each district in a hierarchy, wherein each is dignified only by its relationship to the whole, each performs tasks which contribute to the honor and well-being of the whole, and competition is completely impossible. *The opposite tendency, the rebellion of individuals within the units against this subordination to a plan and their use of a place in a component unit to foment trouble and rivalry with other units, while not so strong, is always present* (emphasis added).

Careful reading of Freeman's argument reveals that this is not an isolated example; this kind of deception, which surely must be conscious and in some ways intentional, runs throughout his work. How and why would Freeman, whom even Mead described as "brilliant" (Côté, this volume, 60–73), make such misrepresentations? Côté looks at the correspondence between Freeman and Mead, and about Freeman by Mead, and suggests that, for a variety of reasons, Freeman was obsessed with Mead and attacked her research for personal and psychological, rather than intellectual reasons. It may be so.

One need not be an extreme postmodernist to note that anthropologists and other academics exhibit selective perception just as other human beings do. We, too, see what we expect to see, and we are not necessarily conscious of doing so. This tendency clearly affects how we read Mead's work. It is also true that Mead's corpus of material is sometimes complex and not always consistent. What one person reads in one publication is different from what someone else reads in another publication. Di Leonardo (1998), for example, examines the relationship between Mead and twentieth-century feminism and explains how someone who made clearly antifeminist comments could so readily be taken up as a significant "foremother" and seminal role model. Feminists essentializing *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* ([1935] 1968) might be surprised at what Mead says in *Male and Female* (1949a).

A factor that contributes to the ease with which different readers find different things in Mead is highlighted by Mary Catherine Bateson (this volume, 162–175): icons are not static, even though they may be perceived to be. Mead's intellectual ideas and contributions did not spring full-blown in the 1920s and remain the same until her death: her ideas changed and evolved over time. She even, on occasion, changed her mind or admitted errors. Mead herself was singularly cognizant of the importance of history in and for anthropology. To understand her work, one must realize that she believed that the discipline would, and should, proceed in an evolutionary and "scientific" way, progressing and building on the work of those who had gone before, and she was especially conscious of her own central role in this history. Time and context were so important to Mead that she insisted that every piece of paper in her office be dated (Bateson, this volume, 162–175).

Mead has often been criticized for not "up-dating" her books or modernizing the language, but she chose to let the originals stand as examples of how anthropologists thought and wrote at the time (see also Bateson, this volume, 162–175). For example, some of the language contained in Mead's (1977) *Letters from the Field* was inappropriate and perhaps even unacceptably racist in the 1970s. But she refused to change what she had written earlier and explicitly let these letters stand as they were, without revision,

so that they could serve as historical documents about how anthropologists operated during the period. She believed that to have changed the letters for publication would have been to tamper with history in some sense. She wrote: "Nevertheless, in these letters, except when an individual might somehow be harmed, I have let stand the statements made in a way I would not make them today" (Mead 1977:14). She described how she hoped these letters, unchanged from when they were written, would contribute to an understanding of what she believed was the evolution of theory and method in anthropology. One can justly question Mead's wisdom in publishing these letters at all, but one cannot do so without addressing the issue of the historical context in which they were produced and her recognition that the nature of anthropology at the time would be better understood as a result. [10]

The third way in which commentators have essentialized Mead relates directly to the realities of historical context and intellectual history: We fail to properly appreciate not only Mead, but also the development of anthropology in general, because we do not assess her work in its historical context. We are guilty of what historians call "presentism" (see also Bateson and Guddemi [this volume, 162–175 and 106–127]). Rather than examining her work in the context of other work produced at the time, we compare it with later work, and in doing so what stands out is, quite naturally, the way in which much of it clashes with more contemporary norms, theory, and practice. These are the elements that become the focus because they jump out in memorable ways and grab our attention. We do not sufficiently appreciate that different questions were of interest when she wrote, different concepts were used, and theoretical frameworks were just being developed. To chide Mead for not asking questions of interest to contemporary anthropologists is foolish; a study of the questions then central to the discipline might be productive.

Contributing to this phenomenon is the trajectory of Mead's professional life. Most of her fieldwork and her technical publications came early in her career, and little new work of this type was done after World War II (Manus is probably the only exception). She continued to be central and visible in the discipline until her death in 1978, but she chose other directions for her public and intellectual life. Her pervasive influence on American life and anthropology during the 50s, 60s, and 70s erroneously led many to evaluate her earlier ethnographic work on then-contemporary standards rather than in the context of earlier paradigms. We need to contrast her ethnographic work with that of other first-generation students of Boas, not with Marshall Sahlins or Clifford Geertz, or Marvin Harris. Even those who pessimistically believe that the discipline has not *progressed* much during the century of its existence must admit that it has *changed* considerably in the course of the twentieth century.

Several contributors to this volume illustrate the kinds of rich analysis that can result when Mead's work is examined in historical context, and many illustrate that Mead was creative, innovative, and "ahead of her time." As noted earlier, Sullivan (this volume, 91–105) explores the emerging meaning of central terms such as temperament, personality, and individual. Patricia Francis' meticulous scholarship (this volume, 74–90) reveals the close connections Mead was drawing between psychology and anthropology, even as a student, and thus deepens our understanding of the development of the so-called "culture and personality school." Francis also uses the Library of Congress Archives to reveal Mead's psychological background; her careful and detailed analysis reminds us that Mead's focus, often on the person and her/his relationship with culture, was of central interest to a variety of scholars in the first half of the century. If we are able to question the relevance of this individual-culture dichotomy or juxtaposition today, it is surely partly as a result of the work, especially Mead's, that has gone before.

In another paper (McDowell 2001) I argue that Mead's theoretical paradigm was too simple for her observational skills and that she was hampered by the paucity of anthropological theory during its early years. She observed and recorded things without a theoretical framework for them, and so her work almost always includes more sophisticated ethnography than theory (also see Feinberg 1988). This was certainly the case for the Mundugumor. Mead saw and recorded more than her conceptual framework accommodated: recognizing that furthers understanding of both her work and early disciplinary paradigms.

Methodology in the early part of the twentieth century was as rudimentary as theory. Especially interesting, though, are the ways in which Mead was consciously experimenting with methodology in this relatively new discipline. Eric Silverman (this volume, 128–141) documents the innovative ways that Mead and Bateson were using photography in their studies of the Iatmul. But he goes further and analyzes the creative and innovative ways in which the ethnography was conducted and constructed, and he notes that the project was not only ahead of its time but in some ways it "prefigured later twentieth-century developments in social thought…" (Silverman, this volume, 128–141). Thus, when viewed in historical context, the work was imaginative and ingenious as well as thorough and insightful. Mead's work on Bali (with Gregory Bateson) is innovative and probably unequalled, and no one who has looked at *all* of Mead's work on the Arapesh (with Reo Fortune) can fail to be impressed by the creativity and innovation in techniques.[11] Although published materials on the Tchambuli (Chambri) and Mundugumor are scarce, the Arapesh material is literally voluminous and methodologically highly experimental.[12] Tiffany (this volume, 19–45) shows how even Mead's

initial effort to take fieldwork "illustrations" in the early 1920s were counter to the cultural norms then prevalent in photography.

The same appreciation of history led Mead to arrange for the placement of her papers, published and unpublished, in an archive at the Library of Congress for the use of future scholars: anthropology's history was important. Mead's understanding of a larger cultural and historical context, however, was not as sharp and developed as her understanding of the discipline. Although she did not see the peoples she studied as suspended in time and unchanging, she did attribute to them less historical change than they warranted (see Gewertz [1981] for an example of Mead's misinterpretation of, or failure to recognize, historical events). More important, however, is the context in which she herself worked. Mead was clearly a positivist, and she was not aware of the extent to which she was a product of a particular history, society, and culture.[13] In fact, it is only relatively recently that anthropologists have begun to understand the extent to which disciplinary theories and methods are essentially folk ones that are circumscribed, if not bound, by the culture(s) which produced them. The fact that Mead did not realize she was wearing glasses does not relieve those of us who look at her work from examining her prescription and understanding what factors influenced her vision; it is that kind of reexamination that will yield important results for the discipline and beyond (see also Herzfeld 2001). What cultural baggage did Mead have, for example, about Samoa? What did she know of photography, how were photographs used, how were they posed or constructed at the time? How was she influenced by the broader cultural milieu in which she lived?

A second example of the kind of broader cultural and historical analysis that we need comes from di Leonardo (1998): Although often critical of Mead, she examines not only the things and people that influenced Mead herself but the cultural and historical world in which Mead worked. The result leads to an exceptionally deeper and richer understanding of Mead, her work, and her influence. More importantly, however, it leads di Leonardo to go beyond the individual, Margaret Mead, and ask critical questions that might not arise if only the work of an isolated individual were explored.

The last aspect of the essentialization of Mead is the way in which her fame and even notoriety made her an easy-to-appropriate symbol for a variety of referents. Freeman used her as a symbol of his dreaded cultural determinist. Other anthropologists, feminists, politicians, and media opportunists have "used" Mead in a way that she certainly never intended when she told her daughter to "use" her (Bateson, this volume, 162–175).

A prevalent and problematic usage is Mead as a symbol for the evils of colonialism throughout the Pacific and beyond. Do not misunderstand: No one can doubt that she was a part of the process, that she was relatively un-

aware of the effects she herself had, that she was perhaps an anthropological "modernist" of the most unattractive sort. Indeed, few anthropologists at the time were otherwise. Her legacy in the Pacific has been a strong one, and its effects not insignificant. Anthropology is beginning to face this reality more explicitly.[14] However, it is a serious error to equate the symbol with the thing symbolized. The editors of a volume entitled, *Confronting the Margaret Mead Legacy: Scholarship, Empire, and the South Pacific* (Foerstel and Gilliam 1992), call for a serious self-examination of the discipline's relationship to colonialism and the continuing oppression of peoples in the Pacific, something desperately needed. But when they focus on the symbol (Mead) rather than the referent (the devastating and continuing effects of colonialism) they not only essentialize Mead, but also distract themselves and their readers from their own goals. The focus on Mead makes it too easy to center critique on her rather than on the broader historical context of colonialism and anthropology's place in the wider forces that impacted populations throughout the world.

Reactions to the Freeman-Mead controversy within the anthropological community have been interesting. Support for Freeman came from the expected quarters: conservatives, simplistic sociobiologists, and his students.[15] What most interests me is the extent to which American sociocultural anthropologists came to her defense. In part their reaction was to a perceived attack on the significance of culture in human behavior, a justifiable reaction by almost any standard. But I think that there may have been more going on. Merrily Stover's paper (this volume, 142–161) directly addresses the importance of Mead as a symbol for *American* values. She argues that Mead is the consummate American hero who embodies core ideals: The pioneer spirit, a desire to improve society, an old-fashioned appreciation of diversity, the individual, and freedom. Mead's effusiveness, her confidence, her concern for "the common man" are quintessentially American. Many of di Leonardo's (1998) criticisms of Mead are really more appropriate comments on aspects of American culture. Mead's excessive reliance on the individual and psychology, for example, led her to disregard the larger system of political economy, and her profound future-orientation fostered her neglect of the forces of history.[16] Stover helps us to understand the meanings embodied by Mead and the reasons she resonated with Americans. And to the extent that American anthropologists were and are members of their own wider culture, she resonates with them as well. Freeman's attack on Mead was not just an attack on Boas and the role of culture in human behavior; it went deeper into the cultural heart of the United States than many of us care to admit.

There is more at issue here than Mead's personal place in the history of anthropology or the discipline's standards of scholarship, although these are

not unimportant. What anthropologists need to do is examine the way the discipline has developed and how it operates so that we can improve it in the future. We need to take that "militant middle-ground" espoused by Herzfeld (2001) and examine our history in order to revitalize the future. We need to understand past examples—especially "mistakes"—in all of their complexity in order to provide richer and deeper analyses and understandings. The papers in this volume are, I think, more than a good beginning.

NOTES

1. Many commentators have noted that it is difficult to characterize the results of the publication of Freeman's work as a "debate" when Mead was not present to respond. To say that Freeman had a "disagreement" with Mead is too gentle, while describing his work as an "attack" on her seems one-sided as well. Thus, I rely on the word "controversy."

2. Di Leonardo (1998) includes an analysis of some of the complexities contained within Mead's work, including internal contradictions, the development of ideas, and how the wider cultural milieu in which she worked affected her vision.

3. Most of these papers were originally presented at the February 2001 Annual Meetings of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania in Miami, Florida. The session, "Reflections on Pacific Ethnography in the Margaret Mead Centennial, 2001," was organized and chaired by Sharon W. Tiffany.

4. Throughout the media coverage of the publication of Freeman's (1983) volume, I was frequently surprised by the ease with which his analysis was accepted without much thought or investigation; a variety of professionals as well as laypeople were eager to disparage Mead without investigation (her supporters were sometimes similarly guilty). She had accrued meaning that seemed more appropriate to something other than a single human being.

5. Some Samoan critics have rightly commented on Mead's simplistic descriptions, especially in the context of comparisons with what she perceived to be American reality (see Malopa'upu [2002]).

6. In this context, she must be given credit, as Marcus and Fischer (1986) do, for being one of the earliest of American anthropologists to engage in what is today called "cultural critique."

7. In a similar vein, those who wish to comment on Mead's work in Manus should study *Kinship in the Admiralty Islands* (1934) as well as *Growing Up in New Guinea* ([1930b] 1968).

8. Derek Freeman availed himself of these archives, if somewhat selectively.

9. Boas did considerable work in biological anthropology himself, and his students continued his interests in physical anthropology. It is due to his influence and his insistence on the relevance of biology that American anthropology continues to maintain a "four-field"

constellation. Boas even had his student, African-American novelist and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston, measuring heads on the streets of Harlem (Hemenway 1977:63)!

10. One of the most important points I make in teaching writing to college students is the importance of audience: it provides the structure for whatever gets written. Mead was very sensitive to audience, and wrote differently accordingly (as she should have). In examining *Letters from the Field* (Mead 1977), it is important to recognize that what is contained therein is just what the title states—letters that were written to friends and family. Although it may be legitimate to criticize the publication of letters, they cannot be evaluated and used in the same way as an ethnographic text.

11. For Bali, see Bateson and Mead (1942); for Arapesh, see Mead ([1935] 1968), ([1940] 1970), ([1947a] 1971), ([1947b] 1971), ([1949b] 1968).

12. See McDowell (1991) for an explanation of the differential treatment of the three societies included in *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (Mead [1935] 1968).

13. For example, see Gewertz's (1984) analysis of the way in which Mead's American concept of the individual hindered her understanding of the Chambri (Tchambuli).

14. Again, let me refer to one Samoan critic: *Coming of Age in American Anthropology* by Chief Malopa'upo Isaia (2002).

15. A conservative political climate surely had something to do with the reception Freeman's book received. See also Bateson (this volume).

16. Di Leonardo's (1998:363) lively description of Mead is worth quoting in part:

> Mead embodied the mixed vices and virtues that commentators have long identified as particularly American: she was overly self-assured while underinformed, focused on selfhood to the exclusion of larger social and historical processes, imperializing, condescending and prescriptive while certain of her own fairness, and yet also prodigiously hard working, publicly engaged, buoyant, charming, and insightful in many other ways.

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