REDISCOVERING REO: REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL CAREER OF REO FRANKLIN FORTUNE

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Reo Fortune's legacy to anthropology has been overshadowed by his relationships with friends and colleagues, many of whom came to see him as difficult. Professional differences and personality clashes pervaded his career. Despite this, he was once regarded as the foremost anthropologist of his era. Fortune's contribution to anthropology is reflected in his major publications and journal articles that illustrate the diversity and complexity of his fieldwork.

Introduction

Reo Franklin Fortune's position in anthropology is problematic. Despite his proximity to important figures in anthropology during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, he never attained the status accorded many of his peers. Fortune was unsuccessful in securing a permanent academic position until 1947, when he was appointed to the University of Cambridge, where he remained until retirement in 1971. Yet, though established in an academic institution, his problematic relationships with colleagues and students marginalized him in terms of recognition. Fortune's difficulty in public speaking and his erratic approach to teaching exacerbated his liminality so that he always remained on the fringes of greatness.

There are three reasons why Fortune deserves to be reconsidered. First, he was an immensely productive writer with four books in eight years: between 1927 and 1935, he published a work on dreams and three

Pacific Studies, Vol. 32, Nos. 2/3—June/Sept. 2009

ethnographies of which, perhaps, his most famous are *Sorcerers of Dobu* (1932c) and *Manus Religion* (1935) (see also Lohmann 2009). Second, he was a New Zealander—one of many, including Diamond Jenness, Raymond Firth, and Te Rangihiroa (Peter Buck)—who informed anthropology during the early part of the twentieth century. However, Fortune lacked the institutional base that Jenness achieved in Canada, Firth in London, and Te Rangihiroa at Hawai'i and Yale. Third, Fortune was a central figure in anthropology during the interwar years of 1926–1939 because of his strong links to both American and British anthropological traditions. He was trained by some of the most significant figures in British social anthropology. These included Alfred Cort Haddon, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown. His marriage to Margaret Mead and his connections to Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, and Gregory Bateson helped Fortune establish ties with those who were central to anthropology in both Britain and the United States at that time.

The published literature about Reo Fortune's life is small. There are a few obituaries (Gathercole 1980; Lawrence 1980; Young 1980); a chapter by his niece, Ann McLean, in a book about early anthropology in the Papua New Guinea highlands (Hays 1992); and Wardle's (2004) entry in the *Biographical Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropologists* (Amit 2004). However, the only material of substance published since his death exists in works about Mead, Benedict, and Bateson (Banner 2003; Caffrey 1989; Grosskurth 1988; Howard 1984; Lapsley 1999; Lipset 1980; Modell 1983) and in Mead's own writings, such as *Blackberry Winter* (1972) and *Letters from the Field 1925–1975* (1977). The Australian historian Geoffrey Gray (1999) recounts Fortune's relationship with John Hubert Plunkett Murray (later Sir), the lieutenant governor of Papua from 1906 to 1941. Fortune conducted his first fieldwork on Dobu in 1927–1928 and courted controversy by refusing to meet with Murray in the field. The result was an exchange of letters that ended with Murray distrusting most anthropologists and Fortune being labeled a troublemaker. Francoise Héritier (1999), writing on incest, attributes comments to Fortune that were actually made by Mead. Most contemporary literature either ignores or sees Fortune as an adjunct of Mead. Fortune's relationship with Mead, Benedict, and Bateson has been well documented in the literature, while his relationships with others, also influenced to some extent by these three, have not (Banner 2003; Howard 1984; Lapsley 1999; see also Lohmann 2009; Molloy 2009; Sullivan 2004). This paper, using material from archival sources, is one interpretation of Fortune's relations with others within the context of his professional career.

Fortune's interpersonal relationships were at times stretched to breaking points. His marriage to Mead foundered, and his friendships with colleagues and mentors were often strained. Through gossip and misunderstandings, his reputation as "difficult" became accepted as truth. However, Peter Worsley and Peter Gathercole, who knew him as a colleague and mentor, spoke fondly of Fortune, describing him as a breath of fresh air, affable, and charming (Worsley 1989; Gathercole, pers. comm., December 8, 2003).

I shall begin with an overview of Fortune's life and then relate various relationships that illustrate changing perceptions of Fortune as a friend and colleague and conclude with comments on his legacy to anthropology.

Biographical Notes

Reo Franklin Fortune was born in Coromandel, New Zealand, on March 27, 1903, and died in Cambridge, England, on November 25, 1979. He was awarded his MA with first-class honors from Victoria University College in 1925 for a thesis titled "Dream Problems." In 1926, he won a traveling scholarship that enabled him to travel to England to continue his studies at the University of Cambridge. The following year, he published his first book, *The Mind in Sleep* (1927b); completed his thesis for the diploma in anthropology; and commenced his first fieldwork—on the Island of Tewera in the D'Entrecasteux Archipelago off the coast of Papua. In 1928, Fortune married Mead, and over the next five years they conducted research in five different cultures until their marriage broke down while they conducted research in the Sepik area of New Guinea. In 1932, Fortune published *Sorcerers of Dobu* and *Omaha Secret Societies* along with an article in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* on incest (1932a), and in 1933 he applied unsuccessfully for the chair of anthropology at the University of Sydney. In 1934, he applied for various positions, including the chair in sociology at Cambridge, again unsuccessfully, and returned to New Guinea in 1935. Fortune's ethnography *Manus Religion* was published this same year, and in 1936 he and Mead were divorced. In the years following the divorce, Fortune married his former love, Eileen Pope. He also held various academic and governmental positions: at Lingnan University, China (1937–1939); Toledo, Ohio (1940–1941); Toronto (1941–1943); government anthropologist to Burma (1946–1947); and, finally, lecturer at the University of Cambridge (1947–1970), where he remained until his death in 1979. Fortune was to publish only one more book during his lifetime, *Arapesh* (1942).

Perhaps some of the recognition Fortune craved came in 1951 when he was awarded the Rivers Medal for anthropological work in the field. This medal was instituted in 1923 in honor of William Halse Rivers Rivers, a former president of the Royal Anthropological Institute who, along with Charles Seligman and A. C. Haddon, had conducted the first major anthropological field expedition to Papua and New Guinea during the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1974, Fortune was also made an honorary fellow of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania.

That Fortune came to make a career in anthropology was probably as much a result of his meeting Mead as it was with his disillusionment with the teaching of psychology at Cambridge. He found the system at Cambridge isolating. Access to a suitable area for study was difficult to obtain, as the rooms available in the laboratory of the Department of Psychology were allocated to others. He resorted to studying in the psychology library, the anthropology library, and his room. He was also without the financial means to entertain other students, which would have been useful for building his network of social and intellectual contacts. Finding the people in anthropology to be more sociable and disillusioned with psychology, he switched disciplines (Library of Congress: Margaret Mead Papers [LOC: MMP], box R4, Fortune to Mead, letter dated October 12, 1926). According to Bateson, Thomas Callan Hodson, a reader in anthropology at Cambridge, was reputed to have remarked that he [Hodson] had "rescued" Fortune from psychology and "saved him from himself" (LOC: MMP, box R2, quoted in Gregory Bateson to Mead, letter dated February 6, 1934). Anthropology also provided an introduction to Bateson, who was at that time preparing for fieldwork in the mandated territory of New Guinea. The different social, economic, and intellectual backgrounds of these two men were to be an important factor when they came together in the Sepik area of New Guinea in 1932.

First Fieldwork

Fortune's journey to the Sepik began five years earlier, when he arrived in Australia in 1927 to take up field research under the auspices of the Australian National Research Council (hereafter ANRC). He and Mead were not yet married, and functionalism was in its infancy. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (or "Brown" as he was then known) had recently arrived in Australia to take up the newly formed chair in anthropology at the University of Sydney. Radcliffe-Brown also held the position of chairman of the Committee on Anthropological Research of the ANRC—the body that determined funding for anthropological research within Australia, Papua,

and the mandated territory of New Guinea. Fortune was granted funding to conduct research in Tikopia, but Radcliffe-Brown had decided that Fortune was to go to the Gilbert Islands. Fortune declined and chose instead to go to Fergusson Island and Dobu Island in the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago. Finding Dobu contaminated by missionaries, he then chose to go to Tewera Island, about thirty nautical miles northeast of Dobu.[1]

Fortune's disagreement with Radcliffe-Brown did not stop there. Radcliffe-Brown also strongly disagreed with Fortune on anthropological issues, believing that there was no place for psychology within the anthropological framework. Fortune described Radcliffe-Brown as totally antagonistic to "(1) [Franz] Boas' influence . . . (2) Theories of first origin. (3) Psychology," distrusting of Mead on the first count and of him (Fortune) on the third (LOC: MMP, box S1, Fortune to Mead, letter dated September 19, 1927). Fortune's letters to Mead from this time indicate that they both hoped still to be "given" Tikopia, but news that Raymond Firth had also laid claim to this region ended any chance. Radcliffe-Brown was at this time also seeking an assistant for the department, and Fortune came under consideration. However, Firth got both Tikopia and the assistant position. Fortune got Dobu and, on completion of his fieldwork, Mead.

Despite Fortune's theoretical differences with Radcliffe-Brown, he came to his defence when J. H. P. Murray, the governor of Papua, took exception to a letter from Fortune. Honesty and concern for the well-being of the Dobuans led Fortune in 1928 to express himself in terms that Murray considered "deranged" but that reflected the anthropologist's distrust of colonial administrators. Fortune saw missionaries and colonial authorities as a threat to the autonomous well-being of indigenous peoples and made this clear in his correspondence with Murray. As far as Fortune was concerned, the idea of making the Islanders adhere to the "European mould of law" was quixotic as well as "the attempt to fit an impossibly resistant material into an alien mould" (National Archives of Australia [NAA] Series A518/1 Item A806/1/5; NAA, Series CRS G69 Item 16/41 Folios 1–22). Fortune was, as Gray (1999) quoted him, "[b]eing honest to my science." But the damage was done. Fortune's reputation in Australia would always be tainted by this episode. Radcliffe-Brown continued his support for Fortune throughout the 1930s, despite his earlier dispute with Murray, and praised Fortune to Mead and to A. C. Haddon. Mead and Fortune had provided hospitality to Radcliffe-Brown when he was in New York, and he wrote to Mead in 1931, saying:

> I have been reading the proof of Reo's monograph on the Omaha and am very pleased with it. Please offer him my congratulations.

> I do hope that by this time he knows that I regard him as one of the very few first-class anthropologists round the world. (LOC: MMP, box B15, Radcliffe-Brown to Mead, letter dated November 2, 1931)

Radcliffe-Brown continued by saying how Fortune had done so much better than many expected him to and how Haddon, who had been doubtful, was very pleased when informed of Boas's approval of the Omaha work. Later, Radcliffe-Brown, at the instigation of Mead, was to be instrumental in Fortune being offered a position at Lingnan University in China in 1936. Fortune at first refused, hoping to be selected for the chair at Cambridge, but when this did not eventuate, he accepted the offer in China.

Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict

In 1928, Fortune returned to New Zealand to await Mead's arrival. Their marriage took place at Auckland on October 8 before they set sail for Sydney and their joint fieldwork in Manus. However, the marriage seemed doomed even before it began. Fortune had already expressed doubts about Mead's truthfulness regarding living with her first husband, Luther Cressman. Fortune's concerns centered on how Mead had explained this to Louise Rosenblatt, her former roommate at Barnard College. Rosenblatt was also in Paris when Fortune met Mead there in 1926. He wrote,

> That however altruistic your motive its execution repelled me immeasurably . . . [and] [a]s an example of twisting things—"you'd not want to touch a divorced woman"—your interpretation of my revulsion. . . . If you refer to this further when you're with me Margaret I'll feel tempted to strangle you—Come forgiving it—or else get out—one thing or the other—thoroughly—I'll stand no further misinterpretation and unfair slight in that matter. (LOC: MMP, box S1, Fortune to Mead, letter dated April 9, 1927)

Even as she sailed for Bremen in 1927 to meet Fortune in Berlin, Mead had reservations about their relationship. Writing a conciliatory letter to Cressman one week and then another the following week—after just three days with Fortune—Mead said they had no future together at all (Banner 2003, 262; Howard 1984, 103). Mead returned to New York and filed for divorce from Cressman. Fortune, meanwhile, was completing his diploma while sailing to Sydney. He was not to see Mead for another year, and

during that time their letters were not particularly romantic in the traditional sense, instead being filled with plans for their first combined research. Mead read and critiqued Fortune's thesis for the diploma in anthropology at Cambridge. He, in turn, proofed her forthcoming book, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), and apologized for being critical. He suggested that "the redundant citation of points already made in the pages entitled 'Conclusions' is not excusable and leaves a bad taste rather than otherwise" (LOC: MMP, box S1, Fortune to Mead, letter dated August 19, 1927). Mead considered returning to Samoa (see also Tiffany 2009). However, Fortune suggested that they could go there in their own time later, "unless you prefer to work there alone—in which case I suggest waiting till I appear to appreciate you less than I appear to now" (LOC: MMP, box S1, Fortune to Mead, letter dated September 19, 1927).

Marriage to Mead gave Fortune entry to academic circles in the United States. Mead and Benedict had been instrumental in securing a fellowship for Fortune at Columbia University under Boas, where he was to complete his doctorate. His thesis was to be the first chapter of *Sorcerers of Dobu*. The correspondence between Fortune and Boas is sparse. However, Boas appears to have been sufficiently impressed with him that he recommended an extension of the fellowship and supported Fortune's future applications for funding. This resulted in *Omaha Secret Societies* (Fortune 1932b), his return to New Guinea in 1935, and eventually *Arapesh* (Fortune 1942).

More important, however, was the influence of Benedict, whose intellectual relationship with Boas ensured continued support for Fortune through the Social Science Research Council at Columbia. Fortune often turned to Benedict for assistance in finding funds. With monies secretly supplied by Mead, Benedict sought the support of Boas, usually with success.

Mead had supplied the initial funding for Fortune's trip to the Sepik. Under the guise of an anonymous donor, she had offered $3,000 to fund Fortune's research. Whether he was aware of this is not known. Mead suggested that should the matter come to light, her father would be known as "the anonymous donor" (LOC: MMP, box A4, Mead to Edward Sherwood Mead, letter dated October 16, 1930). After the marriage failed, Mead used her own money to fund research that would keep Fortune out of the United States. She used the guise of an anonymous donor, once more enlisting the assistance of Benedict and, indirectly, Boas.

Ruth Benedict was, however, the one constant in Fortune's anthropological career. While there is no indication of when Benedict and Fortune first met in person, it is probable that it was during Benedict's visit to Paris

in 1926. Their correspondence began in 1926 when Benedict wrote to Fortune expressing her pleasure in reading his article "The Psychology of Dreams" (Fortune 1926):

> It is an excellent piece of work and even I who am the merest amateur in the subject can appreciate its quality. I congratulate you heartily on it. If you were nearer than across the ocean I could have much conversation with you about it. It's stimulating. (Alexander Turnbull Library: Reo Fortune Papers [ATL: RFP], MS-Group-0923: 80-323-444, Ruth Benedict to Reo Fortune, letter dated October 25, 1926)

When Benedict wished to use the Dobuan material in her own work, she wrote to Fortune requesting permission to do so. He replied, "Of course use the Dobuan material if it's really good enough" (quoted in Mead 1959, 329; Fortune to Benedict, letter dated November 21, 1929). However, Fortune subsequently regarded the way in which his Dobuan ethnography was used as a travesty. His personal copy of *Patterns of Culture* (Benedict 1935) is heavily marked with comments. Where Benedict stated in her acknowledgments that "the chapters have been read and verified as to facts by these authorities," Fortune noted,

> Verified as to facts. What are such when misinterpreted [and] . . . the pouring of the pig's fat over one of the men of dead man's village is obviously a bit of horseplay, but Benedict is so determined that the Dobuans shall be merely dour and jealous psychopaths that she takes the perfectly straight forward statement "in this happy manner the locality pulls together its forces when death strikes it," and interprets it as a piece of irony. (ATL: RFP 80-323-078, quoted from Fortune's annotated copy Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* 1935)

Fortune remained silent and never publicly challenged Benedict on her use of the Dobuan material. Several years later, when a French edition of *Patterns of Culture* was being prepared, he did write to her, "I am not happy about your *Patterns of Culture* thesis. The use of the Dobuan negatives is conditional in my not being cited in support of it in any way" (LOC: MMP, box R5, Fortune to Benedict, letter dated June 24, 1948).[2]

Benedict encouraged Fortune to continue writing while she edited and arranged for the publication of all his major anthropological works. It was also Benedict who passed Fortune's doctoral thesis at Columbia in 1932.

She ensured that he had funds whenever possible and appears to have understood Fortune in a way that few others did. She cared greatly for him, even after his marriage to Mead ended. Perhaps it was her own relationship with Mead that allowed her to empathize with Fortune. After all, they had both loved and lost the same woman who, while professing her love for them, seemed to regard them more as acquisitions. Fortune confided in Benedict. It was to her that he related his feelings regarding Mead.

In perhaps the only account, from his perspective, of what happened in the Sepik, Fortune wrote to Benedict in 1934,

> I don't know much of what you think of me after Margaret's done with talking of me. Margaret's always represented me as butting into her affairs too much and spoiling them, as you probably know. So that it was high time I stood aside. What I regret is that I was not in a position to stand aside easily and politely—not on the Sepik River. (LOC: MMP, box R5, Fortune to Benedict, letter dated as "end of October" 1934)

Because there was £250 invested in new field equipment and charges in reaching their field site, Fortune felt that he could not just up and leave and, more so, that he could not leave alone. Mead had become hysterical, blaming all her "failed" relationships on Fortune. And then came the "Race" business (LOC: MMP, box R5, quoted in Fortune to Benedict, letter dated as "end of October" 1934):

> I was a member of an alien Race to you, Luther [Cressman], G[regory Bateson], and Margaret—I being called Northern, sadistic etc. and you all Southern and masochistic; a lot of stuff about sex perversions, horoscopy, [*sic*] twins (we are all twins with one twin absorbed into the umbilical cord of our births), analysis of the Holy Family in Race, Margaret sorting out medicine chest into bottles of medicine for one race and bottles for another race for several days. (LOC: MMP, box R5, Fortune to Benedict, letter dated as "end of October" 1934)

Fortune apparently tried to get the key to the medicine chest from Mead but failed despite the fact that he had been suffering from malaria for ten days. Meanwhile, Mead continued "sorting medicines insanely and having hot baths every half hour lest she die—a fear she had." Fortune also remarked that he had retained "one or two documents of the hysteria . . . they reveal the form of the stuff tho' little of the intensity or of the feeling"

(LOC: MMP, box R5, Fortune to Benedict, letter dated as "end of October" 1934). Fortune described abandoning the camp and how Bateson had decided to come with them, believing that Fortune was a danger to Mead. According to Fortune, the boat journey from New Guinea was quiet and reasonably peaceful until they approached Sydney, whereupon Mead once again lashed out at him, realizing that their arrival in Sydney could mean her losing Bateson. Fortune was deeply hurt but "did what seemed right to me . . . which doesn't alter the fact that I'm fond of her, care about her—in a way" (LOC: MMP, box R5, Fortune to Benedict, letter dated as "end of October" 1934).

When Mead left Fortune in Sydney in 1933 and returned to the United States via New Zealand, she did so with the knowledge that she would always remain vulnerable to criticism from Fortune, whether it was through published material or verbal reports. By going to New Zealand, she was able to present her side of the story to Fortune's family, but three years later, when Fortune himself returned to New Zealand, his version of events differed considerably from hers. Fortune's sister-in-law, Shirley, wrote to Mead in 1936 saying, "I suppose very naturally, and you will understand this better than I do, the two accounts don't tally" (LOC: MMP, box B9, Shirley Fortune to Mead, letter dated August 26, 1936).

Mead was apparently angry that Shirley had questioned her version of why she had left Fortune. In response, she wanted Shirley to know that she could make or break Fortune's career. Although she did not explicitly say that she would stop assisting Fortune, the inference is there. Mead claimed that she was the only person who could help Fortune: he "has owed his whole scientific support to wires that I have been able to pull" (LOC: MMP, box B9, Mead to Shirley Fortune, letter dated October 3, 1936). Mead continued,

> I have some feeling that your letter is based partly on a feeling that I lied to you, in order to set myself in a good light and Reo in a bad one. What possible use that could have been to me seems difficult to discover. I went to New Zealand because Reo said he wouldn't go there and have to explain why I hadn't come. It meant leaving Sydney earlier than necessary and it meant expending a lot of money and suffering considerable retrospective misery, to make that stop in New Zealand. (LOC: MMP, box B9, Mead to Shirley Fortune, letter dated October 3, 1936)

After their marriage ended, Mead wrote to Fortune's brother, Barter,

> If he should want to marry he will probably have to take up some other and related occupation—like teaching psychology for instance. Unless he should marry Dorothy Anabaldi [*sic*]. Doesn't she inherit a farm when her father dies? (LOC: MMP, box R5, Mead to Barter Fortune, letter dated July 8, 1935)

Dorothea Arnaboldi was in fact a cousin of Fortune, and the family had expected that she and Reo would marry. However, Fortune backed out because of a perceived problem with consanguinity. "He felt that they were too closely related to risk having children" (Melda Brunette [Fortune's niece], pers. comm., April 14, 2007).

In order to protect herself, Mead utilized her network of friends and colleagues to ensure that Reo Fortune remained as far away as possible. She wrote to Shirley Fortune, "There is not one single person with any power in the anthropological world who is going to try to get Reo a job, or get his stuff published, unless I push them" (LOC: MMP, box B9, Mead to Shirley Fortune, letter dated October 3, 1936). Fortune, in turn, wanted nothing further to do with Mead, while she maintained her belief that the theory of the squares, which she had devised in the Sepik, was, in fact, scientific.[3]

The squares theory was based on the four points of the compass, each sector being representative of a different temperament (see also Sullivan 2004). For example, northerners were cold, domineering, and sadistic; southerners were hot, submissive, and masochistic. Mead had placed Fortune in the North and herself and Bateson in the South. Fortune repudiated this, calling it dishonest. It was the way in which Mead used the squares theory that possibly hurt him the most. Initially, Fortune thought that Mead had lost her mind, that the events in the Sepik were brought about by figments of her imagination, and he hoped that when they returned to civilization, she would once more be the Margaret he knew and loved. He thought that giving her space and time to come to her senses would resolve their conflict. But when he attacked her "science" in his letters to her, Mead could not see that he honestly saw it as "bad science" and took it as a personal assault.

Life after Margaret Mead

Fortune was to remain in Sydney for some time after Mead left in 1933, undecided as to where he might go next. Most of his friends in Australia were also Mead's friends, and their correspondence clearly shows that of the two, Mead appears to have been the more charismatic. Caroline

Tennant Kelly had befriended Fortune on his first stop in Sydney, so it was only natural for him to introduce Mead to her. After the events in the Sepik, Mead was to make full use of this friendship by using Kelly as her intermediary in securing information about what, where, and when Fortune was doing. If he coughed or appeared distracted, Kelly wrote dutiful letters to Mead advising her of what was happening. In return, Mead, requesting absolute secrecy, secured Kelly's cooperation in securing signatures for the divorce papers. In addition, little of what was happening in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney escaped her knowledge. All comings and goings were duly reported back to Mead. Having been persuaded of the validity of "the squares," Kelly began to categorize all around her accordingly, but she also had doubts. She wrote to Mead, "You know Margaret I have spasms of absolute pro Reo-ism. . . . Is it that we have created a Reo of our imaginings or is it that we become fogged when we try to penetrate the Northern Square? (LOC: MMP, box B9, Caroline Kelly to Margaret Mead, undated letter, ca. May 1934).

While Benedict encouraged Fortune to continue researching and writing in the years immediately after his separation and divorce from Mead, she discouraged him from returning to the United States. When Fortune enquired about positions at Columbia and Duke, Mead wrote saying that money was unavailable and that positions were hard to find (LOC: MMP, box R4, Margaret Mead to Reo Fortune, letter dated May 14, 1934). The United States was in the middle of the Great Depression, and it was also Mead's desire to keep Fortune as far away as possible. As stated previously, Mead used her own money and Benedict's help to secure a grant that would see Fortune return to New Guinea; this grant was an extension of project 46, "Research in New Guinea." In a report to the Council for Research in the Social Sciences (CRSS), Boas stated, "In 1934 on his second field trip he was the first anthropologist to go into the newly opened, not yet pacified 'Gold fields' region of New Guinea. A Major part of his monograph on the Purari tribe has been turned in to the Department" (Columbia University Archives [CUA]: CRSS 1925–1968, box 6, folder 46, Professor Franz Boas, Research in New Guinea). Presumably, this was the Kamano material that Benedict had read but rejected: "It would be a mistake to publish these three slight chapters on Purari as a separate publication. The whole detailed monograph should appear at once and make all the material available together" (LOC: MMP, box S1, Benedict to Fortune, letter dated December 1, 1936). Although Fortune was to send Benedict a revision of this material including diagrams of the material culture (clothing and weapons), it too was returned to him with Benedict's

note saying, "I shall be very glad to have the completed and edited manuscript whenever you get it done" (LOC: MMP, box R5, Benedict to Fortune, letter dated May 7, 1940).

Unfortunately, Fortune never completed the Kamano manuscript. His attention had now been taken by a teaching position in China, a new wife, and new fieldwork among the Yao of southern China. However, when he sought funding while in China, he turned once again to Benedict, who attempted to have his previous grant (project 46) extended. In her memorandum to the CRSS, Benedict recommended that $1,000 be appropriated "to be used in financing ethnological study of Chinese village communities" (CUA: CRSS, Benedict to the CRSS, memorandum dated May 10, 1937). However, when the matter was brought before the members of the Committee on Anthropology and Sociology at the CRSS, only Boas gave his support. Benedict had to find another source. However, the Japanese invasion of China intervened in any plans Fortune had for research, and he was forced to flee.

In 1941, Benedict wrote to Alfred L. Kroeber,

> I'd do a lot to save Reo, but it would have to be out of my own pocket for he has fallen down badly on writing up his last two-years field trip which was arranged for him under Columbia's auspices, and I would not feel I could urge any Foundation to risk write-up money even if I knew a Foundation which might give it. (Bancroft Library [BANC]: MSS, CU23, box 33, Benedict to Kroeber, letter dated August 6, 1941)

Benedict referred here to the Kamano material, which Fortune seems to have abandoned at this point in his career. Perhaps more important, throughout the difficult years following his separation and divorce from Mead, Benedict remained his friend, even when Fortune thought that she was his enemy and accused her of being an agent of Mead and Bateson. In 1937, Fortune wrote to Benedict,

> It might occur also to a friend of mine—of any reality—that I do not wish to be reported upon to Margaret Mead and Bateson—however curious they may be—that I regard their curiosity into my state of mind, doings etc. as impertinent and mean. . . . I would prefer your friendship myself. (LOC: MMP, box R5, Fortune to Benedict, letter dated April 28, 1937)

Paramount to Fortune's relationships were loyalty and honesty, and these qualities had been sorely tested with events in the Sepik.

On his return to England in 1933, Fortune attended Malinowski's seminar series. Fortune also presented a paper at Cambridge that Bateson dutifully reported back to Mead. Fortune's (1934) unpublished manuscript "A Critical Anthropology," which posed the question "where, and to what extent, anthropologists should stand behind native cultures, push their claims and throw his [*sic*] personal influence into their championship" was, perhaps, a reflection on his encounter with J. H. P. Murray in New Guinea and the repercussions that followed from this. Malinowski provided the means for Fortune to live in London, lending him money that Fortune repaid from his living expenses that came with grant monies (ATL: RFP, MS-Group-0923, Malinowski to Fortune, letter dated October 20, 1938). Further, when Fortune applied in 1934 for a position as assistant in ethnology at the Colombo Museum in Ceylon, he asked Malinowski to provide support for his application. Malinowski wrote a glowing letter of recommendation for both Fortune and Ralph Piddington but concluded by backing Piddington, who was one of his own doctoral students. Of Fortune, Malinowski wrote,

> Dr. Fortune is a brilliant young anthropologist who most likely will make for himself a career at one of the world's great universities, and whose ambitions are set that way. Even if you could secure his services, I should be afraid that any time he might be lured away by some outside call. . . . I am going to support him as strongly as I can for the Professorship at Cambridge or Oxford. (London School of Economics, Bronislaw Malinowski Papers [LSE: BMP], box Malinowski/7/9, Malinowski to the [unnamed] Director of the Colombo Museum, letter dated February 4, 1936)

However, when it came time to throw his support behind Fortune for the Cambridge chair in 1937, Malinowski wrote to A. C. Haddon, asking him to take up the task, as two of Malinowski's former students, Raymond Firth and Audrey Richards, had already asked Malinowski to support them for the same position. Nevertheless, Malinowski did write Fortune a general letter of recommendation at some stage in which he stated, "Theoretically, Dr Fortune has shown in his many articles an originality of outlook which promises to place him among those who will build the anthropology of the future" (LSE: BMP, Malinowski/7/22, Malinowski, Letter of Reference for Reo Fortune, undated [ca. 1937]).[4]

Between 1933 and 1937, Fortune applied for numerous positions—in anthropology at Sydney, Cairo, Ceylon, and Cambridge and in psychology

at both Victoria and Canterbury University Colleges in New Zealand. Despite seemingly glowing references, he remained unsuccessful and finally accepted a position at Lingnan University in China that he had previously declined, much to Mead's chagrin. As mentioned earlier, Mead had interceded with Radcliffe-Brown in an attempt to secure a position for Fortune in China. This position was the result. He settled in well at Lingnan (1937–1939) and may have remained there longer had not war broken out, making it impossible to continue.

But where was he to go? Fortune wrote to Malinowski, who suggested that he would be better served by contacting Kroeber in California. However, American universities, post-Depression and nervous of an impending war, had few positions to offer. On his arrival in California, Fortune stayed at the University of California, Berkeley, for some weeks, attending seminars and giving one or two informal talks to students before eventually securing a position at the University of Toledo, Ohio, in 1941. Although this position was part time, he had hopes of it becoming something more. Unfortunately, ignoring the advice of Kroeber that publication of his papers "Social Forms and their Biological Basis" (Fortune 1941a, 1941b) would offend the Puritan sensibilities of midwesterners, Fortune went ahead and published, thereby effectively ending any chances of continued employment at Toledo (BANC: MSS, CU23, Fortune to Kroeber, letter dated July 4, 1945).

The published versions of the articles were marked "R. F. Fortune, Toledo," without naming the university, as its authorities had requested he remove the name of the university from the papers. These two papers, recorded as "current issues" in the *American Ethnological Review*, referred to (1) codes of sexual conditioning among tribes in New Guinea, comparing patrilineal societies with matrilineal ones, and (2) the relationship between war and diet. In the former, Fortune stated, "Where inheritance, succession and descent inhere in the male line, orgasm of the clitoris is tabooed and sex fore—play and after—play directed to that end is also tabooed," whereas in the matrilineal group, these things were regarded as a common part of sexual relations (Fortune 1941a, 571). In simple terms, the biological needs of the male in patrilineal societies take precedence over the needs of females to the extent that female satisfaction is tabooed, thereby establishing a code of behavior conditioned in a similar manner to Pavlov's dogs. Likewise, the reverse is true of matrilineal societies.

In his latter paper, Fortune (1941b) suggests how the type of diet conditions the stomach and gut in such a way as to determine social responses to war and peace. Those who maintain a light diet with a high metabolism indulge in a fast alternation between war and peace, whereas those whose

diet is heavy and with a slow metabolism have a slower alternation between war and peace. In both papers, the essence is the link between biological conditioning and social conditioning. However, it was the discussion of sexual mores rather than the ideas behind it that was deemed offensive to university officials in particular and to midwesterners in general.

It was also at this time that Fortune traveled around the Midwest attending conferences, ostensibly without invitation, and according to Benedict "had gone off on tangents in anthropological arguments that had left them thinking he was probably deranged" (LOC: MMP, box B1, Benedict to Mead, letter dated July 20, 1941).

Fortune next moved to Toronto, where he found himself in the Department of Anthropology with Thomas McIlwraith and Charles William Merton Hart. Hart and, presumably, McIlwraith were no strangers to Fortune, with Hart having been the subject of a rather scathing unpublished letter from Fortune to the editor of *Man* in which he questioned Hart's conception of anthropology (LOC: MMP, box R4, Fortune to the Editor of *Man*, letter dated September 8, 1932). Hart had written a review of Mead's *Growing Up in New Guinea* in which he wondered "whether [Dr. Mead] can be called an anthropologist at all" (Hart 1932, 146) and Fortune had sprung to her defense. But here, as in Toledo, Fortune's controversial writing proved to be problematic. His article "Arapesh Maternity" published in *Nature* (Fortune 1943) outraged McIlwraith and Hart, but Fortune failed to understand why. Fortune wrote to his wife, Eileen,

> I got another copy of the August 7, 1943 number in which I published an article those brainless sops at Toronto raised a storm in a tea-cup about. On re-reading it I see nothing in the article to justify their behaviour. It was I'm certain largely malicious. (ATL: RFP MS-Group-09213, Reo Fortune to Eileen Fortune, letter dated 1945)

This article may have been only a part of the problem. Edmund Carpenter, who was also at Toronto around this time, recalled asking McIlwraith whether it was true that Fortune had been fired for suggesting to his mainly female class "that the unique human feature of face-to-face sexual intercourse might have influenced human development" (Carpenter, quoted in Howard 1984, 267). McIlwraith was reported to have agreed in the affirmative. Anecdotal evidence also tells that Fortune challenged McIlwraith to a duel with weapons of his choice from the museum's collection or, perhaps more seriously, chased McIlwraith around the museum with a tomahawk

(Levin, Avrith, and Barrett 1984). It is more likely that Fortune challenged McIlwraith to identify weapons in the collection, but whatever had happened, Fortune became extremely uncomfortable remaining in a department where he no longer felt welcome. Fortune took refuge by enlisting in the Canadian armed forces and served as a Royal Canadian Auxiliary Forces War Services supervisor in England from 1943 to 1945.

By the end of World War II, Fortune was once again jobless and accepted the position as government anthropologist to Burma. His time there was to be short, as in 1947 he finally achieved a permanent position at Cambridge. A colleague from the same department, Glyn Daniel (1986: 199–200), in his autobiography *Some Small Harvest*, described Fortune's appointment as "a disastrous appointment and we suffered as a result for many years." In the beginning, Fortune felt that he was doing well. He received an MA from Cambridge shortly after his arrival as well as a letter from President Score at SouthWestern University of Texas with prospects for a job there in the future (ATL: RFP MS-Group-0923, Reo Fortune to Eileen Fortune, letter dated December 10, 1947). However, Score died in 1949, and no further offer was made from SouthWestern. Fortune's wife, Eileen, had yet to join him in England, and his letters to her indicate that he felt confident in his new role. However, his self-confidence and his relations with Raymond Firth were to be sorely tested by what Fortune saw as Firth's arbitrary interference between a student and his supervisor.

Peter Lawrence had applied for funding through the Australian National University (ANU) to conduct fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, and it was Firth who had conducted the interview as ANU's London representative. Firth agreed that Lawrence should receive the fellowship and that Fortune should be appointed his supervisor. The dispute that ensued between Firth and Fortune was acrimonious and changed their relationship, with Fortune feeling demeaned and his authority irreparably undermined by Firth's interference. Fortune had wanted Lawrence to conduct research in the highlands of New Guinea, whereas Firth, determined that the Madang area would be cheaper and more accessible for Lawrence. Firth had also provided Lawrence with a rail pass to enable him to attend lectures at the London School of Economics. Fortune interpreted this as being made a condition for funding and accused Firth of trying to poach students. Firth also preferred to take advice from the Australian anthropologist Ian Hogbin, who had just returned from New Guinea. Fortune saw this as a slight, suggesting that his knowledge of New Guinea was outdated. The authorities at ANU sided with Firth and even went so far as to make further funding for Lawrence conditional on Firth approving Lawrence's progress. Although Fortune did eventually attempt to proffer an olive branch, it was too little,

too late (London School of Economics: Raymond William Firth Papers [LSE: RFP], Folder 312, Reo F. Fortune).

In 1954, Fortune applied for the new chair of African studies at Rhodesia University College. Firth was named as a referee and responded generously in his official reply, praising Fortune's intelligence and contribution to anthropology, but expressed doubt on his organizing abilities and lack of administrative experience. In a personal note to Walter Adams, secretary of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies, Firth was more explicit, saying,

> I have not felt that I could open my mind fully because some years ago I suffered from one of his obsessive notions and our relationship has never got back on the old footing. Indeed I am a bit surprised that he gave me as a reference. I do not think I am alone in this. McIlwraith of Toronto, and [E. E.] Evans-Pritchard [of Oxford] have both had something of the same trouble. I think there is no doubt that Fortune, in all ordinary matters a reasonable man, is inclined at times to fly off the handle if he thinks he has not had his due. . . . I think you should consult privately a man like [Isaac] Schapera, who, as far as I know, has never been involved. (LSE: RFP, Box Firth/8/30, Firth to Walter Adams, letter dated October 29, 1954)

There is no doubt that Fortune had difficulty in coherently expressing his ideas. Bateson recalls that "the curious zigzag violent progression of Reo's mind—talking nonsense this way and that with all the time a sound idea unexpressed behind it all and insisting on his nonsense till finally the idea comes to the surface" (LOC: MMP, box S1, Bateson to EJ [Ethel John Lindgren], letter dated February 27, 1936). According to Bateson, "[William] Blake and Reo would probably have understood each other" (LOC: MMP, box S1, Bateson to EJ [Ethel John Lindgren], letter dated February 27, 1936). It was this inability to articulate what he was thinking that probably contributed to Fortune's reputation for being difficult.

On the other hand, Kroeber was pleasantly surprised, when Fortune visited Berkeley in 1941, to find that his manner had improved from when he first met him in 1930. In a letter to a colleague, William Lloyd Warner, Kroeber wrote,

> Our reaction to his personality is more favorable than it was eight or ten years ago. Lowie agrees with me in this. He is more fluent, at any rate definitely less jerky in a manner. He gave our students

> a talk yesterday which was very vivid and which they lapped up. (BANC: MSS, CU23, box 177, Kroeber to [William Lloyd] Warner, letter dated March 20, 1940)

By the 1950s, the pendulum had swung the other way, with Jean La Fontaine remarking that she and Nur Yalman attended Fortune's presentations at Cambridge "not because we could really follow them, but because we liked him and felt someone ought to go to his lectures" (La Fontaine 1982). Peter Worsley (1989) suggested, "In a bizarre way, he of course had some very powerful insights. One never knew whether he was being serious or crazy or just thinking beyond one." Gwilliam Iwan Jones (1989) recounted how his students at Cambridge in the 1950s decided that Fortune "thought in Dobuan" (Macfarlane 1982).

Whatever his thinking, Fortune published little after his relationship with Mead ended. Apart from the *Arapesh*, which appeared in 1942, his subsequent publishing consisted of short articles. Eileen Fortune allegedly extended an invitation to Mead to come live with them in the hope that she would inspire Fortune once again (Howard 1984, 431). It is my belief that Fortune's reluctance to publish was, in part, a result of Benedict's rejection of his Purari manuscript in 1935 and again in 1940. Although she remained on friendly terms with Fortune and supported his applications for funding, she resisted pressuring him to complete his work, perhaps because she too began to believe the impression that he was "deranged" (LOC: MMP, box B1, Benedict to Mead, letter dated July 20, 1941). Benedict's death in 1948 removed the one person who may have been able to motivate Fortune to complete his Purari work.

In addition, Fortune did not wish to enter into a publishing "war" with Mead over her interpretation of their fieldwork materials. Fortune's differences with colleagues were compounded by his refusal to indulge in academic politics, resulting in collegial perceptions of him as paranoid as the Dobuans he wrote about.

Fortune's Legacy

Although Fortune came to be seen as eccentric and, at the worst, mad, his contribution to social anthropology is significant. *Sorcerers of Dobu* (Fortune 1932c) remains one of the classics of the functionalist school and is often cited in works relating to homicide (Daly and Wilson 1988), kinship (Lévi-Strauss 1969; Parkin 1997), exchange theory (Foster 1993; Gudeman 1986; Sahlins 1972;), the *Kula* (Uberoi 1962), and misogyny (Gilmore 2001). Fortune's book remained the only published ethnography of Dobu

until 2005 (Kuehling 2005). Although Kuehling (1998, v) initially described Fortune's portrayal of Dobu as a "caricature," she tempered this in her published work with the admission that her "comments on his study are based on a different discourse of interpretation" (Kuehling 2005, 2). By contrast, Young's (1980) obituary of Fortune regards both *Sorcerers of Dobu* and *Manus Religion* as remarkable works.[5]

When Fortune revised *Sorcerers of Dobu* in 1963, he was constrained by the printing process, which allowed him to insert new material only by removing either text or placing material on the blank spaces that existed in the original. Consequently, he substituted one section with another, retaining the same pagination. In the original, pages 241 to 249 are concerned with the dominant sex attitudes of the Dobuan and present a clear portrait of Dobuan sexual morality. The revised text (pages 241–249) contains a seemingly irrelevant critique of Malinowski and lacks the detail of the original.

Manus Religion (Fortune 1935) used what Mead called "event analysis," a form of "situational analysis more than twenty years before it was 'discovered' in Africa by Gluckman and his colleagues" (Mead 1972, 199; Young 1980, 89). The American anthropologist Rodney Stark (2003, 372) described Fortune's book as a "distinguished study of the Manus of New Guinea."

Mead remarked that "A Note of Some Forms of Kinship Structure" (Fortune 1933), published in *Oceania* in 1933, was "the kind of thing on which a man could found his career" (Mead 1972, 215). Thirty-six years after publication, Nelson Graburn sought permission to reprint Fortune's 1933 article, describing it as "one of the most crucial contributions to the development of modern structural anthropology" (ATL: RFP, MS-Group-0923, Nelson Graburn to Fortune, letter dated May 2, 1969).

While *The Mind in Sleep* (1927b) and *Omaha Secret Societies* (1932b) were much overlooked, Roger Lohmann (2009) has recently revisited the former, while George Devereux regarded the latter as a "corrective investigation" throwing new light on a previously neglected aspect of Omaha society, thereby providing the impetus for future corrective studies. As Devereux (1967: 223–24) reported, "Fortune's seminal contribution to the initiating of this new policy should not be forgotten, no matter how great (or small) a role his personal penchant for the night-side of cultures may have played in it."

Lise Dobrin and Ira Bashkow's (2006) article makes extensive use of Fortune's Arapesh publications (1939, 1942) and his unpublished manuscripts, finding "his ethnographic work immensely insightful and unfailingly accurate" (Ira Bashkow, e-mail comm., August 31, 2006).

While historians of anthropology have often overlooked Fortune, his works endure. The recent interest shown in examining Fortune's contribution to anthropology is, perhaps, indicative of a Reo Fortune revival.

NOTES

This paper began as a paper submitted for presentation at the symposium "Gang of Four: Gregory Bateson, Ruth Benedict, Reo Fortune and Margaret Mead in Multiple Contexts" during the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) 2005 annual meetings in Kauai, Hawai'i.

I am indebted to the many people in archives throughout New Zealand, Australia, the United States, and England who gave generously of their time to assist me in my research. I wish to thank the following persons and institutions for permission to quote from manuscripts and papers: Ann McLean and the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand, for the Papers of Reo Franklin Fortune; Mary Catherine Bateson and the Institute for Intercultural Studies in New York for the Margaret Mead Papers at the Library of Congress; the London School of Economics and Political Science for the Papers of Bronislaw Malinowski and Raymond Firth; Columbia University, New York, for material in the Columbia University Archives; and the Bancroft Library for the Records of the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. I would also like to thank Gerald Sullivan and Sharon W. Tiffany for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

1. Fortune referred to areas as "uncontaminated" by missionaries, so I have assumed that he would have used this word if talking about Dobu.

2. The punctuation is as Fortune wrote it. It is unlikely that Benedict replied to this letter, as she was in Europe from mid-July until September and died shortly after her return to the United States.

3. For discussion on the squares, see Banner (2003: 328–408), Lapsley (1999: 221–44), Lohmann (2009), and Sullivan (2004).

4. I do not know if this letter was sent to anyone or just given to Fortune. There is nothing in the file to indicate what Malinowski did with this letter.

5. For a discussion of reviews of Fortune's work, see Molloy (2009).

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