DREAMS OF FORTUNE: REO FORTUNE'S PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY OF CULTURAL AMBIVALENCE

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Reo Fortune's first book, *The Mind in Sleep*, published in 1927, considers dreams in which one's attitudes contradict waking opinions. Fortune was keenly aware of his own conflicting perspectives and abhorred ethnocentrism. He argued that rejected beliefs remain subconsciously. Individuals hold contradictory beliefs using two capacities: logical and emotional representation and connection. The former is more accessible when awake, the latter in dreams. Fortune's subsequent ethnographic studies attended to dreams and ambivalence. His theory encouraged his rejection of stereotyping by the "culture and personality" school of thought, and can be used as a model of cultural ambivalence with ongoing anthropological value.

Curious Dreams and Fortune's Theory of Dual Culture in Mind

Reo Fortune was among the most accomplished fieldworkers and prolific ethnographers of the twentieth century. However, it could be argued that he is most remembered through his association with two anthropologists. One was Margaret Mead, his one-time wife, with whom Fortune shared intense field experiences and conflicts at home and in print (Fortune 1939, 26; Mead [1938, 1940] 2002; Roscoe 2003). The other was Ruth Benedict ([1934] 1953), whose use of Fortune's materials made the "paranoid" Dobuans far more widely known than Fortune's own writings. Biographical and historical work on Mead and Benedict has reproduced an image of Fortune as macho and defensive (Banner 2003: 255–6, 318; Thomas 2009). Without questioning the legitimacy of these impressions by some of his

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associates at certain points in his life, here I look to what we can learn about Reo Fortune's personality and scholarly motives before his fateful association with Mead and Benedict. The fact that Benedict, and later Gregory Bateson, were competitors for Mead's love, added emotional complications to Fortune's scholarly relationships with each of these figures in distinctive ways (see Molloy 2009 and Thomas 2009). Here I am interested in who Reo Fortune was before life threw him the curve ball of meeting Mead, which helped motivate him to leave psychology in favor of anthropology (for other factors, see Gray 1999; Thomas 2009).

My main source is a little-known book on dreaming that Fortune published at the age of 24, titled *The Mind in Sleep* (1927). It was a work in progress when he met Margaret Mead on a ship from Australia to Europe in 1926 (Mead 1972: 169–80). While he anonymously included some of Mead's dreams in it (Banner 2003, 264; Lapsley 1999: 149–50), he also included six of his own that reveal much about his views before his association with Mead. We have here a glimpse of the young man's trials, ideals, and scholarly persona.

The man who emerges from this book is an emotionally sensitive, brilliantly thoughtful character who devoted considerable effort toward tackling difficult moral issues, particularly those involving conflicting views and perspectives. We learn that Fortune was a liberal, an agnostic, a biological materialist, an antinationalist, and a pacifist. He was also keenly aware of the perspectives of others and how differing views influenced relationships. A widely read scholar with a strong foundation in psychology, he fearlessly and respectfully challenged the orthodoxies of intellectual giants like Sigmund Freud ([1900] 1965) and W. H. R. Rivers (1923), the Cambridge psychologist and ethnologist. Fortune focused on dreams in which one acts or thinks in ways contrary to one's waking views to theorize about dreams without one's own theory influencing dream content. This perspective provides an opportunity for us to see some of Fortune's struggles with competing drives surrounding the First World War (also called the Great War), his abandonment of Christianity, and his love of scholarly order.

Fortune's theory of self-contrary dreams pointed his ethnographic work to problems of dreaming and ambivalence and encouraged his rejection of stereotyping. Though of little influence when published, Fortune's book prefigures some developments in the psychology and anthropology of dreaming. Finally, *The Mind in Sleep* provides a model of cultural ambivalence and dynamism of continuing usefulness by showing how individuals can hold contradictory cultural views simultaneously.

Fortune's Theory in *The Mind in Sleep*

According to Fortune, some of each person's consciously held beliefs are shadowed with conflicting beliefs on the subconscious level, accessible in dreams. Going through life, new attitudes are learned and developed, but older convictions persist below the surface. For example, the religious convert may, deep down, remain attached to a former belief system. Intrigued with the idea that people apparently hold conflicting views simultaneously, Fortune investigated dreams in which the ego exhibits attitudes that have been rejected or repressed in waking life.

Fortune disagreed with Rivers' argument that Freud's dream theory was self-fulfilling. Dreams in which a person holds opposite views to those of waking life, Fortune (1927, ix) argued, showed that "it is easily possible to exaggerate the influence of waking theory on dreams of the type under review." In anthropological terms, *The Mind in Sleep* is concerned with conflicting elements of culture in each person's mind and argues that dreaming allows for the expression of these incongruous views without harming social cohesion. In dreams, ideas that have been rejected in the conscious, social, cosmological, and moral systems remain and find expression.

This raises questions about how and why rejected beliefs persist, and why they may be accepted again, at least temporarily, in dreams. Fortune answered that these ideas retain emotional force, even when they have been rejected by logical or pragmatic concerns; they resurface in dreams because of the emotional tenor of dreaming.

Dreaming and waking are characterized by different kinds of thinking. Waking cognition connects ideas in terms of spatiotemporal relationships and reason, but "in dreams," Fortune (1927, 34) wrote, "association by common affect frequently supersedes association by contiguity and logical similarity." In "affective association," dream images and scenarios are connected or juxtaposed because they evoke a common feeling. Fortune considered affective association to be *the* distinctive characteristic of dream thought. It dominates dreaming when it is least disturbed by waking attitudes. As one nears waking, conscious thought patterns invade. When the conscious attitudes disagree with repressed ones, the intrusion of waking thought into dreams engages various mechanisms of censorship. These disguises complicate the affective associative symbolism of dreaming. Fortune thus disagreed with Rivers' view that symbolic censorship does not occur in dreaming. Fortune (1927, 18, 20) considered his own theory closer to Freud's in this regard, though he rejected the idea that deeply repressed attitudes are necessarily or usually sexual.

While Fortune's theory is detailed and provocative, with implications for both psychology and anthropology, it did not make much of an impression on either field. Mead (1972, 177) attributed this to Fortune's using part of his fellowship funding to subsidize its publication as a trade book, such that it "never got any scientific hearing at all." Social anthropologist Jackson Steward Lincoln (1935, 170) made no reference to it in his ethnological monograph on dreaming, though he did mention Fortune's Omaha ethnography ([1932b] 1969). Fortune himself, unfortunately, did not develop the ideas laid out in his book in his later writing, nor did he make explicit use of his theory in his own ethnographic work.

In *The Mind in Sleep*, Fortune (1927, 4) analyzed several dreams in which repressed tendencies find expression, including when "an agnostic dreams with belief in Christianity, [and] a pacifist with hatred of former enemy nations."

Since remembered dreams are usually those that occur shortly before waking, when censorship has come into play, Fortune argued that in order to reach awareness they must escape censorship via three "methods of evasion" (1927, 21). Fortune called the first of these "surrogation," in which a relatively repressed experience or attitude (the "submergent") finds "subsequent expression by merging and confounding it with an object of less repressed" but otherwise similar feeling ("the surrogate") (Fortune 1927, 20). In other words, it is "the process of confounding submergent and surrogate by association through common affect" (Fortune 1927, 21). For example, in one dream Fortune recounted that his repressed hatred of Germany during WWI was expressed by links between studying in that country as a gesture of peace, and being in a hated former school.

Fortune's second method of evasion is "envelopment," when a dream experience of an unrepressed attitude evokes the appearance of an affectively similar, repressed attitude. Fortune illustrated envelopment with one of his dreams in which he found himself in a library advocating agnosticism. This represented his waking views. However, his submergent Christianity appeared undisguised when a disturbance broke out, and he gave a speech on the virtues of Christianity as a way of quelling the disorder. He associated Christianity with an ordered and just universe, for which he longed in spite of contrary evidence. The repressed attitude, like a wolf in sheep's clothing, moves freely among the flock of conscious propriety in the dream scenario, smuggled past the censor's shepherd in its disguise of affective association with the uncensored attitude. Thus in envelopment, "the submergent obtains unsymbolic, undistorted release when the surrogate is confounded with [one's waking views]" (Fortune 1927, 46).

Third, in "substitution," two layers of symbolism hide the repressed attitude. In one of Fortune's examples, he dreamed of flowers (the censored version or manifest content), which, through punning association and common colors, he interpreted upon waking to represent the national flag (the surrogate), which in turn, represented extreme patriotism (the submergent). In substitution, the highly repressed submergent and the less repressed surrogate both remain out of the dream's manifest content. Dream characters or things are substituted for repressed others based on punning or other similarities, and the disguise is so thorough that these dreams do not evoke much emotion. Substitution occurs when the attitude dreamt is highly repressed and censorship maintains control (Fortune 1927: 64–65). When this happens there is "displacement": "the image of the manifest content that has the greatest importance in connection with the latent content appears relatively inconspicuously" (Fortune 1927, 57). "Displacement appears to occur when repression is so heavy as to keep both submergent and surrogate in latent content" (Fortune 1927, 66).

With his interest in the censorship of unacceptable attitudes, and interpreting dreams to find definite meanings, Fortune may initially appear to be a Freudian. However, Fortune countered Freud's view that the censor, all-powerful in waking life, is weakened when we are asleep. Rather, he held that the censor continues to operate in sleep, but repressed material can slip past it into awareness because dreaming represents "a new mode of associative thinking, whereby objects are connected, not by the logical relations of contiguity or cognitive similarity that obtain in waking thought, but rather by similarity of affect" (1927, 15).

While it now seems unwarranted to claim that dreams are unique in this way, the linking of ideas through affective similarity is certainly prevalent in dreaming. Fortune and Rivers both accepted Freud's distinction between manifest and latent content; but both rejected Freud's wish fulfillment theory of dreaming on the grounds that nightmares do not depict events that we want to occur (Fortune 1927: 16–17). According to Fortune, however, Rivers did "not accept the theory of the symbolic evasion of the censorship in dreams. Rivers believe[d] that the confused imagery of dreams may be explained as regression to a lower more infantile level of thinking" (Fortune 1927, 19). By contrast, Fortune argued that waking thought organizes emotions around objects, while dreaming thought organizes objects around emotions. Censorship is "the return of waking consciousness upon a type of thought which actively resists such a return" (Fortune 1927, 31). Since Fortune considered affective connection the basis of dream scenarios, it followed that when censorship was strong, there was little manifest affect; when censorship was weak, affect was high (1927, 72).

The units of waking cognition are "sentiments." Fortune (1927, 88) defined a *sentiment* as *"an organized system of emotional tendencies grouped about an object and the idea of an object."* The units of dreaming cognition, by contrast, are "constellations." A *"constellation is a collection of ideas perceived in hallucinatory fashion as objects, disrupted from the sentiments of which they form the core, and regrouped about an emotional tendency which their respective sentiments have in common"* (1927: 88–89, italics in original). Fortune implied that constellations, which are unconscious in waking life, often contradict sentiments, are more resilient than sentiments, and preserve ideas that have been rejected or repressed.

For Fortune, constellations associate representations in "unconscious thought" (unavailable in waking life but accessed in dreaming) through "association by common feeling tone." Common affect is the primary means by which the mind in sleep connects representations to form constellations. When conscious ideology begins to invade the dream as one approaches waking, affective constellations are replaced with "surrogate constellations":

> *The surrogate constellation is formed by two ideas, perceived in hallucinatory fashion as objects, disrupted from the sentiments of which they form the core, and regrouped about an emotional tendency which their respective sentiments have in common, but which is more strongly repressed in one sentiment than in the other.* (Fortune 1927, 89, italics in original)

Surrogate constellations connect representations through "verbal similarity" (puns), and "simulacral association" (assigning attributes of one event to another) (Fortune 1927: 101–4). Thus, Fortune concerned himself with both pure dream cognition, characterized by affective association, and mixed dreaming/waking cognition, characterized by simulacral association. Because of their distinctive modes of connecting ideas and feelings, they allow the expression of attitudes repressed by the conscious mind as it confronts physical reality and its sociocultural and logical constraints.

Fortune's book concludes with the suggestion that dreaming evolved to balance individual and social needs:

> The organization of emotions around an object is the normal mode of working of the waking mind. The organization of objects about an emotion, on the other hand, is a normal mode of working of the dreaming mind. (Fortune 1927, 88)

These two modes evolved "to keep incompatible suggestion separated" (Fortune 1927, 88). By this Fortune meant preventing conflicts between

one's personal views and dominant views in one's culture. Fortune called greater openness to enculturation "suggestibility." Humans need to have strong suggestibility in order to achieve good social agreement, but this threatens individuality. Dreaming evolved to allow individual contrariness to express itself in emotionally satisfying ways without endangering sociality (Fortune 1927: 85–86).

Fortune evidently considered a degree of individual resistance to suggestibility to have conferred a selective advantage in human evolution, though he did not spell out what this would have been. Subsequent research has shown that dreaming is common to all mammals, except possibly egg-laying species, indicating that the evolutionary origins of dreaming must be sought long before the hominid line and its reliance on culture evolved (Hunt 1989, 26).

Regardless of how dreaming evolved in human ancestors, Fortune's explanation offers the anthropologically useful observation that dreaming can function socially by allowing people to express views that go against those prevailing in the surrounding society. Curiously, his own recounted dreams do just the opposite: they express majority views lurking in the mind of a social rebel. The agnostic becomes a Christian, the pacifist becomes a warrior, and so on. Evidently, it can go both ways: the waking view can either agree or disagree with the majority view in the surrounding culture, and the dreaming view can disagree with the waking view. In both types of internal conflict, Fortune's formulation, like other psychodynamic approaches, has important implications for a sophisticated anthropology of cultural storage and transmission, because it offers a composite model of the individual as a culture-bearing being (Hollan 2000). Such work reminds us that to be enculturated in one's tradition is not simply to agree with it. People are often almost literally of two minds: one might agree with others in dreams but not when awake, or vice versa.

Fortune's ideas about dreaming, though not directly influential in psychology or anthropology in his own time, and apparently only indirectly influential in setting his own ethnographic agenda, are nevertheless echoed in subsequent and current scholarship. I mention two examples. First, psychologist C. G. Jung ([1945] 1960) took an interest in the same sorts of dreams as Fortune considered. Jung labeled them "compensatory dreams" and saw them as functioning to restore intrapsychic balance by calling attention to neglected aspects of personality that are striving for expression (Koulack 1993).

Second, anthropologist Michele Stephen proposed a model of memory and dreaming that resembles Fortune's ideas about verbal and emotional knowledge, each using distinct memory systems:

> [One] organizes information in terms of verbal categories and semantic understandings and [the other] records and organizes all information according to its emotional significance. . . . What is usually available to waking consciousness is only the semantic/language register of memory. (Stephen 2003, 97)

Here, then, is an elaboration compatible with Fortune's model of dual belief systems that provides an opportunity for ambivalence in each individual's self-image and cultural repertoire. Each person has, as it were, two cultures, one based on emotional connections, and the other based on logical connections among representations. The dialectic between dreaming and alert consciousness brings the two alternately into view (see Lohmann 2003: 206–7).

Fortune's Minds

Fortune revealed much about his personality, beliefs, and attitudes in the course of demonstrating his psychological ideas about dreaming. Six of the sample dreams he provided are his own. Here I recount them and his commentary about them in order to capture a glimpse of his youthful attitudes.

The Dream of the German Broil

In this dream, set in the time of the Great War, Fortune was trying to decide whether to attend college in Germany or France (Fortune 1927: 5–22). In the dream, he had relatives in both places, and both countries were located in his hometown in New Zealand. The French college was in a flat area in the middle of town, affording convenient access. The German college was perched atop a high hill outside of town, accessible only by tram. He decided, in spite of the inconvenience, to attend the college in the enemy nation, Germany, in order to show his "freedom from the narrow nationalistic prejudices then convulsing the world" (Fortune 1927, 6). Upon arrival in Germany, he was ignored and ridiculed by his relatives, his former school principal, and others. Upon taking the tram to campus, he had only English money to pay, which was rejected. Finally, the driver took him to the college, only to crash the tram through the front door, and throw the hapless Fortune into a giant metal basket hung from the ceiling, before withdrawing and taking the tracks with him, leaving no way of escape. Fortune was harassed by various officials, and then thrown out the door.

Fortune explained that the night before he had this dream, he had read an article advocating passivism and the removal of nationalistic bias and insulting, ethnocentric descriptions of Germans from schoolbooks to promote international understanding and dialog. Fortune agreed strongly. The principal of the school he was attending had disapproved of his "pacifist activity" (Fortune 1927, 9), and had berated him in his office, beside a wastebasket that resembled the dream basket in which he experienced similar feelings of "humiliation and distaste" (Fortune 1927, 10). Caroline Thomas has identified Fortune's hated school as the

> Teacher's Training College in Wellington, which Fortune attended at the same time as he was doing his B.A. at Victoria College. The principal of the former was also a lecturer at the latter. Fortune would have been around nineteen years of age at this time. (Caroline Thomas, personal e-mail communication, August 27, 2005; quoted with permission)

The German college appeared similar in architecture and environment to his old school. Fortune hated the institution in real life because he found much of the lecturing there inadequate, and he resented the required attendance at these inferior lectures. These feelings, suppressed at the time, came out in the dream.

Fortune (1927, 13) related this dream narrative to his theory by explaining that his unconscious hatred of Germany found "expression by cloaking itself in a conscious hatred." The dream was not really about his former school, however. Fortune felt that his feelings toward it were less repressed than his hatred of Germany during the First World War as a schoolboy. He had later rejected and repressed these feelings, only to have them fanned by reading about anti-German textbooks. That Fortune had taken a strong stand rejecting nationalistic ethnocentrism is made clear in a footnote. "In the year of this dream I acted as secretary (honorary) to a student body that was raising funds (by manual labour) for student relief in Germany" (Fortune 1927, 13, n. 1).

In The Dream of the German Broil's narrative, and Fortune's contextualization and analysis, we learn that Fortune was rebellious, even as a child. He revealed himself to have high standards, not only for his own behavior, but also for others'. He criticized the quality of instruction at his school. He found their disapproval of his pacifism—already present as a child—difficult to bear. He was "humiliated" by authority figures' rejection of his moral stance against nationalism. Later, as a young man at university, he read critiques against nationalism and hawkish violence. He was a student activist and a leader, organizing support for his counterparts in Germany,

whom he regretted having hated during the war. Fortune was an active, dynamic *participant* in his society and culture. He was enculturated to British nationalism, and then, critically assessing official and majority views, he broke with them and sought to convince others to change their views as well. He did this not only as a student, but also as an author. Fortune's passages are infused with his controversial views in a remarkably frank and open manner.

The Dream of the Library Vandalism

The second of Fortune's shared dreams expressed anxieties over his responsibility as a student employee for his college library's late operation and closing. In the dream, he acted in his actual capacity at his college library at night. He secretly let in some friends who, to his horror, smashed the stained-glass windows and left. Fortune then danced barefoot with the vandals in celebration. One of them remarked that his reputation was such that he had nothing to lose, and Fortune became anxious that he, in fact, did have reputation and position to lose. Contextualizing his narrative, Fortune wrote that the chief librarian had recently reprimanded him for forgetting to turn out the lights, and though Fortune felt intimidated, he exhibited nonchalance, and later feared that his attitude would be reported to higher authorities (Fortune 1927: 23–28).

In this narrative, we see a conflict between wanting to rebel while continuing to value tradition and order as a foundation for life. He wanted reputation and status within proper society, yet he also wanted to cut loose. His dilemma, it would seem, was how to let his individuality, in Burridge's (1979) sense of a critical and exemplary reshaper of society, shine without destroying the order that he loved. His very interest in dreams that highlight contrarian views is a symptom of this.

The Dream of the Library Disorder

In the next dream, Fortune was again in the library, engaged in an argument about religion with the chief librarian. While they were distracted, a student gave a loud speech in favor of agnosticism, drawing a crowd. Fortune saw this as a threat to the peace and order of the library, which it was his job to maintain. After silencing the speaker, he stood on a chair and gave his own soapbox speech on the "great truth and advantages of the Christian religion" (Fortune 1927, 41). Fortune recounted this dream because in waking life he had, in fact, rejected Christianity and become an agnostic. His reasons for this were not because he found supernatural explanations untenable. Rather, he reasoned that believing in Christianity

would compel him to accept that God is a demon for allowing injustice in the world. Therefore, he preferred to see evil as the result of a "blind force" (Fortune 1927: 42–43).

For Fortune, agnosticism was associated with disorder and lack of direction. In the library disorder dream, he was a Christian because this repressed part of his personality was affectively associated with his open dislike of "disorder" in the library (Fortune 1927, 43).

Fortune's father, Peter, was a clergyman and named his son "Reo" after *te reo* "the Word" in Maori. According to Caroline Thomas:

> Peter Fortune had been a missionary in China but at the time of Reo's birth he was an ordained minister posted to the small town of Coromandel which had a relatively large Maori population. He was only there about a year before the family moved and over the next 10 years or so the family changed parishes about 4 or 5 times. Peter Fortune abandoned the church sometime around 1918 when Reo was 15 and it is probably then that Reo developed his agnostic beliefs. (Caroline Thomas, personal e-mail communication, August 27, 2005; quoted with permission)

Fortune thus grew up in a household in which cultural difference and religious ambivalence were central. Coming of age in New Zealand, he rejected both the ethnocentrism and absolute religious belief that guided Christian missionary work. This personal history would have prepared him well for the ethnographic career he was about to undertake.

A recurring theme of order/tradition versus disorder/individuality appears in Fortune's dream narratives. Order/tradition provides structure, beauty, meaning, and social cohesion, but it also stifles creativity and denies new knowledge. Disorder/individuality provides novelty and exuberant personal expression, but it also maims security and staid grandeur. The young Fortune struggled to discern what their best balance should be. He seemed to settle, uneasily, for individuality in the same way Margaret Mead was to do in vacillating between tradition versus freedom in gender roles (Lohmann 2004, 127). Yet Fortune's fascination with traditional culture, and how individuals act under its sway, was to help motivate his several future ethnographic projects.

The Dream of the Pike Attack

In this dream, Fortune found himself in a kill-or-be-killed wartime situation, where his pacifism and internationalism melted before necessities of the moment. Fortune's (1927, 47) description of this dream is brief:

> We were to storm a large house manned by German soldiery. We were outnumbered badly, but we had one advantage. The pikes that we carried were somewhat longer than the rifle and bayonet. I was concerned that my pike was not so sharp as my neighbour's. Then I found myself in a rush. In a minute I was in a room alone with my back to the wall facing eight or nine Germans. I felt a wave of fear sweep over me. But I killed them off and found myself outside gulping in the clean air.

Fortune explained that the previous evening he had attended a pacifist speech with which he had strongly agreed. In his dream, his pacifism was mocked by pragmatic doubts. This dream illustrated that it is well to be a pacifist in theory, but when one has to go with one's fellows against those who have become enemies, personal dissent can blunt one's weapon, and one can be killed. Instead, pacifist Fortune defended himself without a thought, killing several men. Again there was the fear of being different from others in his culture, which made him vulnerable, yet by toeing the line and doing what had to be done, he and his side vanquished.

The Dream of Stopes

Fortune offered an extended account of this dream and the background information needed to understand its characters. In sum, it is a dream in which he was introduced to a woman character from an erotic French novel that he had recently read. He arranged to meet her, but she did not appear. He then met some people he knew from his old school on the playground, including some girls whom he knew well and a younger boy named "Stopes," whom he barely knew. The playground was flooded; he told them that he had played cricket under worse conditions. After some people walked by, he found himself helping his former house master cut branches off a pine tree (Fortune 1927: 52–56).

Fortune was interested in this dream because it initially appeared to have no affective or personal significance, but he realized that it had merely seemed that way because the real meaning was so successfully disguised. The boy, whose name was not really *Stopes*, had a name similar to the author of a sex manual in his college library that Fortune had loaned out the day before. Fortune's choice of names becomes clear when we realize that the founder of the first birth control clinic in England was Marie Stopes (Lapsley 1999, 155). Another part of the sex manual author's name was that of a woman who had rejected Fortune. He had been reading the French novel at the same time as this misadventure, and the woman who failed to meet him in his dream had also jilted the hero in the novel.

Fortune accepted the Freudian symbolism of the feminine, watery field and the castration anxiety of chopping branches off a phallic tree. He had heavily repressed the idea of sex with the woman who had rejected him. But the book so circuitously connected with her by its author's name was explicitly about sex. Here, according to Fortune, was a dream about a would-be girlfriend, though she never appeared in its manifest content.

From this dream we learn of an occasion when Fortune had been unlucky in love, and that he had nonsexually idealized his object. It would appear that while Fortune was exploring sexually liberal attitudes in waking life, he retained prudish feelings. There is little wonder that Mead's introducing him to her own free-love beliefs challenged Fortune's sensibilities, in spite of his consciously held degree of liberality (see Thomas 2009).

The Dream of Irises

Like the Dream of Stopes, this dream had a simple manifest content, but the context and analysis Fortune provided is complex, because he saw deep repression as retaining its true meaning beyond consciousness:

> I am speaking at a public gathering in favour of the Labour Party. Then I am climbing, climbing, continually climbing a long ladder. At the top I mount into a great cluster of large red roses, very fragrant and extending away a great distance on either side. I descend the ladder. Half-way down is a long bed of white lilies. I descend through them and come at the foot of the ladder to a great bed of irises, deep blue irises, extending, a solid mass of colour, as far as I can see in either direction. (Fortune 1927, 58)

Fortune explained that he did, in fact, support the Labour Party, which he saw as rejecting uncritical patriotism. Some days earlier, he had engaged in a heated argument with supporters of the Conservatives, who had angrily accused him of being disloyal when he suggested that expenditures to the royal family might be regarded as "a national extravagance" (Fortune 1927, 59). Immediately before the dream, he had read a piece of conservative literature that described Labour as disloyal. Fortune (1927, 61) recalled an event six months earlier when the former premier, "a strong Imperialist," had died. The premier represented a form of patriotism that Fortune found distasteful. At the time, Fortune was teaching at a school, and was obliged to honor the deceased by setting the flag at half-mast. He had to ascend a ladder and nail the flag into correct position. Fortune used this background

to interpret his dream as actually about the British flag: the flowers were the correct colors and the blue irises are known as "flags." The dream represented to Fortune a reversal of his waking views: he had given a patriotic speech (though in favor of the antipatriotic Labour Party), and he wallowed in the beauty of the flag, though he rejected flag waving.

Part of Fortune accepted conservative attitudes prevailing in the surrounding culture, though on the surface he held views more typical of liberals. Rather than opposing the individual to the collective, Fortune opposed the views of two sectors of his society. He was both a Labour supporter and a loyal citizen of the British Empire. On the surface he rejected the mindless patriotism of the latter, yet on a deeper level he reveled in it. He also rejected the ostensible disloyalty to tradition of the Labour Party, while also recognizing that this was an inherent part of its message. Such are the dilemmas of living socially, as a member of groups with conflicting views.

Continuities and Breaks between Fortune's Psychology and Anthropology

Fortune entered anthropology with a strong psychological foundation and a fascination for both dreams and the presence of what one might call contradictory "alleles" of culture in any individual's mind, each with its own kinds of dominance and recessiveness. What traces did this leave in his later anthropological work? Looking at his subsequent monographs, three on Oceania (Dobu, Manus, and Arapesh) and one on Native North America (Omaha), a subtle influence can be seen in Fortune's awareness of dreams and the ambivalences of individuals arising from cultural and social contradictions. However, despite their potential to enrich both his accounts and his explanations, Fortune's earlier theoretical interests are not systematically followed up. I see several possible explanations for this, each coming into play at different points. First, he may have seen the task of ethnography as fundamentally different from psychology. Second, simply documenting social, cultural, and linguistic systems may have consumed so much of his time in the field that there was insufficient opportunity for him to explicitly use and test his theory. Dobrin and Bashkow (2006) and Molloy (2009) all attest to the intensity of his cultural immersion in fieldwork. Third, he may simply have moved on to pursue other interests. I examine these major works for signs of how the younger, psychologist Fortune influenced the slightly older, post–Margaret Mead, anthropologist Fortune.

In *Sorcerers of Dobu* ([1932a] 1963, 181), Fortune noted that Dobuans believed personal souls leave the body during dreams, and that dream

images are spirits (cf. Lohmann 2003). Dobuans saw magical incantation as the ultimate cause of successful outcomes, even inspiring love (Fortune [1932a] 1963, 97). Some magic required dreaming: "In all love-magic the spirit of the magician is exhorted to go forth in the night to influence the spirit of the beloved" (Fortune [1932a] 1963, 237). A witch "does all of her work in spirit form while her body sleeps, but only at the bidding of the fully conscious and fully awake woman and as the result of her spells, it is said" (Fortune [1932a] 1963, 150). Not only were attacks perpetrated in (lucid?) dreams, but people experienced victimhood in their dreams as well, as when a woman

> would wake from a nightmare convinced that the flying witches were chasing her spirit and were just outside baulked by her spirit's luck in getting home before them. Then the night would be hideous with a ghastly yelling or alternate high and low shrieking, expressing such fear in its very sound as to be contagious enough to myself who knew its origin. (Fortune [1932a] 1963, 152)

Vivid here is Fortune's portrayal of how social interaction and personal experience, during both waking and sleeping life, led Dobuan people to accept beliefs about dreams and spirits (cf. Lohmann 2000). This approach is consistent with the themes of individual adaptation to surrounding culture discussed in *The Mind in Sleep*. There is, however, no discussion of Dobuan types of dream symbolism or how dream narratives might be used as a window on contradictory beliefs of the individual struggling to fit in with surrounding society. Instead, *Sorcerers of Dobu* is a description of how the sociocultural system works.

Fortune ([1932a] 1963: 43–62) did not gloss over rough spots and departed from ideal, synchronic images of social structure in his description of the "functioning of the system." The glitches he described show that the social system did not purr along like a well-oiled machine, but was rather embodied in individuals facing psychic and social ambivalences. Marriages were seldom smooth and happy, and people were torn by conflict between natal and affinal loyalties. Fortune also noted an inconsistency in the creation myth and how people coped with this:

> In the beginning of time various human persons *emanua nidi*, changed into birds. Thus birds came to be. Inconsistently enough, various birds hatched eggs from which issued the first human beings upon earth.

> In truth, the Dobuan does not push hard upon logic in his account of Creation. He does not notice that one legend conflicts with another. (Fortune [1932a] 1963: 94–95)

Fortune ([1932a] 1963, 126) similarly noted that Dobuans made alternating use of incompatible explanations for the efficacy of magic without concern.

In *Sorcerers of Dobu*, Fortune depicted incompatible beliefs and marveled at native acceptance of these as unproblematic, but did not explore the question of *how* they accomplished this. He did not explore intrapersonal ambivalence over holding contradictory beliefs, which is a centerpiece of *The Mind in Sleep*. It may be that he did not see his job as an ethnographer of a primitive people to go into these sorts of questions. Furthermore, doing research into dream symbolism and personal ambivalences in these exotic field settings would have required rich knowledge of each informant's personal quirks, life history, and both idiosyncratic and symbolic associations circulating in the local culture. As Waud Kracke (1987, 1999) has observed in his psychoanalytic studies of dreaming in Amazonia, an intimacy is required between ethnographer and informants that may not have been easily possible, given constraints of time, linguistic competence, and the other ethnographic work that Fortune faced (see also Spiro 2003).

Fortune's book on Native North America, *Omaha Secret Societies* ([1932b] 1969), is a rich and sophisticated account of both thriving and faded religious practices and beliefs in a tribe facing poverty and acculturation. Fortune ([1932b] 1969, 5) gave the role of dreaming in social life some attention, noting first that dream visions are not linguistically distinguished from waking ones. His ethnographic attention to dream narratives here secured him a recognized place in the ethnology of dreaming (Lohmann 2007).

Fortune quoted Small Fangs, who told of having been drawn to a place by a sweet smell (indicating a supernatural presence). Here, he saw one snake writhing over another snake he had dismembered shortly before, "doctoring the cut snake" (Fortune [1932b] 1969, 56). Small Fangs took this as a vision conferring healing ability, and accordingly, when his wife Lea was ill twenty years later:

> I told Lea about the snakes and told her to dream about it. She did dream that those snakes came to her and said to her to eat peyote and she would get well. So when she came home they had a peyote meeting and gave her peyote tea and she felt happier. (Fortune [1932b] 1969, 57)

Fortune related this story to illustrate how people who were not members of secret societies kept their visions quiet, except within the family, to avoid subjecting themselves to magical danger from affronted secret society members. Omaha people had less faith in private visions than in those officially sanctioned by the secret societies. Here we have a situation of ambivalent and semiprivate challenge to social hierarchy and dogma, yet Fortune did not take this opportunity to explore the point using the theory of dreaming and cultural ambivalence that he had developed a few years earlier.

This being said, Fortune did not shy away from points of individuality and ambivalence in his general description of how Omaha secret societies and visionary power operated. He noted that secret society members awed their audiences with "miraculous" displays, including supposedly sucking pathogenic fluids from patients' bodies without breaking the skin. When these practices were revealed to initiates as "tricks," they faced a contradiction:

> The initiates . . . realising that their affected 'materialisations' were not material miracles but solemn dramatisations only, a fact unknown to and strictly kept secret from the non-initiates, were free to believe that all was *batho*^{n}, unseen influence.
>
> . . . [I]n some initiates the process led to a heightening of religious feeling, [and] in others it led to a degradation. (Fortune [1932b] 1969, 4; see also Tuzin 1980)

Thus, Fortune depicted the Omaha individual as possessed of complex, changing, and contradictory beliefs. However, he did not make exploration of this complexity central to his work, which focused on documenting the society rather than individuals. Fortune had adopted a more typically anthropological perspective.

Turning to *Manus Religion* (Fortune 1935), we find a similar treatment of dreaming and simultaneously holding contradictory views. Fortune stressed the ambivalent feelings Manus people felt toward their "Sir Ghost—each household's protective ancestor represented by a skull. This ambivalence arose, in Fortune's analysis, because they expected the impossible from him: no accidents and indefinitely long life. When a Sir Ghost "failed to protect" his ward, and the household head died, the skull was removed from its place of honor, destroyed, and cast into the sea, to be replaced by another. Far from being straightforward protectors, spirits—including one's own Sir Ghost and those of other households—were also understood to be a common cause of illness and loss of life. So the ambivalence the Manus felt toward ghosts was the same as their ambivalence

toward living personalities whom they saw as both helpful and harmful to their own interests.

Reminiscent of his earlier point that dreams reveal submergent attitudes rejected in waking life, Fortune referred to Manus dreams as showcasing "a deeper attitude" of distaste toward one's own protector ghost, who on the surface was honored as benevolent. In this connection, one man told Fortune that he "dreamt of his Sir Ghost saying to another, 'Now let's go kill a good man,' and both laughed at the project" (Fortune 1935, 21). Fortune expected to find ambivalent and complex attitudes in individuals toward hegemonic dogma and decorum.

For the Manus, something seen in a dream was a real occurrence, so this was a revelation of hidden truth, confirming an air of suspicion that Sir Ghosts are not to be trusted. However, this did not contradict the belief that a Sir Ghost could also protect: "Manus children are not subjected to religious pressure. Faith and belief are taken for granted" (Fortune 1935, 5). This seems a far cry from an agnostic pacifist's struggles with God-and-country militaristic rhetoric in New Zealand during the Great War. Deeper ambivalences of this sort may simply not have come to Fortune's attention during his stay among the Manus.

Another point of religious uncertainty explored by Fortune among the Manus is their beliefs surrounding the causes of death. Sins of the living could motivate a judgmental Sir Ghost to punish the household with illness, and if the sin was not confessed and reparations paid, death of a member might result:

> In this way popular opinion becomes standardised, and sin is generally stressed as the cause of death, mortal sin, not ghostly malice, although individual oracles are continually making individual exceptions to try to save sinners' faces, and their own faces also. (Fortune 1935, 24; see also p. 56)

So here are ambivalences over the ways one assigns cause and effect for others', as opposed to one's own, matters. Fortune was clearly aware of the rough spots and inconsistencies in both his own and Manus models of their society, though he did not explore these issues through intimate dream analysis.

Nevertheless, Fortune's attention was firmly fixed on ambivalent beliefs among the Manus, as still another example shows. He reported that the Manus incompletely borrowed religious and magical beliefs of the neighboring inland Usiai people, including notions of "*tchinal* . . . mischievous land ogres . . . [and] magical familiars of the land dwellers of the Great

Admiralty, the Usiai" (Fortune 1935, 60). While the Usiai held these beings in earnest regard, the Manus considered them ridiculous characters and declared their disbelief. Yet

> in cases of serious illness, the Manus make use of *tchinal* derived exorcism of *tchinal* derived black magic. This use is generally secondary to the use of the customs of the Sir Ghost and ghost cult in order of trial, an order that is also an order of faith. The extraordinary thing, considering the legends, is that there is any place at all for the *tchinal* derived magic. (Fortune 1935: 60–61)

Here Fortune identified beliefs and practices that were explicitly denied or ridiculed under normal circumstances, possibly because of their foreign source and challenge to local tradition. Fortune described this ambivalence in terms of conflicting practices, turned to as a last resort. Such moments of desperation reveal (or produce) beliefs and attitudes that are otherwise submergent or denied. Fortune did not, however, explore these matters theoretically for his Manus ethnography as he did in *The Mind in Sleep*.

Finally, Fortune (1935, 254, 264) mentions the use of dreams by Usiai seers employed by the Manus as diagnosticians. Noting that for the Manus dreams represented accurate visions that might cause interpersonal conflicts, Fortune did not analyze them in terms he had laid out in his dream book.

Fortune's last book, *Arapesh* (1942), focuses on descriptive linguistics, supplemented with Arapesh texts and literal translations. This monograph reveals Fortune's remarkable skill, not only as an ethnographer, but also as a linguist. He does not deal with the problem of dreaming and cultural ambivalence, evidently because his efforts focused on other problems. However, in his 1939 article, "Arapesh Warfare," Fortune does take seriously the problem of reconciling individual and collective goals, to which he had attributed the evolutionary origin of dreaming in *The Mind in Sleep*:

> A balance was struck between individual values and collective values. . . . A war was promoted by individual initiative in the first instance, when one man coveted another man's wife. . . . The woman had to be the wife of a man of a foreign locality. She had first to be seduced and to be found willing to run away from her husband. Her seducer had to possess the support of his clan, moiety, and locality in arranging for her elopement to himself. (Fortune 1939: 26–27)

It would not do to stir up fights within one's own group. Moreover, to force a foreign woman to enter her husband's group as a bride would be, in Arapesh belief, to court her husband's death by sorcery. While Fortune depicted Arapesh individuals as needing to confront their sometimes conflicting egocentric and sociocentric desires, he did not turn to Arapesh dreams as a window on this dynamic.

In the same article, Fortune challenged Mead's ([1935] 2001) generalizations that Arapesh are profoundly nonviolent, lack warfare, and select "a *maternal* temperament, placid and domestic in its implications, both for men and women" (Fortune 1939, 36). Fortune's evidence is compelling, based on Arapesh narratives, transcribed and translated with great linguistic skill (Roscoe 2003).

In his ethnographies, Fortune portrayed people as changeable individuals, working within their social systems to balance personal and collective goals, which are easily at odds.

Fortune's Resistance to Stereotyping

Retrospectives on early work of the culture and personality school demonstrate that researchers' personalities, concerns, and interpersonal relations shaped their personified depictions of societies (Dobrin and Bashkow n.d). Fortune's early study of dreams reveals a distaste for stereotyping people and groups. His intellectual position was that individuals, embedded in dynamic social life, are comprised of multiple, changing attitudes that are shaped by an ongoing internal dialog. When awake, this internal dialog is based on logical connections and spatial contiguities, but when dreaming, the inner discourse is based on affective association, in which emotional connections have precedence. Fortune argued that an individual's cultural repertoire exists in two forms that are dynamic and sometimes contradictory: (1) logical-waking, which is dominant and socially attuned, and (2) affective-dreaming, which is recessive and egocentrically attuned. While he did not make it his business as an ethnographer to trace out these processes in detail, it is possible that this sophisticated position mitigated against his adopting the stereotyping excesses that marred the early culture and personality school's otherwise valuable achievements. Most particularly, Fortune's temperament and intellectual position, and not merely his resentment as a spurned husband, led him to reject two of Margaret Mead's formulations: her unpublished "squares" or fourfold personality typing (Banner 2003: 326–33; Sullivan 2004; Thomas 2009) and her generalized gender types in *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* ([1935] 2001).

Mead's squares typology comprised four personality types labeled Northerner, Southerner, Turk, and fey, that one might simplistically gloss as egocentric, sociocentric, domineering, and nurturant, respectively. It was born in the famous conversations among Fortune, Mead, and Bateson in the Sepik field of New Guinea in 1933, at the same time as an intense flirtation developed between Mead (Fortune's wife) and Bateson. This certainly would have made for bad affective associations in Fortune's mind, probably both in waking and in sleep. Beyond this, the characteristics of the model would make it anathema to his assumptions and preferences, carefully and logically worked out in researching his dream book.

Fortune realized that the squares system's classifications were subjective and bad science when Mead changed her classifications of particular people depending on the health of her relationships with them. In the intense emotions and "tropo" psychology that gripped the group in the oppressive Sepik heat, Fortune struck Mead, following which she miscarried (Banner 2003: 335–6). In her understandable anger, Mead labeled Fortune with negatively valued, masculine terms from the squares model like possessive, jealous, and aggressive. Fortune's behavior at the time doubtless reflected consternation over the appearance of a charming rival who, in apparent collusion with his wife, threatened his marriage.

Caroline Thomas (2009, 307) quotes one of Fortune's letters of 1934 in which he wrote that when Mead labeled him a sadistic "Northerner," he felt himself not only negatively judged, but also the victim of what anthropologists now call "othering." I suspect Fortune's theory of the changing, conflicted individual vis-à-vis social pressure, and his stance against smug nationalism, would have biased him against the squares model, even had it not been used as a weapon against him.

After Fortune's marriage to Mead ended, Mead published her influential and groundbreaking *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (Mead [1935] 2001). As Gerald Sullivan has pointed out, the idealized gender types Mead identified in the perfectly contrasting Arapesh, Mundugummor, and Tchambuli correspond to her squares types:

> Mead and Bateson used the same system of categories to compare various societies; hence the ethos of each of the societies mentioned in *Sex and Temperament* should be understood as a representation of one or more of Mead and Bateson's types. The men and women of the Arapesh generally exemplified the maternal, or Southern, position as those of the Mundugumor generally exemplified the paternal, or Northern position. Tchambuli women were usually Turks; Tchambuli men were most often a variation on feys. (Sullivan 2004, 195)

Unsurprisingly, then, Fortune was among the published critics of *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*. He wrote, somewhat awkwardly:

> Although the theory of Arapesh social culture having the one, uniform tendency, so called maternal, remains a hypothetical creation, it is not proper to assume that the Arapesh must be conceived either in terms of that hypothesis, or in terms of alternative hypothesis. It is better to make no hypotheses. (Fortune 1939, 37)

Fortune's intellectual style shines through in his attack on Mead's generalized depiction of Arapesh personality. In Mead's writing on the Arapesh, in spite of rich description, she tended to rhetorically use idealized scenarios as though they were data, and made strong generalizations even when her own data contradicted these (Lohmann 2004, 112). Fortune criticized the accuracy of such blanket generalizations, and in the lines that follow, drew on specific data to support a more flexible picture of Arapesh culture-in-practice.

Though Fortune and others have pointed to Mead's tendency to ride roughshod over the details, Mead's central point in *Sex and Temperament*, that gender is not determined by sex alone, stands as a monumental achievement in anthropology (Lipset 2003). But Fortune's aversion to an etic, generalized picture of the cultures of both groups and individuals is clear. Lise Dobrin and Ira Bashkow (2006, 146) have shown that in comparison to Mead, Fortune exhibited an emic, empathetic, and particularist approach, and generally eschewed subordinating ethnographic data to theoretical frameworks.

Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* ([1934] 1953) inspired the intense discussions within the Sepik love triangle. While the book is a towering achievement in anthropology, it problematically likened cultures to individual personalities. Among the difficulties with early culture and personality studies was the tendency to reify cultures and stereotype cultural configurations. Ironically, Benedict used Fortune's ethnography of Dobu as one of her exemplars. Susanne Kuehling (2005: 136–7) studied Dobu seventy years after Fortune and critiques his account, but calls Benedict's boiled down version of Dobuan paranoia a "travesty." Thomas (2009) has confirmed that in private, Fortune himself was similarly critical of Benedict's use of his materials. Fortune's pre-Mead dream-life and self-analyses indicate that before his fateful association with Mead, Benedict, and Bateson, he tended not to think of either individuals or groups in terms of

stereotypes, but rather saw them as continually learning and changing, and holding multiple and contradictory views simultaneously.

Conclusion

Reo Franklin Fortune was a complex, changing personality whose early psychological theorizing lent subtlety to his subsequent ethnographic work. However, he did not treat his theory of dreaming as a set of hypotheses to be tested in the ethnographic field. Fortune's theory of cultural ambivalence and his personality are consistent with his rejection of blanket characterizations of people and peoples.

Fortune's psychological theory of dreaming, though dated and imperfect, is a provocative and sophisticated anthropological theory of cultural ambivalence. Among its valuable implications is the point that the dynamic cycling of culture in individuals takes place in both waking and dreaming consciousness, as well as in the groggy zones in between. Fortune's *Mind in Sleep* deserves a second chance among contemporary psychological anthropologists.

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