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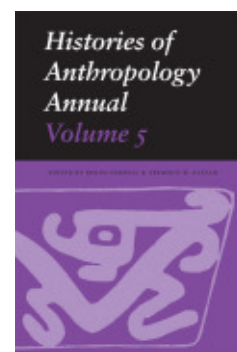
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"The Truth in Anthropology Does Not Travel First Class": Reo Fortune's Fateful Encounter with Margaret Mead

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“The Truth in Anthropology Does Not Travel First Class”

Reo Fortune’s Fateful Encounter with Margaret Mead

Lise M. Dobrin and Ira Bashkow

The surest and most perfect instrument of understanding is our own emotional response, provided that we can make a disciplined use of it.

Margaret Mead (1949:299)

Introduction: Reo Fortune’s “Reticence”

In 1939, the anthropologist Reo Fortune published an article disputing the representation of Mountain Arapesh culture offered in *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, which was written by Fortune’s former wife and collaborator in the fieldwork, Margaret Mead. Whereas Mead depicted Arapesh culture as having a peaceful and cooperative ethos for both men and women, Fortune showed that Arapesh political life, while not categorically violent, also institutionalized conflict and warfare.

Most writings that deal with this dispute do so within the dramatic frame that Mead herself provided in her memoir *Blackberry Winter*, supplemented by her voluminous correspondence and interviews (Howard 1984; Boon 1985; Lapsley 1999; Banner 2003a; Crook 2007; Molloy 2008). From these documents we learn that Fortune was uncaring, volatile, and physically abusive (Mead 1972:230, 238, 242; Howard 1984:128, 149, 160; Lapsley 1999:224; Banner 2003a:330, 335–36, 341). He was ambitious to the point of paranoia, competing with his wife over their joint research (Mead 1972: 231, 234, 236, 290; Bateson 1984:162). He was limited by “puritanical jealousy,” “the sternest Victorian values,” and his colonialist ideas about gender roles (Mead 1972:185, 207, 230, 243, 289; see also Lipset 1980:135; Lapsley 1999:195, 223). This dark portrait makes it easy to assume that Fortune’s objections to Mead’s ethnography were energized primarily by his furious jealousy over the turning of her affections to Gregory Bateson, whom she left him to marry. The drama begins with “one of the great moments in the history of anthropology” (Stocking 1974:95): during a

transition point in their joint New Guinea fieldwork in December 1932, Mead and Fortune were taken by government launch up the Sepik River where they came into contact with Bateson, then on Christmas holiday from his fieldwork on Iatmul. A few days later, the three made a trip upriver in Bateson's canoe, and enclosed in the mesh mosquito room of a colonial guesthouse, tensely anticipating a possible raid, Mead and Bateson stayed up all night talking, establishing their desire for each other while Fortune slept off an uncharacteristic drunk in their midst (Mead 1972:243, MM/RF 12/30/1932 in Caffrey and Francis 2006:73–74).¹

It is common knowledge that Fortune subsequently fell apart, “psychologically distressed by the failure of his marriage” (Lawrence 1980:2). According to Fortune's younger brother Barter, “Up to the end of the Mead era Reo was the most dynamic and physical individual,” but this dynamism turned into “an ‘incomprehensible lethargy’ that he never managed to shake off” (Howard 1984:170). Interviews reported in Howard (1984:170–171) describe Fortune as having “a primal scream in him” that was “agony” and as having “simply [been] ripped to shreds” by Mead. His distress was not aided by the loss of his personal savings during the Depression and his difficulty finding stable academic employment over the next fifteen years. After Mead left him in 1933, Fortune returned to New Guinea for a period of further fieldwork; he then held a series of short-term academic and government posts in China; Toledo, Ohio; Toronto; and elsewhere before finally settling into a lectureship at Cambridge, where he remained for the rest of his career. Fortune's odd character during his Cambridge years is the subject of much vivid oral lore. He was said to be “a difficult colleague at the best of times,” “exasperating,” and “incomprehensible” to students (Young 1980:108). Others called him “very cut up, rampantly bitter, difficult, edgy,” and “eccentric to the point of paranoia” (Howard 1984:171; see also Obituary 1979; Jones 1989). Commentators have noted that following his separation from Mead, Fortune ceased to produce any anthropological work of significance (Francis 2003). Apart from his masterful grammar of the Arapesh language (Fortune 1942), he published only a few scattered articles from his and Mead's joint New Guinea fieldwork. “[I]ncreasingly out of sympathy with his professional colleagues,” what work he did produce seemed driven by an “idiosyncratic antagonism” toward Ruth Benedict, Bronislaw Malinowski, and especially toward Mead, and criticizing them “preoccupied” and “inhibited” him (Gathercole 1980:9). Apparently he was “so deeply hurt” that he became obsessed with showing that “Margaret was all wrong in what she said” (Howard 1984:171). “At their worst—and there were some very bad articles

among the handful that he published during the last few decades of his life—his writings were analytically confused, congested with irrelevancies, and largely inconsequential. Some of these, done during his Cambridge years, read as if he were under duress, dictating them through gritted teeth” (Young 1980:108). By all these accounts, Fortune’s “relative reticence was due to personal distress” following his rejection by Mead (McLean 1992:38).

But while this narrative frame of romantic rejection and emotional breakdown is certainly true, it is also an oversimplification. For one thing, it draws heavily on Mead’s own interested representations, which are not necessarily a “reliable source on Reo Fortune’s ‘passions’” (Romanucci-Ross 1987:795). Fortune is not the only one to have been affected by “feelings of rivalry”; as many have noted, Mead could be competitive and controlling as well (Mead 172:244, 290; Romanucci-Ross 1985; Banner 2003a; Howard 1984; Toulmin 1984; Young 2006). Moreover, it finesses an important part of the story of Fortune’s transformation from a productive scholar and fieldworker to a bitter iconoclast obsessed with the past, namely the specific chain of events through which Mead separated herself from him. As Fortune made abundantly clear in his correspondence and elsewhere, what he himself saw as motivating his actions was not simply the fact of his desertion by Mead. Until the time of their separation, we must recall, Fortune had been devoted not only to Mead, but also to anthropology. He had written three serious ethnographies, *Sorcerers of Dobu*, *Omaha Secret Societies*, and *Manus Religion*; a psychological study of dreams, *The Mind in Sleep*; and a brilliant short article on kinship, “A Note on Some Forms of Kinship Structure,” that can now be seen as anticipating the structuralist analysis of Claude Lévi-Strauss (Lévi-Strauss 1969; see Leach 1951:28). Fortune continued to do pioneering fieldwork under difficult conditions for a number of years hence, and until the end of his life he articulated principled objections to Mead’s interpretation of the fieldwork they had done together in the Sepik. Romantically “Fortune did recover, at least in part”; in 1937, two years after he and Mead divorced, he married his original sweetheart from New Zealand, Eileen Pope. The two had a contented relationship until she died in his care at an elderly age (Howard 1984:172; Ann McLean, PC, October 27, 2008).

A fuller explanation of Fortune’s professional dissolution therefore needs to consider questions more substantive than the two anthropologists’ love relationship. As we will see, what so obsessed Fortune in the years following his separation from Mead was not only or even primarily his loss of her as his wife and collaborator, but the challenge he faced in

attempting to surmount an ethnographic construction that was at once a portrayal of particular New Guinea peoples and an interpretation of his and Mead's own relationship. As he grappled with this construction—and its questionable status as anthropology or “science”—Fortune encountered an extraordinary series of frustrations and rebuffs, some of which represented deliberate efforts by Mead to defuse the threat she felt he posed to her professional reputation. Knowing this history helps us understand what Fortune was trying to do in his enigmatic later writings, as well as the real source of his inexhaustible bitterness toward Mead. Our aim in this paper, then, is to offer a fresh account of Mead and Fortune's disagreement, reframed around a careful reconstruction of Fortune's point of view, so as to draw a more nuanced trajectory from the vigorous fieldworker of the mosquito room to the quirky old Cambridge don mischievously pointing a twig at the speaker during a public lecture in order to bewitch him.² When told in this way, Fortune's story presents us with a disturbing lesson in the distorting effects of power on the production of anthropological canons. It reminds us that social placement, personalities, and presentation can have effects that ramify through the discipline, shaping the course of truth in anthropology.

Enter Margaret Mead

Fortune's eccentric spirit, “with equal facility brilliant or absurd,” was evident throughout his life (Howard 1984:93). His brother Barter described him as “occasionally seized with temporary and burning fits of zeal and devotion” like most of “the rest of us Fortunes,” but lacking in the “human virtues of constancy and sentimental stability.”³ Born in the New Zealand countryside in 1903 to a former missionary and Anglican vicar who “lost his faith and took up farming” when his son was a teenager, Fortune was educated both in the practice of agriculture and in classical languages, philosophy, and psychology (Lawrence 1980:2). His outstanding academic performance eventually won him a fellowship for graduate study at Cambridge, an achievement all the more remarkable given the obstacles he had overcome. Growing up “under exceedingly frugal” and difficult circumstances, Fortune traveled long distances to attend high school, and as a university student at Victoria University College in Wellington he was able to attend only a portion of the lectures because he could not afford to pay board (Howard 1984:92). Although Mead's later writings portray Fortune as irremediably hidebound by his provincial New Zealand upbringing, even from his early years Fortune showed an extraordinary capacity to reason his way to posi-

tions strongly at variance with prevailing cultural views. Like many of his New Zealand countrymen he clearly valued masculine strength and courage, endurance in the absence of domestic comforts, and physical skill and adaptability (Phillips 1987). But we also know from the personal information he offered in his 1927 work on dreaming that he not only shared his father's religious apostasy but went beyond it in his radical pacifist politics (at one point he "flirted" with communism), and he so resisted nationalist ethnocentrism that after World War I he even worked with a student group raising funds for a relief cause in Germany (Lohmann 2009:281–282; Banner 2003a:255; Phillips 1987:192). Traversing cultural difference was a central part of who Fortune was, growing up as he did in a missionary home, and an openness to other cultural perspectives was embedded even in his name, *Reo*, which is Maori (Lohmann 2009:283; McLean 1992).

Fortune met and fell in love with the socially privileged and anthropologically sophisticated Mead on board the ship he took from the South Pacific to England in 1926. He was to begin graduate study at Cambridge; she was on her way home from Samoa. Mead was attracted by Fortune's intense drive and exotic earthiness. Although Mead felt a relationship with Fortune would be "profoundly unsuitable," this was convenient, since she was already married to someone with whom she pictured a future life in the country with "a lot of children" (Mead 1972:185, 188). However, she was soon advised that an anatomical problem would cause her to miscarry if she were ever to try to have children, and as she wrote in *Blackberry Winter*, "if there was to be no motherhood," then "this changed the whole picture of the future" (Mead 1972:189). Instead of adjusting her professional life to motherhood and the needs of her husband's career, Mead could marry Fortune, with whom she could combine her marriage and a career as an anthropologist (Mead 1972:189). But by the time of Fortune's first fieldwork, even before he and Mead had married, their relationship was rocky (Mead 1972:181). Reports from this period mention Fortune's rashness, as well as his jealousy about Mead's marriage to Luther Cressman, her romance with Ruth Benedict, and her free-love attitudes more generally (Banner 2003a:255–268, 276–278; Cressman 1988:178–79; Lapsley 1999:149–150, 158). As we will see below, Fortune's first major documented outburst was indirectly connected to Mead—although here too we find that the drama has as much to do with matters of anthropological substance as with romantic choices. It took place in the D'Entrecasteaux islands just off the New Guinea coast, where Fortune spent six months on Dobu and Tewara in 1927–28 carrying out the research that led to the anthro-

pological work for which he is perhaps best known, *Sorcerers of Dobu*. We discuss this episode in some detail here because it foreshadows in a number of revealing ways the conflict he would later have with Mead over Arapesh culture.

The Storm over Sorcery in Dobu

On his way to the field, Fortune stopped in Port Moresby to pay a visit to the head administrator of colonial Papua, Lieutenant-Governor J. H. P. Murray. Murray was committed to the notion that the interests of colonial administration would be served by a better knowledge of Papuan “customs, languages, and habits of thought,” and he welcomed Fortune as one of the tiny stream of anthropologists coming through at the time who might be able to help him (Campbell 1998:70; Bashkow 1995). But soon after Fortune arrived at his fieldsite, Murray received a letter from him ominously observing that the natives “fear white influence greatly” (RF/Murray 12/29/1927, cited in Gray 1999:63).⁴ The practice of magic and divination that Fortune found so thoroughgoing in Dobuan social life made the natives vulnerable to punishment, as sorcery or “black magic” was a jailable offense under colonial law. Fortune’s revelation naturally provoked Murray’s curiosity, and in response to his request for more information, Fortune sent back a long and highly wrought letter in which he refused to cooperate with the administration because of its ill-founded policies. He declared firmly, “my sympathy is with the native, sorcery, [illegal] burial rites, and all”: “I who know them condone their evil practices to the limit.” Any attempt to fit the native “into a European mould of law for his own sake” was unreasonable, “Don Quixote at the windmills.” This being so, no “good [could] be served by Your Excellency’s using of anthropology” to inform colonial practices: “there can be nothing but bad feeling between Administration and native—and what good feeling exists is due only to the amiable ignorance of Government officers of the truth of native life. . . . The more Your Excellency knows of the natives I am working among the more bitter the conflict must become: it can do no ultimate good to either side.”⁵

Murray was highly troubled by this “eccentric, dogmatic and self-opinionated” communication from a trained anthropologist working in his Territory.⁶ He solicited reactions from patrol officers, the district Resident Magistrate, and others, including Papua’s two government anthropologists, F. E. Williams and W. M. Strong, as well as A. R. Radcliffe-Brown in Sydney. He even devoted some days to traveling to Samarai, the district center, in order to investigate. After consulting with the

head of the local mission, Murray began to worry that Fortune might make a similarly critical and heated statement to the press, and he sent both Williams and the Government Secretary to Samarai to intervene. Although things cooled down after Fortune left the field a short time afterwards, the incident had enduring repercussions. Under Murray's tenure, no outside anthropologist would ever again be allowed to conduct fieldwork in colonial Papua.⁷

For Fortune to take such an aggressive and insulting stance with the head of the colonial government was impolitic to say the least. However, when we read past the tone of his letter and look more deeply into its context, it becomes clear that Fortune was expressing a principled point of view that grew out of his analysis of the colonial situation, his position within it, and the possible consequences of his actions for the Dobuans with whom he worked. In the period surrounding Fortune's visit, Murray was concerned about the idea of "social function" then gaining influence in anthropology, because the tendency to see any native institution as integral to the functioning of a society left no room for the kinds of changes that administering a colony required. It was within that framework that Murray interpreted Fortune's objection to the native sorcery ordinance, which led inexorably to the conclusion that "government of natives by Europeans" was "impossible."⁸ But what led Fortune to this conclusion was not in fact functionalism. Fortune could be highly skeptical of the functionalist proposals being celebrated by his colleagues around this time, and he did not view sorcery as an institution which was necessary for Dobuan society to function (Fortune 1934). Indeed, he wrote to Mead from Tewara, "What social need makes sorcery—a death for a death, or a death for an illness?"⁹ What Fortune was concerned about instead was his rapport with local people and the way his actions might affect both their well-being and his research.

Fortune had chosen to work on the tiny island of Tewara because it was the area of the D'Entrecasteaux least affected by government and mission influences.¹⁰ But the islanders were eager to keep it that way, and Fortune did not have an easy time gaining their trust. He was treated with hostility when he arrived, and was only slowly and cautiously brought into the partial confidence of a few key friends. Even then, suspicions remained that he was a spy and would report to the government that the islanders were practicing sorcery, leading to their imprisonment (see Fortune 1963[1932]:104, 287). Fortune was at pains to project an identity aloof from the interests of the colonial government, and he was especially anxious that Murray not visit him there as the two had originally planned.¹¹ Indeed, it was this anxiety that motivated

Fortune's original December 29, 1927 letter to Murray, which called on him to abandon their visit plans (Gray 1999:66). But between this and the time of his bellicose second letter refusing to share with Murray any knowledge he had gained during his fieldwork, something happened that turned Fortune's focus from achieving rapport with his informants to a concern over the negative impact he could have on them given their subjection to colonial law.

To Murray, Fortune's concerns seemed baseless. His review of local police and court records showed that the fears of imprisonment Fortune reported were not due to intensive interference in their villages by overzealous administration officials; indeed, there were no cases on record of any Tewarans being punished by the administration for sorcery.¹² But Fortune knew that natives had been jailed on the neighboring island of Fergusson, and that fear of such punishments resonated throughout the region. More importantly, Fortune seems to have been profoundly affected by the native view (one that he himself cultivated; see Kuehling 2005:17) that he might be a different kind of white man, totally unlike the colonial officers and missionaries they ordinarily encountered. Instead, the native people hoped, he might be a "moral white" man, one who would share his wealth with them and who, instead of censoring or punishing them for maintaining their customs, would even intercede with the other white powers on their behalf (Burridge 1969:35; see also Leavitt 2000:305; Bashkow 2006:57). Fortune would do these things because, according to this view, he was not actually white under the skin, but instead a native like themselves, with a particular identity, name, and network of kinship relationships.¹³

This millenarian view of Fortune was announced most clearly during his fieldwork when a Dobuan woman dreamt that he "was the spirit of her dead brother come back from the dead" (Fortune 1963[1932]:292). According to the woman's prophesy, Fortune's presence (undoubtedly impressive, especially given his keen interest in their daily activities, his facility with their languages, and his unwhite-like willingness to eat their food) heralded the imminent return of the people's deceased ancestors. She urged everyone to prepare for this mass resurrection by killing all of their livestock, so as to leave themselves so destitute that the spirits would feel sympathy and return to come to their aid. Such redemption from their humiliating colonial subordination was so attractive to the natives that people living all over the large and linguistically diverse Fergusson Island heeded the prophetess's injunction and exterminated all of their pigs and dogs (lest the returned dead see a live pig or dog about and turn the owners into "butterflies, rocks, stars and fishes"), thereby

destroying nearly all their own wealth. Despite the fact that ordinarily “they are as hard as the flintiest proverbial Jew—and treasure their property greatly,” they even “slaughtered all the young litters and threw them away.”¹⁴ The district officer “tracked down the woman prophet who was partly responsible for the state of chaos he found,” and Fortune not only attended her trial but was called upon to serve as the interpreter for it, since “the Government man here . . . doesn’t know a word of the language” and exercised “all brawn and power and no intelligence in dealing with [native] cases.”¹⁵ During the trial, the woman retold her dream—it was “all gospel to her [that] I [am] no white man (such as those they are familiar with)”—and “she finished up by making a proposal of marriage to me in court,” with the colonial “police all around and [the] Government [officer] all decked out in full dress dignity.” Fortune was struck by the sincerity of her feelings and “avoided trampling on them.” He softened the blow of the month-long jail sentence he had to relay to her by saying apologetically that the government officer had “decreed she had to weed his garden for a month,” as alas “Government’s word was stronger” than his own.¹⁶

When seen against the background of this episode, Fortune’s outburst to Murray the following month makes a great deal more sense. Given the anti-sorcery ordinance, Fortune knew that sharing his knowledge of the culture with the government would put the natives at risk. The forbidden practices were all but universal in the area, and the ordinance, a “haphazard” banning of only certain magical practices that left “the beliefs behind [them] strong and undisturbed,” did nothing except to “terrorise practices into greater and greater secrecy and underhandedness.” As he put it to Murray, “Government snips now and then at a leaf or two and does nothing to the roots—and the growth is resistant and strong.”¹⁷ Even after returning to Sydney, Fortune steadfastly insisted on the validity of this point.¹⁸ Since every death is ascribed to sorcery and sets in motion secret proceedings to avenge for it, “The prosecutions are futile,” he wrote to Murray. “The law can never become more than harrying—it is not justice to take one individual as a criminal when an entire society practices the crime.”¹⁹ The very same point, that “every native is guilty” and the administration was acting “illogically if it punished only those against whom an accusation had been made,” was subsequently reiterated, in calmer language, in a lengthy article about anti-sorcery ordinances in the Melanesian colonies published by Ian Hogbin (1935:31) in *Oceania*. But Fortune was not trying to contribute to anthropology. He was trying to solve a more pressing problem: how to avoid being a vector for similar trouble for his own informants. Since by the terms of the ordi-

nance “every Man-Jack in the Dobuan and Fergusson Island area would have to remain more or less permanently in prison,” Fortune understood that his Dobuan “friends” who had been “open and straight spoken” with him had “given their personal safety and that of their people into [his] hands.” He thus wrote to Murray that he “would not be any party to betraying them”; he would keep his “hands clean.”²⁰

Three Features of Fortune’s Temperament

The remarkable story of Fortune’s conflict with Murray over the colonial anti-sorcery law reveals three personal qualities deeply characteristic of Fortune’s temperament.²¹ The first is *his empathetic alignment with the perspective of the people he studied* (see also Dobrin and Bashkow 2006). Fortune was often frustrated with the Dobuans, and he repeatedly described them as “a thoroughly nasty people.” But even so, this evaluation flowed from a recognition of their struggles, which he experienced personally in his dealings with them. Though he found “many of them [to be] decent by sheer force of natural feeling,” he ultimately concluded that they were victimized by their own “socially unfortunate ideas”—“their decency has an uphill fight against their beliefs.”²² Fortune clearly understood anthropological fieldwork to be a cross-cultural passage into the lives of the natives, in which the goal was to become “used to dealing with them in their own world.”²³ As his letters to Mead from this time amply attest, he developed not only an analytical understanding of the languages in the region, but also a real facility with some of them. He minimized colonial associations in his dress, dispensing with his pith helmet. He “couldn’t afford” to wear it, he said, as it was “a mark of caste, and with a crowd of [returned] labourers, a constant reminder” of white authority.²⁴ He ultimately gave up even wearing a shirt. In time he began a food garden and came to maintain himself on the islanders’ own yams.²⁵ From the very beginning, Fortune participated in exchange with the Dobuans “in their own fashion”: “They give me presents—instead of demanding barter—the invariable treatment for a white man. Later I return the presents according to custom.”²⁶ This willing engagement in the natives’ world undoubtedly encouraged their cargoistic interpretation of him.

Whereas the other whites around him tended to discount native people’s concerns as epistemologically secondary, Fortune took them every bit as seriously as Murray took his own.²⁷ And Fortune’s closest informant insisted to him, “if you tell Government I know this black magic they will lock me up.”²⁸ Fortune knew firsthand the potential for white

involvement in native affairs to cause harm, since he had tragically helped bring about its bitter fruit in the jailing of the prophetess. In seeking to avoid incriminating his informants, Fortune's stance toward Murray reveals a moral sensitivity that is thoroughly contemporary, if anachronistic in Fortune's time. A concern with the risks to human research subjects is now enshrined in principles like "beneficence" and "respect for persons" that guide contemporary ethics reviewboards. Fortune clearly understood the colonized natives as a "vulnerable population," to use our current terms. As he emphasized to Murray, he would only share sensitive information about the natives on the condition that it did not lead to a tightening of law enforcement in the area; he was "most willing [to] co-operate" and "lay every whit of information" he had before Murray, but only if he had his assurance that it would be in "complete detachment from the local Government officer's activities." To again use the vocabulary of present-day research ethics, Fortune was requesting a veritable certificate of confidentiality!²⁹ But without such assurance, which he knew Murray could not provide, to share his data with the government could lead to "a befouling" of the research he had done.³⁰

A second feature of Fortune's ethnographic temperament that this episode reveals is *an insistence on holding fast to whatever truth his research uncovered*, even when its implications went against common wisdom. This "relentless honesty"—an "unpreparedness to bend in the wind"—that often constituted a personal failing was for Fortune himself a matter of the highest moral principle, a matter in which his sense of professional integrity was thoroughly bound up (McLean 1992:53–54).³¹ In the Dobuan case, Fortune's dogged conviction that the sorcery forbidden by colonial law was endemic to Dobuan society led him to another conclusion that we identify with today, though at the time it was untenable: the notion that a just colonialism was impossible. We come to our current perspective having experienced the history of decolonization and the disciplinary crisis of the 1960s over anthropology's role in the colonial subjugation of native peoples. But Fortune stood out as one of very few anthropologists to criticize colonialism in his own day, and perhaps the only one to boldly speak his truth straight to power! So stridently did Fortune voice his critique to the head of the colonial government that he was branded a "mad man" for it, "deficient in . . . common-sense."³² He would not "act as a spy" by cooperating as hand-maiden to an administration oppressively forcing native culture "into an alien mould," lest he "dishonour" his "obligations to . . . science."³³ Fortune persisted in worrying about the problem of anthropology's relationship to colonialism even after he left the field, publishing on it in

appendix 3 of *Sorcerers of Dobu*; and in April 1934, after had returned to England, he gave a paper at Cambridge entitled “A Critical Anthropology” in which he posed a question remarkably ahead of its time: “where, and to what extent” the anthropologist should “stand behind native cultures, push their claims and throw his personal influence into their championship.” His answer seems to have shifted as he tried out different positions, but in the written form of the presentation he sent to Mead, he argued against “indiscriminate protection for all native societies on general principles,” as not all aspects of culture (nor anthropology!) were equally morally defensible.³⁴ Prefiguring current controversies over female genital mutilation, *sati*, and other foreign cultural practices offensive to a liberal western sensibility (Fortune’s example was ritual infanticide), Fortune questioned colonial reformism, structural-functionalism, and universal human rights all at once.

The third characteristic of Fortune’s temperament which this case illustrates is *the emotional intensity with which he could react when he experienced frustration*. On the very day Fortune wrote his antagonistic letter to Murray, the futility of opposing sorcery in Dobuan society was dramatized for Fortune personally yet again when his “best informant and best Dobuan linguist” announced that he was leaving his duties to avenge the recent deaths of two close kinsmen by sorcery. “I won’t find another such” resource here, Fortune lamented.³⁵ This loss came just days after another distressing incident that took place when Fortune arrived at his new field site on Fergusson Island. The apparently “nice fellow” who had arranged to have Fortune’s house built only a few feet from his own insisted that the foreigner’s “arrival had driven his wife away.” He tried to convince Fortune to “tell her forcibly” to return, and “if she didn’t come” even to threaten to “have her put in jail or burn down her village”—“such doings for which white men as a race are noted and feared.” But after Fortune did this and the woman acceded, Fortune was horrified to discover that she was not in fact the man’s wife; she had not even been his sweetheart. It was instead “the most cunning . . . conceivable” way for his new neighbor to have “won a bride.” Besides manipulating Fortune into lying, in itself an affront to his nature, the incident proved that despite his best efforts to dissociate himself from other whites, he would never be successful.³⁶ These frustrations with the ubiquity of sorcery and the fear of whites it provoked in local people found reflection in both the tone and content of Fortune’s strangely strident letter to Murray.

But Fortune’s reaction to Murray was energized by yet another frustration he was experiencing at this time, one that set before his fondest

desires an implacable obstacle: his fiancée Margaret Mead's expectations for their future joint fieldwork. Mead was back at her job in the American Museum of Natural History in New York writing *Coming of Age in Samoa* during Fortune's Dobuan fieldwork. The lovers had agreed they would meet in New Zealand at the end of that year, get married, and then return to the D'Entrecasteaux together for a further year in the field. But when Mead received Fortune's initial description of the region and his list of what she should bring, she must have been aghast at the "dreary" image it presented. Her "best dress" would be puttees with a "knee skirt or short trousers"; "bush travelling" and "mountaineering" would be so much a part of their lives as to require fully two pairs of rugged hobnailed boots—and all this hardship would be endured only to study a culture "damaged" by the pernicious influence of labor recruitment.³⁷ Mead, whose field base in Samoa had been the comfortable western-style home of a U.S. Navy medical officer, wrote back expressing grave doubts as to whether this would be "a good culture" for her to work in, and she outlined her desiderata for a field site: it should be an intact culture without influence from whites; it should have a large number of people concentrated in one place; the natives should be friendly, the climate healthy, and the local food good; it should have good access for easy transport of supplies and mail; and it should present her with plenty of children, especially girls, to study, as her funding was tied to a project on the mentality of primitive children.³⁸

Fortune received a letter from Mead stating as much while he was en route to the new location on Fergusson that he was intending to prepare for their subsequent return, and he was so upset at the impossible bind this put him in that he took out his frustration on the "boys" (native men) he had brought with him from Tewara, so that he afterwards had to "live down a bad name for rage" in the area.³⁹ In the series of lengthy, troubled letters he wrote to Mead over the course of the six days surrounding his outburst to Murray, the main topic he discussed was his worry over whether this new field site, or indeed any place in the region, would be satisfactory.⁴⁰ In these letters, none of which mention his communication with Murray, Fortune alternated between trying to reassure his fiancée that the climate was good, that she could have her dresses ironed, that work with the children would likely pan out, and so on, and confessing his doubts that Melanesian children were a revealing and workable ethnographic subject, sharing his growing understanding of areal diffusion that made the boundaries between cultures hard to identify, and expressing his anxiety that no place in the region would make Mead happy. As Fortune had "no money left to go searching" any fur-

ther for a better fieldsite, he was torn between his desire to please Mead and his commitment to the area given the enormous “capital” he had already invested over many difficult months there getting to know the language, landscape, and people.⁴¹ In short, Fortune’s correspondence strongly suggests that his impetuous dealing with Murray was fed by an intense frustration over the impossibility of developing a workable joint fieldwork plan that would satisfy Mead.⁴²

From Partners in Fieldwork to Opposite Temperaments

Already when Mead and Fortune were still merely courting, after a lovers’ rendezvous in Europe in 1927, their relationship was showing signs of strain. A pattern in which they manipulated one another’s weaknesses is evident in their correspondence, with Mead trying to reconcile herself to Fortune’s hurtful reproaches even as she provoked him anew, for example, by reporting to him that her girlfriend had referred to him as her “caveman.”⁴³ Nevertheless, soon after Fortune left Dobu, Mead met him as planned in New Zealand, where they immediately married and then sailed together to Sydney to equip themselves for their first joint fieldwork on Manus. Apart from two years spent writing up their previous research in New York—a period broken up by a summer’s fieldwork on Omaha—the rest of their troubled five-year marriage was spent working together in the field. The couple spent six months on Manus (1928–29), three months on an Omaha reservation in Nebraska (1930), and eighteen months in mainland New Guinea (1931–33). The short period of domestic life they shared in New York was beset by competitive tension and social awkwardness as Fortune attempted to cope with the immense success of his wife’s newly published book (*Coming of Age in Samoa*), her continuing desire for extramarital sexual relations, his emasculating financial dependence on Mead, and the class and cultural insecurity he experienced in trying to get along in Mead’s bohemian New York social circles. Nor was their relationship untroubled while they were in the field. Although Mead later recalled their Manus fieldwork as “the best field trip we ever had,” her letters home reveal that emotional storms roiled much of their time there, with Mead often suffering from Fortune’s hypersensitivity and explosive temper, and both of them driven to misery by their intense competition (see, for example, Mead 1972:195).

Their mainland New Guinea fieldwork was stressful as well. During their eight months in Mountain Arapesh country, the tensions in their relationship were made all the more taxing by the practical challenges of life in a small mountaintop hamlet and by the anthropologists’ deprecia-

tion of the people's "very simple culture."⁴⁴ Fortune focused on the language, while Mead worked on the rest of the culture.⁴⁵ Her movements limited due to an injured ankle, Mead felt deserted in a village that tended to be empty except for a few "people pottering about in a desultory way" (Mead 1972:229). Both Mead and Fortune regretted that the Arapesh lacked the ceremonial pomp, spectacular ritual, and elaborate architectural and decorative arts of the inland Abelam region, to which they had been en route when their native carriers revolted against the massive amount of cargo they had been forced to carry and left them stranded. Throughout their time among the Arapesh, the anthropologists sent out incessant inquiries in an effort to find a more suitable field site. The situation they found themselves in next was also disappointing. To obviate problems of transport they selected a field site that could be accessed by boat, and ended up in a Mundugumor village on a tributary of the Sepik. But the river had made the Mundugumor accessible to other whites as well, and the anthropologists found it unrewarding to work in a culture so "broken" by recent pacification and heavy labor recruitment. Although in her letters from this period Mead comes across as contented and Fortune all but caring, she would later recall their Mundugumor fieldwork as miserable (Mead 1972:242; see also Howard 1984:149).

When they met Gregory Bateson on the Sepik at the end of 1932, Mead was ready for a change.⁴⁶ Following the famous mosquito room episode, she and Fortune settled into their third New Guinea fieldsite on Tchambuli lake, and Bateson moved nearby. The three frequently spent time together, playing chess, discussing culture, and exploring the possibilities in their developing relationships through sublimated talk about ethnographic cases, romantic compatibility, and sexual style (Banner 2003a:326–334.). But when Mead and her new would-be lover began an intense exchange of intimate notes via native couriers, Fortune understood that his wife was all but having an affair. Being put in the corner of a love triangle was painful enough. But Fortune's humiliation was exacerbated by the social advantages Bateson enjoyed over him as a member of an elite Cambridge family, casting into relief Fortune's tenuous hold on respectability given his hardscrabble colonial roots (see, for example, MM/RF 2/23–28/1933, quoted in Caffrey and Francis 2006:77; Lipset 1980). Bateson's sophistication and easy manner were attractive to the socially conscious Mead, and his relaxed sexual mores, which did not construct Fortune as an obstacle to realizing his attraction for Mead, made Fortune's desire for fidelity in his marriage seem backward and unjustifiably possessive. Moreover, Bateson had a positive claim on Mead's

attention in needing help organizing his rich knowledge of the “magnificent” Iatmul culture, as against Fortune who competed with Mead to cover the most interesting parts of those cultures they were studying together.

The threesome’s joint thinking took numerous twists and turns over the few months that followed, as Mead tried various strategies for adapting her marriage to accommodate her growing desire for Bateson. The culmination, at Easter 1933, was their development of a new theory that Fortune would come to see as the seal of his personal and professional ruin: a universal system of temperamental types they referred to as “the squares” (Banner 2003a, 2003b; Sullivan 2004). Bateson’s contribution to the theory is apparent in its emphasis on physiology and genetics, in which he was trained, while the problem it addresses, evidently framed by Mead, was the psychology of sex role conformity and deviance. Taking a cue from Benedict’s *Patterns of Culture*, which they had been reading in manuscript in the field, the squares provided a common set of terms for describing both cultures and individual personalities.⁴⁷ According to the squares, all individuals have an inborn temperament that can be classified within a four-way typological scheme, regardless of their culture. The primary axis is masculine-feminine, also called “Northern-Southern”—using the gender-neutral metaphor of compass points to convey that both of these temperamental types occurred in individuals of either sex. This dimension is complicated by a second, cross-cutting axis, variously labeled “West-East” or “Turk-Fey,” that is less clear in conception and shifted over time, but has to do with whether one tends to direct or perform for others (see Sullivan 2005). The Northern type, attributed to Fortune, is aggressive, competitive, and possessive, whereas the Southern type is passive, responsive, and giving, cherishing that which possesses it. Mead categorized herself as Southern and determined that Bateson was Southern as well, despite his being male. The squares made it possible to express such a disjuncture between one’s sex and one’s temperament, and Mead regarded this as an important theoretical breakthrough.

This was not, however, our familiar distinction between biological sex and culturally constructed gender. Each of the two primary temperamental types is associated with specific physiological properties that are manifested differently in biological men and women, with special attention given to sexual proclivities, behavior, orgasm, and emissions. The “Summary Statement” of the theory, typed up on the Sepik, carefully correlates permutations of sex and type with a bewildering range of phenomena, including glandular disturbances, belief in the soul, the odor

and color of sexual fluids, one's susceptibility to equinoxes and solstices, the findings of palmistry, and numerous perversions and pathologies such as voyeurism, masochism, "artic hysteria," and necrophilia.⁴⁸ Cultures might emphasize one type at the expense of the others; Arapesh and Samoa are said to "stabilize" the feminine or Southern type, ancient Rome the masculine or Northern. But the classification proposed in the squares could be considered racialistic in that it linked essentialized temperaments to bodily characteristics according to biological inheritance.

The thinking that led to this document was clearly cathartic for Mead, allowing her to express what was "previously incommunicable" (Caffrey and Francis 2006:79–82, 89). In light of her subsequent development of the squares in *Sex and Temperament*, it is tempting to interpret the "Summary Statement" as being fundamentally about the relation between the individual and culture. But read in its own terms for the meaning it held at the time, its primary concern was to establish a framework within which Mead, Fortune, and Bateson could understand their own personalities and possible relationships with one another (Crook 2007:138). The highly personal nature of the squares is evident in the selection of sexual traits and physical characteristics, such as rounded shoulders, which Mead and Bateson identified in themselves. And it is all but proclaimed in the statement's feverish coda, the "Final Statement," which details "how this discovery" could only have been made by the precise combination of type permutations that Mead, Fortune, and Bateson themselves represented.⁴⁹ Mead acknowledged in her correspondence to Benedict "the enormous contribution" Bateson made to "working this out for all of us" (Caffrey and Francis 2006:78). Although Mead insisted that Fortune had contributed to the squares, and she so wanted him to take ownership of it that she made him a co-author on the "Summary Statement"—the only co-authored piece of work that she and Fortune ever produced—we do not believe his intellectual contribution was significant. The theory's universalizing abstraction and graphic sexual detail ran strongly against Fortune's intellectual style and sense of propriety; moreover, the type compatibilities it derived were prejudicial to the possibility of successful matings between Northerners like himself and Southerners like Mead.

Despite his initial acquiescence, Fortune later scratched out his name, replacing it with "I have nothing to do with this" followed by his initials, writing in, "it was no good."⁵⁰ To prevent Mead from sending the appalling "discovery" to Boas, and to prevent her or Bateson from submitting it to a scientific journal as they intended, he even took the document and hid it away. Their anger over this is what caused the final scuf-

fle on the Sepik in which Fortune hit Mead, provoking her to call him a “cut-throat northern destroyer” (Banner 2003a:336). Soon after, the three anthropologists disbanded their field sites and took up temporary residence in Sydney. Although it was another year before Mead would decisively end it, Mead and Fortune’s marriage was irreparably broken. Apart from a brief period in Sydney on their way home from New Guinea, they would never live together again.

The story of what transpired in the following few years has been told before, but always from Mead’s perspective in which her own romantic and intellectual interests form the central theme, and Fortune drops out of the picture as their relationship dissolves (see, for example, Mead 1972:261; Howard 1984; Lapsley 1999; Banner 2003a). But when we reconstruct Fortune’s experiences of this same period, it becomes clear how they solidified his opposition to the squares, making it his guiding passion. Virtually all of Fortune’s subsequent writing can be understood as an attempt not just to redress his loss of Mead as his wife and lover, but even more pressingly to discredit the terms in which this loss was couched, as he perhaps more than any other could see how these formed the foundation for her ethnographic work and later anthropological career.

“A Very Good Scheme” to Get Fortune Out of The Way

By fall 1933, Mead, Fortune, and Bateson had gone separate ways. Fortune left Sydney for London, where he could participate in Malinowski’s seminar and enlist his support in applying for academic positions. Mead returned to her museum job in New York, and Bateson returned to a fellowship at Cambridge. Mead and Bateson continued their fervent courtship, at first surreptitiously in Sydney, and then through the letters they frequently exchanged and trans-Atlantic visits unknown to Fortune. They kept their anticipation of a shared future hidden from Fortune as long as possible; indeed, he did not learn of their marriage until after it had taken place on their way to Bali in March 1936. But the intensity of Mead’s developing romance with Bateson notwithstanding, it was some time before she resolved her feelings for Fortune, and for the first several months of their separation she was not fully certain that it would be permanent. As late as January 1934, Mead was still keeping a large apartment, and she wrote to Bateson that if Reo came to New York she could imagine falling “into an old and reasonably bearable way of life so that we get through it.”⁵¹ For some time thereafter Fortune continued to believe that if only he could secure a stable position and earn a sufficient

salary to support her, Mead might rejoin him and give their relationship a second chance.

But a number of things changed for Mead that January. “I’ve turned a definite corner. . . . I am convinced that any hope of even a *modus vivendi* with Reo is over forever. . . . I feel very clear about this.”⁵² She began to think about letting out half her apartment to a roommate, and she began to contemplate getting a divorce. What forced the issue for Mead was an initiative by Franz Boas to arrange a position for Fortune in New York. This set in motion a chain of events that surely must count among the least savory political maneuvers in the history of anthropology.

Boas was sympathetic to Fortune. His hyper-particularistic ethnographic style and distrust of broad generalization were appealingly akin to his own, and Fortune had cultivated his admiration by writing him long, respectful letters from the field that were full of well-presented ethnographic and linguistic detail. As is well known, Boas was a traditionalist when it came to matters of family life, and he especially valued his female students’ domestic stability even when they themselves rejected traditional sex roles (Cole 2003:258 n.1). So when Boas received a letter from Fortune in London letting him know that he had gotten only lukewarm support from Malinowski in his job search and saying that he would not be joining Mead in New York “owing to absence of funds or teaching openings,” Boas became “wild with Malinowski for not having more respect for the Institution of the Home” and began “racking his brains to find something for Reo.”⁵³ Much to Mead’s distress, Boas spent a week “fussing about Reo’s plans,” and devised two possibilities that might allow Fortune to rejoin her in New York, although neither was ideal.⁵⁴ One was a low-paying teaching assistantship in ethnology at Columbia which involved supervising graduate students preparing for research and exams. The other was more appropriate to Fortune’s status, although the funding was not yet confirmed: he could lecture at Columbia graduate school while assisting Boas in preparing a new book on race for a public audience.⁵⁵

The prospect of Fortune returning to New York at that time was unsettling for Mead, for she had just made up her mind to write a book interpreting her New Guinea research in terms of the squares for a popular audience, though without explicit mention of the theory. As she announced to Bateson, it would be about “the conventionalisation of sex and temperament—without the squares of course.”⁵⁶ Mead and Bateson had been elaborating, informally testing, and revising the squares continuously since they were in New Guinea. It was one of the main topics of their correspondence, and it provided them with a private language in

which they discussed other people (their code name for Fortune in letters and cables was “Northerner”; see also Banner 2003a:401). Once back in New York, Mead began tutoring all her close friends in squares terminology, so that it entered much of her conversation, dominating her thinking. But she dropped talk of the squares in her correspondence with Fortune when he began rebuking her for looking at others not as individuals but “as compass placed potentialities of differing perversions,” and railing at the injustice of being cast as ineluctably unsuitable for Mead because of his inborn temperament, a “northern villain” opposed to her “southern hero.”⁵⁷ Fortune wrote that he felt put in an “unnatural and forced position” from which he could say nothing that would not feed Mead and Bateson’s “contemptuous” use of him “as a foil.” He felt humiliated—“gutted”—as it was “beyond the pale of human decencies” that, in the name of the squares, Mead had insisted upon revealing the most intimate details of their married life with a rival, “even if the ostensible intent [was] scientific.” He called the squares a “crude sieve” that reduced him to nothing more than “a typical New Zealander,” and he objected to Mead’s “shamelessness” in using “latrine references” as a “popular pretence at scientific sexology.”⁵⁸ But Mead was on the whole convinced of the correctness and importance of the squares, and she made it a matter of policy to “pay absolutely no attention to [Fortune’s objections]” and to “go on writing [Fortune] quietly about jobs and publications” and other practicalities, being especially careful to avoid mentioning Bateson.⁵⁹ In short, as Mead began using the squares to describe how “society conventionalises men and women at very different ends of the scale,” so as to produce “clash, either explicit or implicit,” Fortune was growing ever more cutting in his condemnation of the theory, expressing regret at ever having participated in it: “I talked the jargon of the idea” on the Sepik, he said, only because “there was no other language you would talk in.”⁶⁰

The other theme in Fortune’s letters at this time—as indeed for the next thirteen years—was his unsuccessful and increasingly desperate search for financial and professional stability. When Mead left Sydney to return to New York, she gave him a large sum of money (800 Australian pounds), intending for him to live frugally on it until he could find a job. But with the cost of his passage to England that money was gone within a few months, and by January 1934 he was reduced to “bare subsistence level,” feeling “not on pins and needles but on spikes if nothing goes through.”⁶¹ He moved to cheaper lodgings on a down-and-out street in Bloomsbury,⁶² not far from the London School of Economics, where he attempted to maintain his professional identity and pursue the

few job prospects that became available in the hard times following the Depression, when there were still few academic positions but a growing number of newly trained anthropologists competing for them.⁶³ He applied for positions at Sydney, Cape Town, and Cairo, but he was not well placed for these, having received his PhD under Boas at Columbia, and none of the applications were successful. “From an American base I’m up against economic nationalism in the Colonies and England; and I’m not an American in America.”⁶⁴ To make matters worse, it exacerbated Fortune’s class anxiety and offended his sense of dignity to have to accept money from Mead, and he even taunted her once that he wouldn’t cash a ten-pound check she had sent because he had money “to burn. I nearly gave a pound to a man and a woman singing in the streets in the voice and accent of the class they were born in.”⁶⁵ To keep him from starving, Mead had to resort to supplying mutual friends with money they could lend Fortune without revealing its source. Mead felt that in view of her material support, the least Fortune could do was be courteous and supply her with those items from their joint fieldwork that she requested for her museum work. But without “some ground beneath [his] feet,” he raged at her for asking him “to worry about trifles”: “[A]re you so fat with your own stability that you aren’t capable of wanting anything [other] than photographs and negatives?”⁶⁶

Fortune was responding to something real in Mead’s tone. As Fortune’s letters grew more biting, “unreasonable and abusive,” with “rage” as their “main theme,” Mead found it necessary to defend herself emotionally, and she avoided engaging with his questions and recriminations so as not to provoke him.⁶⁷ “There is no point in going into the squares with [Reo] at all, that way madness lies,” she wrote Bateson.⁶⁸ Fortune complained repeatedly about her refusal to respond to his criticisms, and it clearly frustrated him to feel he had so little voice: “[Y]ou write carelessly or slap dash or elaborately saying nothing. . . . Can’t you write like a human being?”⁶⁹ Or later, “Why do you not answer me? Or do you dream that it is dispassionate science? In which case I cannot do anything—or say anything—and might as well cease talking.”⁷⁰ Mead began to worry that Fortune might accept a job near her on the U.S. East Coast, such as the ones then opening up at Duke, Princeton, and Sarah Lawrence College, or one working with Boas in New York. “[I]t’s no joke to anticipate what a professional life will be like in the open with Reo sharp shooting from close by.”⁷¹

In order to forestall this, Mead enlisted the help of her friend Ruth Benedict, who was well positioned to do so as she often acted as Boas’s right hand. Together they “hit on a very good scheme” to offer Fortune

a “field trip next winter, a good long one,” among an American Indian tribe, sponsored by Columbia: “That would ensure his being out of New York.”⁷² But after gaining Boas’s approval for the scheme, they foresaw a problem: in the event that Boas were to find the money for his race book, Boas would likely “fight giving Reo money for the American Indian field work, because he will think that he ought to stay here and write up” his earlier field material instead. So, once again, Mead “spent a long evening with Ruth . . . discussing political ways and means” for keeping Fortune away, and the two of them finally devised the perfect plan: setting up “a new expedition to New Guinea for him, beginning in August.” The Rockefeller Foundation would match funds donated to Columbia for research, so if Mead anonymously donated \$2,500 to the Columbia University Council for Research in the Social Sciences, Rockefeller would double it, making enough for a two-year trip. “It will take everything I have saved, but I think it would be worth it. It would send Reo back to the southern hemisphere, with a chance of his staying there and getting placed. . . . He will not of course be told where the money comes from, but will think we got it out of [a] millionaire” known to Benedict. “Of course we don’t want Papa Franz to know where [the initial donation] comes from” either.⁷³ Mead “considered Africa instead, but it’s more expensive.” “Ruth and I have gone over it and over and it seems fool proof,” she reported to Bateson.⁷⁴ Although Mead wondered whether it was “quite ethical for one to give money for one’s own field trip . . . and have it doubled,” she learned that it had been done previously and was reassured.⁷⁵

In separate letters to Fortune in London, Mead and Benedict built up their story of the “odd millionaire” whom they had charmed and impressed with the prospect of sponsoring an exploratory field trip to the New Guinea Highlands, a “new country recently opened up by the New Guinea air lines,” and as soon as things were approved at Columbia, Benedict wrote Fortune that her “gold-digging for anthropology” had “struck ore”: thanks to the mysterious millionaire, there would be no need for Fortune “wasting” his excellent research skills on “broken-down American Indian cultures” or “that measley assistantship [with Boas] which carries no status and no money.”⁷⁶ Instead, he would have the princely sum of \$5,000 for two years’ “carte blanche” to do whatever fieldwork he liked.⁷⁷ Outbid by Mead and Benedict’s “millionaire,” Boas ceased with his plans. Having no real alternative, Fortune gratefully accepted the fieldwork funding. As he wrote to Mead soon afterward, “Now that I have economic ground underfoot, I have been able to read a book, which I could not do for these past months.”⁷⁸ To Mead’s

relief, Fortune seemed “thoroughly pleased and unsuspecting” about the source of the grant, not regarding it “as an attempt to keep him out of the country which he so easily might have.”⁷⁹ From the substantial letters he wrote to Boas accounting for his ethnographic and financial progress on the trip, it seems he thought of Boas as his sponsor.

In her letters excitedly reporting on the arrangement to Bateson, Mead spelled out its manifold advantages. It removed the threat to her reputation that was risked if Fortune should return, bringing their marital dissolution to others’ attention. As Mead and Benedict often discussed, they were female professionals and had to take special care not to let “the world know about our private lives,” lest gossip circulate and their careers be devastated by scandal.⁸⁰ The removal of uncertainty regarding Fortune’s plans allowed Mead to begin planning her own future in earnest. She now started thinking of having a child with Bateson, and immediately began arranging to divorce Fortune.⁸¹ But most importantly, the prospect of having “Reo safely in New Guinea” for the foreseeable future freed Mead from the worry that he would attack her squares-based interpretation of the ethnographic material they had collected together in New Guinea, allowing Mead to “work much harder and better” on her book.⁸² As she wrote to a mutual friend of hers and Fortune’s, “I have got to get this *Sex and Temperament* book published under the status quo and while Reo is off the scene of action or he might attack it disastrously. If it gets a six months start of his attack, then the attack won’t matter.”⁸³ She began to write feverishly, first in preparation for the Hanover conference she was to attend that summer, and then on *Sex and Temperament*: “5,000 words and it was still only three thirty” in the afternoon”; “6,480 words of new material in two hours”; “8,000 [words] in an hour and a half.”⁸⁴ In the span of eight months, Mead attended the month-long Hanover conference, traveled to Europe for three months to rendezvous with Bateson, and wrote the entire manuscript of *Sex and Temperament*.

Back to the Field, in a Fog

Wanting to stretch out his funding to last as long as possible, as he had no job or immediate prospects to return to, Fortune elected to travel to New Guinea by freighter, a trip which would take him nearly six months. In some ways, the trip was a productive one. From port in Durban he sent Boas the *Manus Religion* manuscript he had been revising for publication as Boas had “kindly arranged.”⁸⁵ Fortune’s work on his Arapesh grammar and texts had been delayed by his need to do the “spade work”

of teaching himself phonetics, which he did during his post-field stay in London, but he succeeded in completing the manuscript and sent that off to Benedict and Boas during the voyage as well.⁸⁶ Unfortunately, it was handwritten, and between a series of complications arising from that, Boas's ill health, Fortune's frequent inaccessibility over the next few years, and the dearth of money for academic publishing in the wake of the Depression, the grammar did not even make it into typescript until the summer of 1939. Fortune proofed the galleys in 1941, and the grammar was finally published in 1942. It would be his last book.

The other activity Fortune engaged in on his long passage to New Guinea in 1934–35 was trying to understand what was happening to his marriage. While Mead was by now convinced that her marriage with Fortune must end so that she could dedicate herself fully to Bateson, she had kept him in the dark about her plans at Bateson's urging. Although it may seem as remarkable to us in hindsight as it was unwelcome to Mead at the time, Fortune continued to see himself as married to Mead, albeit now working through a difficult time, as marriage partners sometimes must do. After all, Bateson was not Mead's first extramarital love interest, and Fortune was doing his best to take at face value her argument that for her to have another lover need not constitute a threat to their marriage. Ever since their separation, Fortune had been making hesitant overtures to Mead. She might meet him at a conference in Cambridge (as she, unlike he, could afford to travel), or Fortune might stop in New York on his way to New Guinea. He solicited her reaction to possible scenarios for a shared future—wondering whether she would be happy in Cairo, for example, should he win the professorship there. And he offered interpretations of the events that had transpired on the Sepik that, should she accept them, created room for them to begin rebuilding their relationship. It is in this spirit—"as [an] excuse for you"—that Fortune repeatedly explained Mead's behavior on the Sepik as arising from a state of temporary insanity, one that she could "come clean" from by repudiating the squares.⁸⁷ "I like to think there is a clean and clear mind in you somewhere," he said. Or was she "all clouded with those clouds of neurosis still?"⁸⁸

But Mead was not interested in renewing their relationship, and she took these suggestions either as hazards that were best ignored or as unreasonable accusations that deserved to be rebuffed. She told Fortune that it was "of course quite true" that there was "no possibility" of her going to Cairo. So ridiculous was Fortune's "definition of the events of the last year" as "mental instability" that she did not "intend to waste time and energy combatting it." Indeed, she assured him, she was as

healthy, plump, calm, and “clear-headed” as she had been “since before . . . Samoa.”⁸⁹ But if Mead’s rejection of him on the grounds established by the squares was not the result of derangement, Fortune concluded, it could only mean one thing: that she must really believe the squares were an “impersonal science” worthy of acting upon. She confirmed this for him by reasserting her commitment to the fundamentals of the theory: “I am continuing to find . . . thinking of certain aspects of human nature in terms of a fourfold polarity [to be] very useful and stimulating in my use of material.”⁹⁰ She also still insisted “that the point [about temperament type] is an hereditary one,” if perhaps “non-revealing to people who do not show the special [North-South] traits sharply.”⁹¹

Fortune was galled by these kinds of responses. Lest Mead not realize what she was saying, he laid it out as clearly as he could, for her and later for Benedict. As Fortune saw it, Mead was committing herself to a “race campaign . . . as deliberate as Hitler’s.” She was dividing humanity into two (primary) races, one Southern and one Northern, each with its own “pharmacoepia,” “literature,” “appropriate cultures among the cultures of the world,” and “appropriate sex affairs.” These “world distributed races” were “believed to have a real physiological basis, like blood groups.” Moreover, Fortune saw Mead as using this categorization “to make the stock race points”: to “question the wisdom of intermarriage” between the races, to “give them their own separate cultures in mutually unintelligible languages,” and to “start a campaign against other races than your own.” If the theory of the squares did not grow out of “weak mindedness,” it could only represent the “self conscious” advancing of a “vicious campaign” of which he was the first victim. Fortune took Mead’s refusal to acknowledge this as “dishonest.” His demands for Mead to own up to the implications of the squares had “nothing to do with sex affairs—it’s more important” than that. “If you really want to get rid of me [just] say so.”⁹² He added in a later letter, “But if the ‘race stuff’ is ‘the basis of your judgments . . . I might as well apply for a clear and clean mind to Hitler if I were a Jew.’”⁹³ Mead’s rejection of him as an inappropriate father for her children Fortune likened to a racialistic worry over miscegenation. So incredulous was he that he revisited the squares in letter after letter. In a sense, of course, it was unbelievable. His wife, the world-renowned Boasian-trained anthropologist Margaret Mead, was resorting to the “seemingly impersonal means” of “Race—not even English v. Colonial—but Race” to justify her change of heart.⁹⁴ “Franz Boas might have taught you” better, he admonished her.⁹⁵

Wearying of his tirades, Mead again withdrew from what was already very largely a one-sided conversation: “We will not talk about theories

of temperament any more.”⁹⁶ But she conceded nothing, keeping her eye on the more pressing matters of writing her book and maneuvering Fortune toward a divorce. She mobilized the help of those whom Fortune trusted: Ruth Benedict, who reposted from New York signed and post-dated letters that Mead had sent her from Europe, where unbeknownst to Fortune she was spending time with Bateson;⁹⁷ Fortune’s brother and sister-in-law Barter and Shirley Fortune, who were to encourage him to agree to a divorce without revealing that that was Mead’s intention;⁹⁸ Fortune’s friend Carrie Kelly, who scoped out in Sydney “what signature legalising process available weekends would be subsequently acceptable to the American and Mexican consuls”;⁹⁹ and Bateson, in many ways the choreographer of the secret divorce scheme, who was writing to Fortune frequently now appealing to his gentlemanliness and sense of fair play as a colleague and friend. When Fortune’s ship docked for a few hours in Sydney near the end of his long ocean voyage, he was met with a legal document awaiting his signature that would grant Mead the power to divorce him in his absence.¹⁰⁰ He dutifully went to the appropriate consular offices and signed. Looking back, he could see that Mead’s correspondence had “been carefully leading up to it.” But she had provided him with no clear reason for wanting a divorce or definite intention to follow through and obtain one. “I don’t even know what you want [the power of attorney] for. . . . It’s a fog.”¹⁰¹ A letter she sent him soon afterward, carefully crafted with Bateson’s input, emphasized that she “could not consider the possibility of reshaping my life so as to include, if possible, children, as long as my relationship to you was still formally there,” and Fortune, aware that he was in no position to provide for a family, accepted this as her primary justification for preparing the way to a divorce.¹⁰² It was to be some time yet before he fully grasped the extent of Bateson’s role in the undoing of his marriage. When Fortune asked her directly about the status of her relationship with Bateson, Mead remained evasive, saying only that her feelings for him were “unchanged” and that his plans were “too vague at present to build upon.”¹⁰³ In another letter following soon after, Mead made clear her desire to treat “the past as a definitely closed book, our sex relationship and its legal expression both finished.”¹⁰⁴ Fortune did not learn that the divorce was definite until November 1935, two months after it had been finalized.

A Biology of Social Forms

By the time he signed the power of attorney in Sydney, Fortune was incorrigibly fixated on the squares. “[T]his goes on in me unforgettably,”

he had written to Mead back when he was in London.¹⁰⁵ His life had certainly taken a downhill turn since the theory's invention on the Sepik; he was unable to find a job, and now his marriage had disintegrated for reasons he could not fully discern. Could there be something right in the squares' categorization of him as constitutionally deficient? Trying to make sense of it, driven perhaps by a psychic need for redemption, he returned over and over again to the characteristics imputed to his inborn temperament by the squares typology: "I have been thinking a [great] deal about myself as being Northern Race i.e. possessive, jealous, proud, sadistic, violent. . . . I had to accept a factual situation [that is, Mead's attraction to Bateson], and also apparently eternal reason for it—to the permanent discredit of my own being and nature. . . . I was given a bad name, with authority of Science. . . . [It] makes a man bad."¹⁰⁶ He went on to say, "I was persuaded for a while it was Science and I was a bad Race by heredity. . . . But I'm not like that. . . . It has nothing to do with me."¹⁰⁷ "Race and Biological Basis in Heredity about it is nonsense," he wrote. "I or anyone else can be the opposite at will where there is position or room for it. . . . [It's] not me any more than a Dobuan or a Manus is me."¹⁰⁸ "I am not pleading in self extenuation," he wrote to Benedict. "I am trying rather to understand [the] situation."¹⁰⁹ But no matter how he tried, he could not shake the feeling that there was something wrong with him—as indeed at this point there clearly was. The obsessiveness of his thought was undoubtedly intensified by the many months he had spent alone on the freighter (he was the sole passenger on the ship). "I'll have to seal myself up talking too much to you," he wrote to Benedict. "It's being so long at sea."¹¹⁰ But Fortune was also suffering from having had his objections to the squares continually rebuffed, or worse, ignored. It was as if his reaction to the theory—as consequential as it had been for him, and as doubtful as he was of it as an account of human difference—was of no significance whatsoever.

He kept returning to the squares "Summary Statement" that Mead had drawn up on the Sepik. He had saved a copy, and he looked at it often. "I have . . . one or two documents of the hysteria—typed by her. I keep them by me. . . . [I]f ever I think all may be well I have them to look at to know where I am."¹¹¹ Fortune's numerous letters about the squares sound like hallucinatory ravings, but in part this is because they faithfully echo the tone and content of the documents themselves: "There are two types of human beings," the statement asserts. These types, which crosscut the conventional sexes, are characterized by "distinct physical types," "temperament," and "body chemistry." Physical type is "expressed in size, bone structure and plasticity vs. rigidity of

face and figure.” The northern temperamental type attributed to Fortune was deemed prototypically “sadistic,” “completely aggressive,” “violent,” and “possessive.”¹¹² Extensive attention is focused on the bodily capacity for mating and childbearing in combinations of different types. The document celebrates itself as a great scientific discovery, the solution to a problem that humanity had been grappling with throughout history. “Christianity was an attempt to solve the problem [solved by the squares], but it finally failed because Jesus was uneducated.”¹¹³ So Fortune’s reference to Mead in his letters as “Science and Light and Truth and Discoverer of New Races” is not entirely unfounded.¹¹⁴ When he wrote angrily that the squares was a “horrid mixture of telepathy, stigmata, horoscopy, beliefs about Races comprehensible only to Twins,” and that the “Tchamberi typed copy gives reasons for Jesus Christ not discerning the four race problem, and all manner of nonsense about revolutionising the practice of medicine,” he was citing the document fairly.¹¹⁵

But as Fortune came to realize that no repudiation or retraction of the squares was forthcoming, he began to frame a theoretical rebuttal. It was the only avenue that remained open for him to throw off the stigma with which he felt branded and reassert a more properly anthropological view of human nature. This quasi-scholarly project, intimately bound up with his sense of his own worth as a human being and as an anthropologist, is what led Fortune to produce some of the strangest and least comprehensible papers he wrote over the rest of his career (see Lapsley 1999:242–243). Entering into the logic of the squares in order to refute the theory in its own terms, Fortune wound up reproducing in this work many of the very qualities that he was repelled by in the theory itself. Although this theorizing ran counter to his more usual tendencies, we can see it as driven by the same characteristics that Fortune exhibited in his altercation with Murray on Dobu: his predisposition to empathetically enter into alien modes of thought, his insistence on holding fast to the truth as he saw it, and his emotional intensity when he experienced frustration.

Fortune began working out his formal refutation of the squares even before he knew Mead was moving to divorce him. When he sent Benedict the first complete draft of his Arapesh language manuscript while en route back to New Guinea, it included, besides the grammar and texts, an additional section containing material on social anthropology that did not make it into the final book (Fortune 1942). Among this material was a paper entitled “Culture in Male Descent and in Female Descent,” which he described at the time as an “account of the different language

which I speak from Margaret—not her shoddy explanation in Race.”¹¹⁶ “If you want to see what I think,” he wrote to Mead, “you can find a copy of the paper I . . . sent to Ruth for publication with the Arapesh language. . . . I think it’s a fairly impersonal reckoning from such stuff. . . . I’ve made my own sense of it.”¹¹⁷ Apparently “worried by a sense of what may be a grain of science in [the squares],” Fortune began attempting to account for the primary human type contrast drawn by the theory not as a matter of immutable inborn traits, but as features which individuals could manifest differently depending on the particular relationships they were in and the larger cultural systems in which those relationships were embedded.¹¹⁸ In other words, he took for granted the basic squares premise that there are two basic human types distinct from males and females. But instead of interpreting the distinction directly in terms of biology as in the squares, he sought to salvage the theory by providing an explanation in which one’s type would be crucially determined by social factors—“how it all works out in culture.”¹¹⁹ One of the main possibilities he explored was that “complexes” of physically conditioned but culturally mediated sex behaviors could be distinguished in patrilineal versus matrilineal societies. He also became interested in how a large scale cultural pattern like warfare could be explained by the shaping of physiological reflexes—in this case, perhaps, cultural suppression of revulsion to killing through “conditioned reflexes of the stomach and gut”—as a result of specific cultural habits such as dietary practices.¹²⁰

Fortune wrote a whole series of manuscripts developing this reasoning on culturally-based physical differences—“a biology of social forms” as he called it, though an apter label might have been “a sociology of biological forms.”¹²¹ In one such paper, “Matrilineal and Patrilineal Cultures in the New Guinea Region,” he lays it out systematically. In matrilineal society, according to Fortune, a somewhat jumbled collection of cultural features related to sex and marriage co-occur alongside the “reckoning of descent in the female line.” The two most important of these are the cultural habit of “[m]aximum satisfaction to the woman in the sex act, including the technical stimulation of the clitoris,” and the sociological complex of “[p]renuptial sex freedom; frequent attacks against jealousy in marriage; high prevalence of divorce; a premium upon social experiments in sex.”¹²² While the content here may be shocking, Fortune’s approach to analyzing it makes sense, given his goals. His proposal is that the sociological complex—transparently a model of the “Southern” Mead—might derive from the cultural habit by way of “endocrine influences.”¹²³ In other words, it is ultimately the *cultural activities* people which habitually engage in as members of a matrilineal society that lead

them to have “Southern” sociological traits; the latter are not originally due to inherited physical factors per se.

Fortune’s brief article “Arapesh Maternity,” published in 1943, similarly attempts to explain physical differences in terms of cultural practices. Fortune observes that Arapesh women have a longer “lactogenic interval,” an “organic quiescent period” between childbirth and the resumption of menstruation, than do Caucasian women. While Fortune imagines it reasonable that the lactogenic interval is related to the length of time mothers nurse their babies, he discounts this hypothesis because Arapesh mothers often nursed for up to three years without causing their lactogenic intervals to be extended for that long. Instead, he suggests that “renewed ovulation” in Caucasian mothers is provoked by an earlier “resumption of sex relations after parturition,” again presumably mediated hormonally (Fortune 1943:164). Nevertheless, the resumption of sexual activity after childbirth is itself fundamentally cultural. In Arapesh culture, its postponement is bound up with ideas about the proper management of population growth, and its resumption is imbued with social significance, as indicated by its marking with a ceremonial feast. Here again, then, observable physiological differences would ultimately be shaped by cultural factors.

Surely to his professional detriment, Fortune began sending his writings around to the small circle of anthropologists—including Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, and Robert Lowie—who he believed would be sympathetic to his goal of reinstating culture at the core of personality theory, in opposition to the squares.¹²⁴ As he wrote to Boas, “I have a biology of social forms now completely sufficient to show the conditioned nature and the codes of conditioning used to make (1) New Guinea matriliney, (2) New Guinea patriliney, (3) war from stone age times till now. . . . I do not expect to be believed except by scientists here and there—real men—the dead timber from the stone age till now litters up the place so much.”¹²⁵ But, unsurprisingly, his few readers were not impressed. “I feel very much worried about your statements which seem to me to assume direct relation between bodily characteristics in populations and their social organization,” Boas responded.¹²⁶ Or as Kroeber wrote to Benedict, “Several letters and over-dogmatic or sharp articles from Reo Fortune indicate pretty severe strain. I’m afraid worry over a living and not making good may lead to a crack-up.”¹²⁷ As none of these people knew about the squares, Fortune’s writings against the theory only confirmed for them that he was going mad. Just like the squares, they are a mess of questionable correlations, explicit sexual details, and grandiose claims. So drawn in to the original squares documents did he become

that he even began to mirror their claim that they heralded a revolution in scientific thought. While working on his revision of the theory in New Guinea, he was “tempted to return to civilization with a Discovery” so important that he actually had it “lodged in the bank in case of accident.”¹²⁸ Growing as they did out of an intense desire to redeem the squares, Mead, and himself all at once, his writings took on a tragic self-referential quality: “[T]he propaganda for the matrilineal code has been conducted in good faith, by many persons of high integrity. We say only that we believe that they did not realize the relativity of their own conditioning or where it came from. Our interest for the future is to see what liberty of action we can regain in regard to our other innate capacities” (FBP: Fortune, “The Social Psychology of Family Life,” 13).¹²⁹

In his mind, Fortune was doing a noble thing by taking on what he saw as the central flaw in the squares. But no one apart from Mead, Bateson, or Benedict could have known what he was trying to do. And for their part, the last thing they wanted was to engage in a public scholarly conversation about the squares on Fortune’s terms. Indeed, they gave no indication of even recognizing themselves in his work. Fortune’s short article “Social Forms and Their Biological Basis” (1941) would have made perfect sense to Mead, who had written to him enthusiastically a few years earlier about the methods then being developed for “measuring the strength of the sex drive . . . by a biological assay of the urine and blood, and a determination of the amount of sex hormone circulating therein.”¹³⁰ But the article was so incomprehensible and offensive to his colleagues (he was lecturing at the University of Toledo at the time it was published in the *American Sociological Review*) that they had him suppress his affiliation in the publication.¹³¹ “I am not crazy . . . , but I fear that I have been taken for it,” he wrote to Boas.¹³²

Fortune’s Return to the Arapesh

When Fortune finally arrived in New Guinea and made his way up to the “aeroplane Purari country” on the headwaters of the Ramu River in the eastern Highlands, he found the place “a blood bath.”¹³³ It was a “fighting country . . . gone very nearly poisonous with incipient Govt. control and redoubled in intensity rather than settled.”¹³⁴ By virtue of a special “act of tolerance by Govt,” he was allowed in with “only 2 boys [i.e., native guards] and 1 shot gun,” rather than the regulation “10 native servants of which at least 4 must be armed.”¹³⁵ He was not allowed to live in a village lest it thereby become a target for attack; instead, he was given temporary use of a “deserted Government outpost,” with

“the grave of a [murdered] prospector” just outside.¹³⁶ Here, for several months, Fortune tried to learn the language and carry out an ethnological study of the Kamano, the area’s “deadly true long distance bow men, constant internecine fighters, and cannibals.”¹³⁷ But, as so often happened, the effects of the anthropologist’s presence were magnified by the colonial situation, and government sponsored “punitive killing” began hitting the natives “harder than ever just where [Fortune’s] observations were made—owing perhaps to attention inevitably drawn by these observations.”¹³⁸ He was forced to return to the coast. As he wrote to Boas, “To do more inland work I would have to outfit like an exploring party with line of carriers, gun boys, etc. imported inland at considerable expense. I have done without—[and] there has been much Government official alarm over that in case I got killed for lack of force,” as it would further escalate the fighting.¹³⁹ He wanted to go elsewhere in the Highlands such as Chimbu or Hagen, but he could not get permission lest it “make a precedent for all they keep out now—missionaries, gold companies, big pastoral lease wanters etc.”¹⁴⁰

So Fortune pressed on in search of another field site. His first choice was New Ireland—“old matrilineal country”—where he might pursue his interest in the biology of social forms. But nowhere he visited was satisfactory, and he returned to Rabaul after just three months. New Hanover was beset by a plague of leprosy. Kavieng had a dramatically depleted population in a “permanent sulk” and was refusing to carry on with the daily business of food gardening because of a drought that had further impoverished them relative to the imported laborers on the surrounding plantations.¹⁴¹ But a promising direction was provided by chance, and it led him back to the Arapesh region where he had done fieldwork with Mead three years earlier. As he traveled around the Melanesian coastal circuit, Fortune encountered Arapesh laborers. He had met them in Salamaua, then the staging area for prospectors seeking their fortunes at the Wau goldfields and other points inland, and he met them now too in Rabaul, an important colonial hub where ships frequently stopped to load and unload enlisted laborers, crewmen, and cargo. As he wrote to Mead from Salamaua, they even “man the BP’s [trade store] here . . . and when I go in . . . the whole native staff chatters Arapesh to me.”¹⁴² Drawing on his unusual cultural capital for a white man in the area, Fortune had earlier managed to hire two Arapesh helpers, including one he knew personally from his time with Mead in Alitua. This had been a great boon for him during his time in the Highlands, where at first he had had trouble securing native assistants because the “[g]reat swarms of miners get them all.”¹⁴³ He found these

cosmopolitan Arapesh laborers very solicitous: “on the beach at Salamaua they want me to ask them anything I don’t know and they are as friendly as friendly.”¹⁴⁴ In November 1935, nine months after he first set foot in the Highlands, he gave up on trying to establish himself in a new region and returned home to Arapesh country with his friends for want of a better alternative. It does not seem he initially went there with any particular intent with regard to Mead or anthropology. As he wrote to Mead, “The old stuff is very well covered by you, of course . . . but I might yet find enough work to do.”¹⁴⁵ He was weary from the stress of danger and constant travel, and he sought comfort in a familiar region where he knew the language and could finally let down his guard.

Fortune received his copy of Mead’s *Sex and Temperament* while he was on his way to New Ireland in July 1935. He read it through at once, and his initial reaction was above all relief that it did not mention the squares. “I might have spared my worry,” he wrote to Benedict. “The book is of her usual honesty and integrity in impersonal matters. As for her personal insistence that she and [Bateson] were mild abused Arapesh, and I a sadistic brute, and that this was a discovery in science, it does not appear in her work. . . . though the context rises up from it at me.”¹⁴⁶ (Over the following months, Fortune did express to Mead his reservations that “some of the material [that] you bend” in illustration of the thesis “you break in the bending.” But he basically concurred with her assessment of “the temperamental tempo of the three cultures,” with such criticisms as he had applying “more to detail than to thesis.”¹⁴⁷ He certainly gave no indication that he intended to make those criticisms public, as Mead had so feared. Nevertheless, when Mead learned from one of his letters that he was heading back into Arapesh country, she worried anew that he was positioning himself to attack her. She immediately had Benedict send off a cable informing Fortune that Arapesh country was “disapproved.”¹⁴⁸ Instead, she directed him to head south to New Zealand or Fiji to begin writing up. But exigencies of transport prevented the cable—along with a subsequent letter reinforcing the disapproval—from reaching him until he had already been in the area for seven weeks.¹⁴⁹

Until that point, Fortune’s research in the Arapesh region had been relatively unfocused, and his inquiries apparently limited by exhaustion and bouts of fever. But Benedict’s cable calling him out of the area struck him as unwarranted and suspicious, and it prompted him to reconsider both his fieldwork goals and the thesis of Mead’s book. “You should not have cabled ‘disapprove Arapesh,’” he told Benedict. After all, at no other place in New Guinea did he have “the equivalent of 9 months

good work as a platform.”¹⁵⁰ “As to [Mead’s] book *Sex and Temperament*,” he wrote in a seven-page letter, “take the skeleton of it”:

This skeleton is of a curious nature: of somewhat arbitrary abstraction from the three separate social tissues involved—yet with some truth behind it—so that I said at the first blow “O well taken.” I was greatly relieved too that her personal mental spree of Southern and Northern personalities had taken such abstract form, so well away from prior, concrete individual judgments on her own small circle—of more invidious nature—at least of my “violence” and sadism compared with Bateson’s “gentleness” and “masochism.” Let her fix the Devil on to the Mundugumor culture, the Saint on to the Arapesh culture, and the Confusion of the Sexes on to the Tchamberi culture—well taken. But come again to consider the cultures, I cannot help but judge in a running gamut all the way from well taken—to taken, taken—to taken in. As of individuals, so of cultures—Is it all so simple? Love the Arapesh, qua Bateson. Repudiate the Mundugumor qua Fortune. Confusion in Tchamberi. . . . I pinch myself on occasion and ask myself, if this *is* science, or history, or what exactly?¹⁵¹

Several weeks earlier, just after he had settled in Liwo, the home village of one of his Arapesh friends which he had visited frequently during his prior fieldwork with Mead, Fortune wrote that he had “discovered the physiological difference of the Arapesh people from other peoples—apropos of the maternal point. It exists and is definite and striking.”¹⁵² This discovery, which is almost certainly that of the longer lactogenic interval discussed above, suggests that Fortune was then still envisioning himself as bringing redemption to Mead’s analysis of the three cultures by rescuing the “truth behind it” from the racist “mad delusion” and “stupidity” of squares.¹⁵³ As he had written to Mead repeatedly during the preceding months, he was trying to get behind what she “sensed on the Sepik” in order to see “how it all works out in culture”: he was seeking a new “formulation of the devil” that would be “in sober and . . . good science.”¹⁵⁴ But even apart from his efforts to reform the theory of the squares underlying *Sex and Temperament*, Fortune had Arapesh material of his own to write up, based on the research he had done on inter-village relationships, the “roads” connecting neighboring groups, men’s ceremony, and oratory (see Dobrin and Bashkow 2006). He knew that he would “have to write my later ethnology under a heavy cloud of controversial presupposition about it by Margaret. It is not going to be easy.

. . . I need every bit of balance I can get under these circumstances, every ounce of weight of knowledge possible.”¹⁵⁵ Still, Fortune wished to respect Boas and the conditions of his funding, which was, after all, coming from Columbia. So when Benedict insisted that an “old field” like Arapesh was out of the question, he agreed to take the next ship out, some six weeks later, following her orders.

Epiphany

It was on board that ship heading out of New Guinea that Fortune finally began to understand how he had been manipulated. When his ship put in at Rabaul, he received a letter from Mead, sent three months earlier, telling him she was “going to Java” to do some “initial survey” fieldwork at the invitation of “three big foundations interested in the possibility of sending out an expedition of child psychologists, endocrinologists, psychiatrists, etc. to study the relationship of mental disorder to cultural conditioning.”¹⁵⁶ On the same stop, he learned from E. W. P. Chinnery, New Guinea’s Government Anthropologist and Director of District Services and Native Affairs who was then based in Rabaul, that Bateson, too, was heading to the Dutch East Indies for fieldwork.¹⁵⁷ Their choice of location was significant: Bali represented a cultural type within the squares system for which they as yet “had no good example” (Mead 1972:255; Mead 1977a:178; Boon 1985:347; Stocking 1974:96), meaning that the squares was continuing to govern their research agenda. Hard as it may be to believe, knowing as we do how the story unfolded, Fortune had not fully understood until that moment that Bateson was in fact his rival. The two had maintained a collegial correspondence since their time together in Sydney, and they had visited on more than one occasion during Fortune’s year in London. Trying hard not to play the part of the possessive “Northern” husband that had been assigned to him in the squares, Fortune wrote to Bateson with the due consideration of a professional peer, albeit one with whom his wife, who idealized open marriage, had unfortunately become infatuated during a time of exceptional stress and apparent insanity. In a letter to Bateson the previous year he had said, “If I thought of you as of considerable importance I’d blame you maybe, but . . . I never have thought of you as such. This is essentially Margaret’s business, so it seems to me.”¹⁵⁸ He asked Bateson whether he had “read Margaret’s book” soon after he received it.¹⁵⁹ Bateson actively cultivated the impression that he and Mead were not in close contact: “I hardly know how our relationship stands as regards the future,” he wrote evasively in response to Fortune’s query.¹⁶⁰

When Fortune learned that Mead was actually using the papers he had signed in Sydney to file for a divorce, he shared the news with Bateson. He seemed to have had no idea that he was relaying the story back to one of the very people who had contrived to make it happen.

But now Mead and Bateson were both on their way to new squares-based fieldwork in the Dutch East Indies, and the fact that neither of them had mentioned the other in their letters could only mean that they had been deliberately concealing their plans.¹⁶¹ Fortune wrote to Benedict that he “just heard from Margaret that she was off to Java and from Chinnery that Bateson was off to a Dutch East Indian island. . . . So that I just realised—and only now, that Margaret lied to me about my power of attorney for her divorce, saying she wanted someone with money to get children” when in fact what she wanted was to form a new partnership with Bateson.¹⁶² The tone of Fortune’s letters took on a new self-assurance as he saw afresh all that had happened: “I understand that your move for my power of attorney for your divorce—which I gave you in faith, believing you, . . . was, in fact, a lie and a trick. . . . Are you planning to produce the children there [i.e., in the Indies]—or was it a lie?”¹⁶³ He had already been disappointed by Mead’s “tactics of an all’s fair nature” in divorcing him from a distance.¹⁶⁴ But now he saw the extent to which Bateson was in on it as well: “I know well what steps go backwards; so does Bateson.”¹⁶⁵ And he began to wonder, too, about Benedict, who had encouraged him to regard her as a confidante and trusted friend since he and Mead parted in Sydney. He had had a glimmer of suspicion about Benedict around the time he was presented with the divorce documents. He wrote to her then, “I’d like to know where you are in this, because I don’t know. . . . Margaret warned me off going near America in case I told American anthropologists from Pacific Coast to New York that she’d been out of her mind. . . . I don’t know how far I’ve been ‘bumped off’ anywhere.”¹⁶⁶ But now he turned Benedict’s cable to him over in his mind: “why the hurry to disapprove Arapesh country and hurry me out—and to New Zealand? Why New Zealand?”¹⁶⁷ If Columbia’s Research Council and the anonymous donor truly wished for him to work in the unexplored New Guinea Highlands, he was willing to do so, but because of the need for the ten guards, the cost far exceeded what his field budget allowed, and as Benedict assured him, “the ‘Angel’ isn’t in a financial position” to increase his funds.¹⁶⁸ But if the priority were to conserve money, the plan of “the least expense” would be “obviously to stay right where I am until something more satisfactory offers.”¹⁶⁹ So her order made no sense—except under the theory that the disapproval was coming at Mead’s behest in order to silence him and

keep him out of the way. “Bateson commended my elimination to New Zealand to me and Margaret supported him and has evidently won your support also,” Fortune wrote to Benedict.¹⁷⁰ It looked to Fortune “more like Margaret Mead, than Columbia, in operation—or Margaret Mead using Columbia and being allowed to do so.”¹⁷¹ Fortune implored Benedict to tell him if “it were not so.”¹⁷² He could hardly conceive that his friends would conspire against him in this way.

For the first time since he and Mead had married, Fortune refused to do as he was advised. He disembarked the ship bound for Sydney and returned to Arapesh country to continue his fieldwork there: “I shall get off at Salamaua and take a small boat back to the Arapesh country due there in a fortnight.” His new understanding had intensified his feeling that Arapesh culture, too, had been unfairly treated by Mead. Resisting the premise of Benedict’s cable that Arapesh culture was adequately understood, he wrote that there was “at present too little work [on Arapesh culture], e.g. Margaret Mead’s *Sex and Temperament* book, which . . . is very largely wrong. . . . It is an old field, but one most imperfectly done, where the language—unlike Malay or Dobuan or Manus or Polynesian, the easy tongues of the islands—is difficult and almost defies good work in short time.”¹⁷³ Evidently during his stop in Rabaul, Fortune also received the first two draft chapters of Mead’s monograph, *The Mountain Arapesh*, inviting his comments.¹⁷⁴ But given all that had transpired by the time it arrived, he was resentful. “On the Roads and Diffusion—criticism—burn it—simulate the appearances of honesty and write on your own work.”¹⁷⁵ Mead did make some changes in the manuscript in response to his demands, but she was not happy about it. She refused to send him the rest of the manuscript despite his repeated requests, citing “prohibitive postage costs.”¹⁷⁶

Fortune’s final trip back to Arapesh country cannot have lasted more than two or three weeks, but the research he completed in that time formed the basis for his article “Arapesh Warfare,” which would stand as his only major public objection to Mead’s interpretation of Arapesh culture as she laid it out in *Sex and Temperament*. Although he felt guilty for disobeying Benedict’s cabled instructions, he also found the field trip profoundly satisfying: “I did want to know a lot of things, and I set to work to find out . . . more in science than in any personal issue. . . . I am better with myself for having done it. You do not realise possibly that a mess in the state of knowledge is a real trouble to me sometimes—and it was so of Margaret Mead’s Arapesh,” but now “I know the clearing up.”¹⁷⁷ Part of the reason he was able to work so effectively on this trip was that he did it with the benefit of his experience of New Guinea war-

fare in the Highlands. “I was able to do the old stuff in Arapesh country after having seen for myself something of what intact culture in New Guinea means—as I could hardly have done well from intuition.” . . . “[W]ith a background of having seen a culture with its own kick still in it . . . I knew how to talk with the old men—as no one did previously.”¹⁷⁸ Fortune’s desire to spend time among the Arapesh was also motivated by his desire for more honest friendship: “The Arapesh are the only [mutual] friends of mine” and Mead’s, and “the only ones I shall ever see, I expect, without false representation from her of me.”¹⁷⁹ When Fortune finally did arrive in New Zealand, he discovered that Mead had been corresponding with his family there so as to put them “at cross purposes with me,” and “such shame does not let up easily.”¹⁸⁰

Fortune returned home in early May 1936, divorced and jobless, and having learned through mail delivery on the way there that Mead had remarried to Bateson. He began writing up his findings even before he arrived, but did not rush to publish them.¹⁸¹ “There’s no fear needed of my . . . engaging in controversy. . . . My extra Arapesh work is written up in the main, and may stay fallow, until long after Margaret Mead’s monograph is published. It will do, at least, for those few interested in scholarship—there is no other point in it.”¹⁸² Mead published the first volume of *The Mountain Arapesh* in 1938 after going “through the whole mss. with a fine tooth comb” to take out any material to which she thought Fortune might object.¹⁸³ Fortune must have submitted “Arapesh Warfare” for publication just as soon as Mead’s monograph appeared, respecting her right to publish on the culture first given their original division of labor, and it came out in the *American Anthropologist* the following year. The article was his last real contribution to anthropology.

The Veiled Counterargument of “Arapesh Warfare”

In *Sex and Temperament*, Mead portrayed Arapesh in terms of the squares as “a social order that substitutes responsiveness to the concerns of others, and attentiveness to the needs of others, for aggressiveness, initiative, competitiveness, and possessiveness—the familiar motivations upon which our culture depends” (Mead 1935:15). All Arapesh children are raised to be “non-competitive and responsive, warm, docile, and trusting,” so that men and women alike are “primarily maternal, cherishing, and oriented away from the self” and towards the needs of others (40, 15). As a result, the Arapesh are hapless in the face of conflict: “In this society unaccustomed to violence, which assumes that all men are

mild and co-operative and is always surprised by the individuals who fail to be so, there are no sanctions to deal with the violent man" (25–26; see also 161). According to Mead, those few men who were given to violent impulses were deviants, and seen by others as "pathetic" (149). To be sure, occasional "brawls and clashes" disturb the gentle quiet of Arapesh existence, but these "disreputable" outbreaks are "slenderly organized" and invariably prevented from escalating (23, 25, 27). "Actual warfare—organized expeditions to plunder, conquer, kill, or attain glory—is absent" (23). The remarkable cooperative "emphasis" of the culture was also reflected in its "lack of political organization" (22). Although Arapesh village clusters were grouped into named localities, these did not amount to "political units" (15).

As against this view so strongly influenced, as Fortune knew, by the theory of the squares and Mead's identification of the Arapesh with herself and Bateson, Fortune put forth a more complex picture in which Arapesh people also had cultural resources for dealing with conflict and violence. Men and women were subject to different cultural expectations. Not only did Arapesh culture sanction violence against other communities when it served a certain social good, but before pacification a mere fifteen years prior to Mead and Fortune's fieldwork, full-scale deliberate warfare had played a central role in reifying the articulation between clans and larger political units, or "sovereign localities" (roughly analogous to a village cluster; Roscoe 1994 describes them as groups of "ceremonial communities"). Furthermore, the moral logic underlying the institution of warfare was elaborated by the politically astute "old men" in a high oratorical form (Fortune's "set speeches") in which Arapesh people exhorted one another to behave in culturally valued ways. Given all this—as Fortune tried to show—the notion that violence was extrinsic to or even merely incidental to the culture, a kind of cultural "deviance," was untenable. Fortune's perspective has since been reaffirmed by Paul Roscoe, who concluded on the basis of Mead and Fortune's unpublished field notes and further field research in the area that "prior to pacification, the Mountain Arapesh resorted to significant levels of violence and waged war on a regular basis" (Roscoe 2003:581). It is also supported by our own research on the ethnohistory of Arapesh war alliances (Dobrin and Bashkow 2006; cf. Lipset 2003).

Rhetorically "Arapesh Warfare" is an odd critique. Mead's name appears only in a footnote, and her work is discussed directly in only a few terse paragraphs near the end of the paper. The paper is dense with native accounts of local historical events, its climax a series of long, metaphorical "traditional speeches" presented in Arapesh with only liter-

al word glosses to aid the reader in deciphering their esoteric cultural meaning.¹⁸⁴ But the paper is remarkable for the empathetic understanding of Arapesh culture it reveals, and for the way Fortune turns this understanding to make not only an overt argument against Mead's analysis of Arapesh culture, but additionally, a submerged argument against Mead's morality, scholarly integrity, and ethnographic authority.

As we show in detail elsewhere (Dobrin and Bashkow in press), Fortune's argument against Mead draws heavily upon rhetorical strategies that make speech compelling in the terms that govern indigenous Arapesh discourse, rather than the universe of western scientific discourse in which the paper is ostensibly framed. In "Arapesh Warfare," Fortune makes systematic use of authority-establishing indices of firsthand experience, and he carefully notes, using proper names, the places at which the narrated events took place, just as Arapesh people do when they speak. Within an Arapesh ethos of speaking, the use of these devices is concerned with the proper transmission and public display of knowledge. Whereas Mead was confined to their Arapesh field site, the mountaintop village of Alitua, due to an injured ankle (see, for example, Mead 1977b:103), Fortune traveled extensively throughout the region. As a result, when Mead wrote about regionwide phenomena such as diffusion, sorcery, pathways of exchange, and the tamberan cult, much of the information she was assimilating was acquired indirectly through him. Fortune objected to her implicit claim to authority on these topics, as it not only overreached the bounds laid down by their original division of labor but also implicated him in the offending analysis. But given Mead's limited experience with interlocal phenomena, it was also unjustified from an Arapesh perspective, which takes firsthand experience of events as necessary for one to be able to speak of them with authority. So when Fortune describes the Arapesh territory in terms of distances reckoned in "days of hard walking" (Fortune 1939:22), the rhetorical force derives from an Arapesh—rather than a western—frame of reference. Similarly, when Fortune cites by name the location of a key battle, *Nuberum-Mugueruhunum*, he is doing more than providing informative ethnographic details. He is also adhering to an Arapesh standard for narrative adequacy, which requires narrated events to be specifically situated in geographic terms. As Fortune tells his readers, uttering the proper names of battlegrounds in an Arapesh context invoked whole histories of interlocality relations along with their associated interpretations and emotions, so that "[t]oday, after many years of peace, when assemblies from two formerly hostile localities meet, the orators of either side call the names of these fields and stir quick applause with them" (31). In this

way, then, the battlefield names in themselves constitute powerful support for Fortune's position.

Nearly a third of Fortune's paper is occupied with translated reports of battles fought in precolonial times and transcripts of conventionalized speeches made by "old men" presented in the vernacular. By directly quoting native speech to the extent that he does, one of the things Fortune is of course demonstrating is his own linguistic skill, and hence his ability to speak about Arapesh culture with an authority Mead did not have. In the year or so he spent among the Arapesh, Fortune achieved a remarkable grasp of the language, whereas Mead's skill remained more modest, making this yet another area of knowledge in which Fortune exceeded Mead. According to Fortune, Mead "never could properly" speak Arapesh. "[I]f she claims ease or ability in a Papuan [New Guinea] mainland language she is not honest."¹⁸⁵ But the Arapesh language texts Fortune chooses to include are interesting for an additional reason. They are all instances of a formal genre of oratory called in Arapesh *sakihās* (plural; singular *saki*). Fortune collected many *sakihās* during his Arapesh fieldwork, and he valued them immensely as a form of data, for, despite the "numerous bonfires he lit in celebration of his indifference to academic immortality," there are multiple copies of different versions of them preserved in his archive and integrated in different ways into manuscript drafts of a never-published Arapesh ethnography of his own (McLean 1992:37). In directly quoting *sakihās* to the extent that he does in "Arapesh Warfare," Fortune is once again bringing his own voice into harmony with an Arapesh speaking style. In part because Mead did not travel to intervillage events where much speechmaking took place, and in part because of her different ethnographic interests and limited language skills, Mead would have found it challenging to decipher the *sakihās* she did hear. They were not her domain to cover given their division of labor; nor did she find their rich use of allusive imagery very impressive: "The Arapesh lack of feeling for form and their use of the most remote, dream-like associations, owing to which new subjects were continually being introduced, made some of their speeches, or formal accusations, exceedingly difficult to follow" (Mead 1947:307 n.3).

But as Fortune well knew, the *saki* was also a politically powerful form of verbal art that was used by the Arapesh to comment, in a public yet "veiled" or hidden way, on matters of current concern in the community.¹⁸⁶ It was for the audience to listen through the words to extract their "inner" meanings, and to act upon them if they were so moved. In citing these particular texts, Fortune appears to have been deploying them in an authentically Arapesh indirect fashion to simultaneously

discredit Mead's analysis of Arapesh culture and denounce her morality.¹⁸⁷ The *sakihās* all emphasize the social troubles caused by unfaithful wives. In the speech reported at length as part of the article's central example, a woman "lacking in moral fibre" is seduced by a man from another locality, bringing on war (29).¹⁸⁸ According to the moral perspective expressed in these speeches, it is not Mead and Bateson but Fortune who should properly be identified with the Arapesh. Mead was like an Arapesh "cut-lipped woman" who is not "content to stay well" with one man and who incessantly contradicts and undermines him (39). Bateson was like the "secret agent, called in Arapesh speech the *bera libere*," who would affect "a soft compassion with the woman for the 'unhappy' marriage she had incurred" in order to seduce her away (28). Fortune would stand with the Arapesh, bereft of his wife. And if the Arapesh were aligned with Fortune in valuing marital fidelity, then Mead's analysis of the culture, based as it was on Mead's identification of herself and Bateson with the Arapesh in opposition to him in the squares, must be wrong.

But while this reversal is implicit in his argument, Fortune advances no direct counter to Mead's description of Arapesh culture as essentially "peaceful":¹⁸⁹

[I]t 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. Without hypothesis, it is clear that Arapesh culture did not promote warfare to any vicious extreme. Warfare was made dependent upon women's sexual consent in extramarital liaisons outside locality borders, and it was regarded with considerable distaste. [Fortune 1939:37]

Fortune felt uncomfortable subordinating cultural details to an overarching theory. He was inclined to be wary of theories, and he especially distrusted high-level generalizations based on ideas that grew out of western concerns. The kinds of generalizations he did value, both in his own work and others', were the ones that arose directly out of the activities and concerns of the people he was studying, and they always remained close to what he directly experienced in the field. Fortune's uncompromising reporting of even minor ethnographic details calls to mind Boas's methodological archetype of the particularistic "cosmographer" for whom the "mere existence" of a phenomenon "entitles it to a full share of our attention" (Boas 1887:138).¹⁹⁰ As he wrote to Boas upon receiving his copy of Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* (with her rein-

terpretation of his ethnography of Dobu), he thought that “the dominating single idea gives an easy clarity of form in some respects,” although “more reason is often more compromise.”¹⁹¹ Appreciating this aspect of Fortune’s ethnographic temperament early on in their relationship, Mead wrote mischievously to Boas that Reo had “roundly annoyed” Radcliffe-Brown “because he insists upon sticking to” the particular cultures he was studying “and not making up cosmic theories” (MM/FB 10/18/1928 in Caffrey and Francis 2006:244). For Fortune, Mead’s image of the “maternal Arapesh” was objectionable scientifically as a “hypothetical creation” imposed on a complicated and diverse people. “It is not an easy task to view Arapesh social culture in its entire sweep” (Fortune 1939:36).¹⁹²

But Fortune’s most enduring disappointment was reserved for the projective basis of Mead’s portrayal of Arapesh culture in terms of her perceptions of herself and Bateson during their courtship. Although Fortune left this out of the “impersonal” rendering he published in “Arapesh Warfare”—just as Mead left it out of *Sex and Temperament*—no aspect of her account was more offensive to him: it was far worse a flaw than the inaccurate “uniform type” generalization she put forth, although it was its driving impulse. To use one’s image of oneself as a guide in describing the culture of others was, in his eyes, to undermine anthropology itself. As Fortune wrote to Mead in 1936, when she was still trying to engage him in a collegial exchange about the content of the ethnography, “You ask now for my criticism of your incipient Arapesh monograph—it applies too to your published book. I can only say do you think your work is so detached from the kind of human being you are? It is not.”¹⁹³

Conclusion: Reo Fortune’s Ethnographic Temperament

In our earlier discussion of Fortune’s clash with Murray on Dobu over colonial anti-sorcery laws, we identified three characteristics of Fortune’s temperament that helped us understand his actions. One of these was *the emotional intensity with which he responded when he experienced frustration. And frustration arose for Fortune repeatedly in his relationship with Mead.* It arose surrounding practical matters in their joint fieldwork such as satisfying her desiderata for a field site, and it arose in relation to their different styles of ethnographic interpretation. As their relationship began to dissolve, Fortune found himself in a series of double binds that allowed him no room to distance himself from the responsibility for a breakup he did not himself want, and for a cultural description he had enabled Mead to create but that he vehemently disagreed

with. Mead defended her right to explore other love relationships within the bounds of their marriage, giving him no choice but to accept her affairs. During their two-year separation she withheld from him her intentions, so that he had only a vague notion of what she wanted in regard to their marriage. And Mead deemed him a constitutionally unsuitable father—via the type categories of the squares—leaving him incapable of satisfying her desire for children.

As noted above, Fortune's lifelong fixation upon Mead has been read by many as an indication of mental imbalance, and this is no doubt true. But we also should appreciate that Fortune's repetition of his fulminations in his letters for all those years was justified insofar as Mead never indicated that she heard them. For all her insistence that "what is important is the work," Mead was not in fact interested in seriously engaging Fortune's perspective.¹⁹⁴ She never admitted that his objections might be valid, and she never offered him so much as any hint of regret at the methods she had used to distance herself from him. Quite to the contrary, as we have seen, her efforts to forestall his criticisms were far-reaching and deliberate, calling upon every form of power at her disposal. When Fortune formally registered his disapproval of her anthropological reasoning in "Arapesh Warfare," Mead barely acknowledged that she had even read the paper.¹⁹⁵ In 1936 he wrote to her that he had sought "your regret for that swinish and clownish 'Science'; and I did not get it."¹⁹⁶ Twelve years later, in 1948, still no response had come. Picking back up with their correspondence after a long hiatus, Fortune referred Mead repeatedly to "a reconstruction of Arapesh warfare I published in the *American Anthropologist* in 1939," which he had written "to redress your blunder attributing pacifism to the Arapesh in obvious ignorance of their history."¹⁹⁷ But he met with only more frustration when Mead failed to respond to his substantive arguments: "It's a pity if you have no reply to what I said."¹⁹⁸ Her only conciliatory gesture was to include a footnote in her *Record of Unabelin*, published the following year, indicating that Fortune's paper contained "some additional retrospective material" based on work with a different set of informants (Mead 1949:302). Fortune eventually described the futility he felt in his dealings with Mead as a kind of spiritual impurity: "The Arapesh said that they did not like married women running [away and] that they used to kill people over divorce to propitiate the ghosts." Citing Hubert and Mauss, he likened the Arapesh practice of human sacrifice in war to "a communication between a profane 'world' and a sacred 'world.'"¹⁹⁹ Unlike the Arapesh, however, Fortune could find no effective means of restorative communication.²⁰⁰

Of course, not all of Fortune's emotional intensity could be captured in his letters. There is no doubt that he was given to violent outbursts, and for Mead this was a sufficient source of tension in their relationship that she invested it with theoretical significance in the squares. His violent nature was part of her grounds for leaving him, a "deal-breaker" that was closely connected to their difference in social class (see also Banner 2003b).²⁰¹ As we saw above, he lashed out at the Dobuans around him when he felt pushed to his limits by Mead's insistence that she have a better field site than those he could find for her. And a well known story about his time in the Highlands has it that when Fortune received word from Mead that she was acting on her power of attorney and actually filing to divorce him, he expressed his frustration by shooting a Kamano man in the leg (McLean 1992:47-48; George Stocking, PC, July 10, 2007). Fortune seemed to regard such loss of control as a natural if unfortunate side effect of being with others under difficult circumstances. With respect to Mead, he observed after their divorce that she had made much of his having hit her back when the two of them were with Bateson, whereas she had "made a very little thing of anything else."²⁰² He felt these episodes of physical violence hardly compared to the kinds of psychological violence she had directed at him.

Fortune was not reticent. *Holding fast to the truth even when he knew that his views would not be accepted, he constantly reasserted his objections to Mead's representation of the Arapesh in his letters and in his work.*²⁰³ In an encyclopedia entry published posthumously, Fortune described Arapesh society as organized around a belief in the fundamentally "different physical nature and functions of men and women," appealing to their myths as a key form of evidence (Fortune 1984:105). Whereas Mead was given to dismiss by obfuscation any issue over which she could not hold sway (Banner 2003a:431; see also Cressman 1988:194), Fortune clung unswervingly to his objection for the rest of his life. What Mead had done with her knowledge of the cultures they had studied together in New Guinea was to Fortune gravely dishonest, and the fact that she had gotten away with it undermined his trust in the whole scientific enterprise. Skimming through the folders upon folders containing Fortune's bitter letters, it is easy to come away with the impression that he was simply obsessed. But when we read those letters carefully, we see that he was writing above all about one principal theme: the mockery that he felt Mead had made of science. Fortune wrote about "Science" over and over because the events of the past that he felt had abused science—the biologicistic squares, Mead's typification of him as Northern like the "loathsome" Mundugumor and in opposi-

tion to herself, and *Sex and Temperament's* popularization of an image of the Arapesh based on the squares—continued to carry significance for him: How could he dedicate himself to a scholarly study of human societies that was permitted to take such hideous forms? He tried valiantly to right Mead's wrongs: He asked her to retract the squares. He asked her to apologize for having used this "science" against him. Charitably, he even entertained the possibility that the squares might hold some real insight, and he attempted through his writings on the "biology of social forms" to pursue what that insight might have been. But all these efforts failed. Worse yet, when he brought his objections to the attention of others, Fortune's dogged insistence on speaking the truth only served to further marginalize him (see, for example, Lapsley 1999:241–242). His letters written in confidence to Benedict and Bateson were relayed faithfully to Mead, who used her knowledge of his motivations to manage him from afar; his letters about Mead to other anthropologists like Boas, Malinowski, and Radcliffe-Brown failed to produce outrage; and his published attempts at repairing the squares only convinced people that he was crazy, further derailing his efforts to find a job. Unable to secure a position at even colonial outposts like Cairo or Ceylon, he took on what was essentially adjunct teaching, and failing that, frontier fieldwork: first in the New Guinea Highlands (1935–36), then in western China (1937–39), and then in Burma (1945–46). The conditions he endured on those field trips were unimaginably harsh, and the severe illnesses, material deprivation, and traumatic violence that he experienced evidently left their mark on his already brittle psyche.²⁰⁴ By the time he finally received the lectureship at Cambridge in 1947, he had given up playing the game. As he had learned the hard way, "the truth in anthropology does not travel first class" (quoted in McLean 1992:63).

What did travel first class was Mead's view of the Arapesh. In part because Mead was so successful in making her findings accessible and compelling to western readers, her notion of "the peaceful Arapesh" has achieved wide currency notwithstanding Fortune's published objections. *Sex and Temperament* teaches that individuals can find it difficult to accommodate the gender norms of their culture, vividly dramatizing the point that any particular set of norms, such as our own, are neither natural nor the only way things could be. Her portrait of Arapesh culture played a pivotal role in this argument, establishing the possibility of a society in which men were expected to be nurturing instead of competitive, caring and responsive instead of possessive and jealous, and gentle instead of violent and given to war. Lest we follow Fortune too far in dismissing Mead's central claims about Arapesh culture because of the

way they refracted her personal relationships through a supposedly objective ethnographic lens, we should also recognize that the work's personal and projective source was what gave it such wide resonance in the culture to which it was addressed, enabling it to reach a broad audience and reshape popular discourse (Boon 1985; Romanucci-Ross 2001; Lutkehaus 2008; Molloy 2008). For the book was, after all, the story of a journey—personal and ethnographic at once—in which a woman's subordination to her husband was overturned.

Whereas Mead's Arapesh ethnography became a form of "applied biography" (Banner 2003a:327; Caffrey and Francis 2006:81), *Fortune empathetically aligned himself with the perspective of the people he studied to such an extent that the ethnography had a way of becoming his biography*. Using his "common humanity" (see n.192) as a research tool in order to learn what life was like in another cultural world, he became so bound up with the discursive ways of the people he studied that his students later said of him, "he thought in Dobuan" (Jones 1989; Donald Tuzin, PC, August 1994). Empathetically relating to the people he studied was not a matter of always liking them, likening himself to them, or being kind to them. It did not prevent him from applying his cultural knowledge to advance his own immediate ends (such as acquiring secrets or coercing people to carry for him) by manipulating their colonial anxieties (Howard 1984:160; Powdermaker 1932:726). Nor did he restrict himself to using only the friendly idioms. When aggrieved, he turned his cultural fluency against the natives, even using their custom for expressing anger when he shot the Kamano man in the leg—rather an excessive and troubling form of "participation" in the culture! But he also followed local custom for redress and reconciliation, returning to the area many years later in order to pay compensation for his misdeed.²⁰⁵ As when at home, Fortune did not expect relationships always to be peaceful. Mead herself recognized Fortune's willingness to engage in ambivalent relationships as a methodological resource: "Reo does have a particular gift for probing the souls of certain kinds of primitive peoples. It's a combination of enormous persistence and a willingness to bear antagonism."²⁰⁶

Indeed, Fortune was an anthropologist so open to the cultures he studied that we can hardly reconstruct his perspective without also reconstructing the ethnographic context. Fortune's strident denunciation of the colonial antisorcery law when he was on Dobu might have been rash, but it was also well-motivated given his insight into the tenacity of sorcery in the culture—an insight that has been vindicated by the passage of time.²⁰⁷ And we can not fully tell what he was saying in

“Arapesh Warfare” without knowing the cultural frame in which the article is cast. Fortune’s article is presented (mostly) in English, but its most impassioned arguments are Arapesh. Nothing we take from western hermeneutical practice would have led us to detect that, or would have shown us how to interpret its subtextual arguments even if we noticed they were there. But with a knowledge of Arapesh ethnography and history as background, the article’s rhetorical power is clear and striking.

In closing, we should observe that it was our own knowledge of Arapesh ethnography gained through fieldwork that first led us to see Mead’s “gentle Arapesh” as implausible, and so to suspect that Fortune’s “Arapesh Warfare” was condensing something more substantive than the jealous nitpicking of an emotionally injured man. In reconstructing Fortune’s position, we have found knowledge of the culture to be an enormously helpful frame of reference at nearly every turn (see also Jebens n.d.:8). It has provided us with the ground to stand on as we have tried to extricate Fortune’s biography from the layers of interpretation it has been wrapped in by Mead’s own reports. The profound tragedy of Fortune’s marginalization and dissolution is only compounded by the tragedy of a historical view of his character that draws so heavily on a single interested perspective, for it was not only Mead’s portrayal of the Arapesh that traveled first class, but also her portrayal of Fortune himself. Here we have tried to go beyond Mead’s biographers, who occasionally noted the inconsistencies in Mead’s account of her relationship with him, but whose telling of Fortune’s story was understandably shaped by her own. Fortune was no mere cuckold overcome by his devotion to a woman who would no longer have him. An ethnographer of extraordinary insight and integrity, he must have felt like the one sane man in an insane world. As with other historical figures who iconoclastically cleaved to the truth as they saw it despite being ridiculed in their day, Fortune is an intellectual ancestor with a claim to our admiration.

Notes

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The following abbreviations have been used to cite material in the text and notes:

FB:	Franz Boas
FBP:	Franz Boas Papers
GB:	Gregory Bateson
MM:	Margaret Mead
MMP:	Margaret Mead Papers and South Pacific Ethnographic Archives (References are to box:file number)
PC:	Personal communication
PNG:	Papua New Guinea National Archives (References are to folio number)
RB:	Ruth Benedict
RF:	Reo Fortune
RFP:	Reo Fortune Papers

1. MM/RF 12/30/1932 indicates a letter from Mead to Fortune dated December 30, 1932. This format is used for all references to letters cited in this chapter.

2. This is just one of the many colorful anecdotes that continue to circulate about Fortune's later days at Cambridge. It reportedly took place at the 1968 Association of Social Anthropologists conference, the topic of which was witchcraft, and ended with Lucy Mair asking Fortune to sit down, saying "Reo, please stop bewitching the lecturer" (Alan Macfarlane, PC, 10/4/2008). When asked about the incident by a visiting student some years later, Fortune acknowledged it, explaining mischievously that "Well, everyone was talking about witchcraft but no one was doing any!" (Richard Larson, PC, 6/12/2010). It is said that Fortune was once caught in an empty biology laboratory burning material to test some sorcery magic. G.I. Jones, who had been a student at Cambridge, recalls that Fortune would attend lectures in other departments and bother the lecturer with "damnfool questions" asked with such seriousness that no one could tell if he was pulling the speaker's leg (Jones 1989; see also Abrahams and Wardle 2002). Such tales could be multiplied.

3. MMP: Barter Fortune/MM 5/12/1935, R5:5.

4. Reflecting the perspectives of the characters in our story, whose usage was guided by the ethos of an earlier time and place, we have retained the term "native" to refer to indigenous people throughout the text.

5. PNG folio 3: RF/Murray 4/22/1928.

6. PNG folio 5: Murray/Minister for Home and Territories 5/24/1928.

7. PNG folios 6–22; Gray 1999.

8. West 1968:216–218; PNG folio 6: Murray/Radcliffe-Brown 5/30/1928; see also Bashkow 1995:12.

9. Or as he railed elsewhere in the same letter: "As for social function—show me the social function of the secret poisoning of a woman by a man who is ill and blames the woman for sending her spirit to abstract his spirit in the night." MMP: RF/MM "middle April" 1928, S1:15.

10. MMP: RF/MM 11/18/1927, S1:14.
11. PNG folio 5: Murray/Minister for Home and Territories 5/24/1928.
12. PNG folio 5: Murray/Minister for Home and Territories 5/24/1928.
13. MMP: RF/MM 3/18/1928, 4/19/28, S1:15.
14. MMP: RF/MM 3/10/1928, S1:15.
15. Fortune 1963[1932]:292; MMP: RF/MM 3/10/1928, S1:15.
16. MMP: RF/MM 3/10/1928, S1:15. A depersonalized version of this story is told in appendix 3 of *Sorcerers of Dobu*. There Fortune expresses his disapproval of the woman's imprisonment to the book's audience, stating flatly, "I do not think . . . it was necessarily wise to have kept her in gaol for a month" (Fortune 1963[1932]:293).
17. PNG folio 3: RF/Murray 4/22/1928.
18. PNG folio 8a: Radcliffe-Brown/Murray 6/28/1928.
19. PNG folio 8a: RF/Murray c. 6/1928; see also Fortune 1963[1932]:288–294.
20. PNG folio 3: RF/Murray 4/22/1928.
21. We use the term "temperament" advisedly. As we discuss at length below, Mead's interpretation of the New Guinea cultures in *Sex and Temperament* covertly depicts what she saw as immutable features of Fortune's personality (as well as that of other individuals). In order to get beyond Mead's interested view of Fortune's personality—which now reverberates through the literature—we have found it helpful to analyze Fortune's "temperament" anew by looking at his responses and actions in the primary sources.
22. MMP: RF/MM 3/18/1928, S1:15; Fortune 1963[1932].
23. MMP: RF/MM 3/18/1928, S1:15.
24. MMP: RF/MM "middle or late January" 1928, S1:15.
25. MMP: RF/MM 4/24/28, S1:15; see also Gray 1999:68 n.47.
26. MMP: RF/MM "mid-April" 1928, S1:15; RF/MM "middle or late January" 1928, S1:15.
27. Fortune's niece Ann McLean (1992:38) describes "accepting otherness with neither judgment nor condescension" as "Fortune's greatest asset."
28. MMP: RF/MM 3/18/1928, S1:15.
29. Federally issued certificates of confidentiality are intended to protect the privacy of those participating in sensitive research. They prevent identifying information obtained through the research from being accessed using legal means, such as court order or subpoena, lest it lead to participants' prosecution or other harmful outcomes.
30. PNG folio 3: RF/Murray 4/22/1928.
31. Fortune shares a number of beguiling commonalities with Mead's most strident critic, Derek Freeman. Both were quirky male New Zealanders with conservative sexual mores. But surely one of the most striking is their "absolute insistence on intellectual integrity" and "unswerving dedication to the scientific truth" (Appell and Madan 1988:viii, quoted in Shankman 2009:67).
32. PNG folio 5: Murray/Minister for Home and Territories 5/24/1928; PNG folio 8: Williams/Murray 6/27/1928.
33. PNG folio 3: RF/Murray 4/22/1928.
34. MMP: quoted in MM/GB 5/17/1934, R2:6; see also Fortune 1934; McLean 1992:51.
35. MMP: RF/MM 4/22/1928, 4/24/1928, S1:15.
36. MMP: RF/MM 4/19/1928, S1:15.
37. MMP: RF/MM 12/25/1927, S1:14.
38. MMP: MM/RF 2/6/1928 (inferred from RF/MM 4/19/1928), S1:15; see also MMP: MM/RF 6/16–17/1928, S1:15; MM/McAdam 2/12/1932, R16:4; Mead 1933:10.

39. MMP: RF/MM 2/28/1928, S1:15; RF/MM 4/19/1928, S1:15.
40. MMP: RF/MM 4/19/1928, 4/19/1928, 4/22/1928, 4/24/1928, S1:15.
41. MMP: RF/MM 4/19/1928, S1:15.
42. Fortune left the D'Entrecasteaux three months earlier than planned. It is possible that the loss of his Dobuan informant left him without social recourse in his new field site. But the most likely explanation is that he left in order to consult with Radcliffe-Brown in Sydney about where else in Melanesia might be more suitable for Mead (it was Radcliffe-Brown who suggested Manus, where he and Mead ultimately did go; Stocking 1993).
43. MM/RF 8/13/1927, quoted in Caffrey and Francis 2006:62.
44. MMP: MM/Radcliffe-Brown 2/12/1932, N92:2.
45. In *Blackberry Winter*, Mead describes her division of labor with Fortune as determined entirely by Fortune's competitive desires, another piece of evidence for his negative character (see, e.g., Mead 1972:226). But we should be careful in interpreting this, as we also have evidence that the topics Mead covered in her joint fieldwork with Fortune reflected her own interests; see Molloy 2009:336.
46. Even before she and Fortune were to meet Bateson, Mead was already imagining herself as the object of his desire. She wrote to Benedict that she was amusing herself by anticipating "how surprised Bateson will be—for no one expects a woman anthropologist to be beautiful at all, to say nothing of being so surpassingly lovely" (MMP: MM/RB 10/21/1932, S4:1).
47. Another influence Mead acknowledged was the tenth chapter of Carl Jung's *Psychological Types* (1926), on introverted and extroverted types (MMP: MM/GB 1/23/1934, R2:3).
48. MMP: "Summary Statement of the Problem of Personality and Culture," 110:4. The first two pages of the "Summary Statement" can be found at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mead/images/mmo142p1s.jpg> and <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mead/images/mmo142p2s.jpg> (accessed June 13, 2010).
- One of the many sketches the anthropologists produced in working out the squares can be found at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mead/images/mmo140bp1s.jpg> (accessed June 13, 2010).
49. The problem of the relation between personality and culture was "impossible to solve" until "three people, equally strong and equally gifted met, who were a male in M [a physiological male with a masculine temperament, i.e., Fortune] and a female in F [a physiological female with a feminine temperament, i.e., Mead], in combination with either a woman in M or a male in F [a physiological male with a feminine temperament, i.e., Bateson], all born of twinning stocks. When that occurred the perfect brother and sisterhood within the group M or F asserted itself . . . and understanding could be reached" (MMP: Final statement, 110:4). The reference to "twinning stocks" is elaborated further in the document in terms of an analysis of heredity and genius reminiscent of work by the constitutional type theorist Ernst Kretschmer (Kretschmer 1925, 1970[1929]).
50. MMP: "Summary Statement" 110:4.
51. MMP: MM/GB 1/9/1934, R2:3.
52. MMP: MM/GB 1/26/1934, R2:3.
53. FBP: RF/FB 12/16/1933; MMP: MM/GB 1/16/1934, R2:3; see also RB/MM 4/27/1936, S5:8.
54. MMP: MM/GB 1/16/1934, R2:3.
55. MMP: MM/RF 1/18/1934, R4:7; MM/RF 1/26/1934, 1/30/1934, R4:9; MM/GB 1/12/1934, R2:3. Boas was the closest Fortune had to a dependable mentor, and he later likened him to his own father, "who was very much a similar stamp of man" (MMP: RF/RB 3/6/1939, R5:9).

56. MMP: MM/GB 1/5/1934, R2:3.

57. MMP: RF/MM c. 8/18/1933, R4:8; see also MM/Carrie Kelly 7/28/1934 in Caffrey and Francis 2006:104. Even when they were developing the squares on the Sepik Fortune felt stung by the way Mead and Bateson used it to typecast him as Northern. He dealt with his feelings about it more lyrically in the following poem, signed “RFE, Tchambuli, 3/21/33” (MMP: S2:5). The fine one “with not a bite of brine on her mouth” is clearly Mead, the earthy one clearly Fortune:

That one was born of an airy mother.
Fathered by winds of the north and south—
Venus all in a fine sea smother
With not a bite of the brine on her mouth.

You, who are earth and her harvest bread,
Salt in her waters, blood in her vine,
Do not do well to lift your head
And gaze on the skies for a windy sign.

Yet I thought it a lie an old man said,
“Trees say, instructing their young at birth,
With roots in the air and groundward head
Dive to the other side of the earth.”

58. MMP: RF/MM 9/12/1933, R4:7.

59. MMP: MM/GB 1/16/1934, R2:3.

60. MMP: MM/GB 1/6/1934, R2:3; RF/MM c. 1/15/1934, R4:8.

61. MMP: RF/MM c. 1/1934, R5:7; RF/MM, 1/19/1934, R4:7.

62. He described the street in a letter with an ethnographic sensitivity sharpened no doubt by his own dire straits: “The passage is a queer place. A few years ago they say the police durst not walk down it. Two doors down live a thieves’ gang—One is in for life now for murdering in order to thieve. This morning a woman who sells peanuts at the far end was found dead from suicide. It is very poor, very populous—thick with children—and often desperate. Funerals and marriages are communal occasions. This morning all the passage was in the street, many of the women crying, and the men saying bitterly, ‘well, she’ll have no more trouble with paying her income tax.’ Income tax is of course a bitter joke—probably only mentioned on such occasions” (MMP: RF/MM 1/29/1934, R4:9).

63. Fortune was plagued by the memory of having declined a temporary appointment at Sydney in November 1932, just a month before he and Mead encountered Bateson. Although at the time the job had seemed unattractive, in light of his new situation he sorely regretted the decision (MMP: MM/RB 11/3-4/1932, S4:1; RF/Malinowski 11/26/1932, N92:2; Wise 1995:107-108; Gray 2007:75).

64. FBP: RF/FB 12/2/1934.

65. MMP: RF/MM 1/16/1934, R4:9.

66. MMP: RF/MM 1/16/1934, R4:9.

67. MMP: MM/GB 1/25/1934, R2:3.

68. MMP: MM/GB 5/2/1934, R2:6.

69. MMP: RF/MM 1/29/1934, R4:9.

70. MMP: RF/MM 6/19/1934, R4:11.

71. MMP: MM/GB 3/10/1934, R2:4.

72. MMP: MM/GB 3/19/1934, R2:4.

73. MMP: MM/GB 5/1/1934, R2:6.
74. MMP: MM/GB 4/6/1934, R4:5.
75. MMP: MM/GB 5/1/1934, R2:6. This was not the first time Mead had secretly provided money to fund Fortune's fieldwork; see Thomas 2009:305.
76. MMP: MM/RF 4/16/1934, 4/19/1934, R4:10; RB/RF 5/1/1934, R4:10.
77. MMP: MM/RF 5/2/1934, R4:10.
78. MMP: RF/MM 5/13/1934, R4:10.
79. MMP: MM/GB 5/24/1934, R2:6.
80. MMP: MM/GB 4/6/1934, R4:5. Mead sometimes expressed disdain for "keep[ing] up appearances . . . surface living and polite evasions" (MM/RB 7/16/1933, quoted in Cafrey and Francis 2006:86). However, she devoted considerable energy to managing others' impressions of her: "As far as all the world knows . . . Reo refuses to come home to America, instead goes back off to New Guinea without me. Meanwhile it was very well documented here that I expected him back this winter. I came back, took the same big apartment which was originally taken to suit his special needs, put his name on the door and in the telephone book, expected him—as his original cable said—to be home by Christmas, and he never came. As far as America is concerned, they all think I am going to Europe to see him so they won't think there has been a break"—whereas she was actually going to Europe to spend time with Bateson (MMP: MM/Kelly 7/28/1934, B9:5). This story of desertion formed the warrant for her divorce claim, as Mead laid it out for her lawyer (MMP: "Memorandum for Mr. Vorhaus," S4:2). It seems she later came to believe that this is what transpired, at one point even suggesting that Fortune raged at her in his letters "so his conscience can be clear on the point of deserting me" (MMP: MM/GB 2/27/1935, S1:5; see also MM/GB 2/5/1935, S1:5).
81. MMP: MM/GB 4/3/1934, 4/18/1934, R4:3.
82. MMP: MM/GB 4/11/1934, R4:5.
83. MMP: MM/Kelly 7/28/1934, B9:5.
84. MMP: MM/GB 5/1/1934, R2:6; MM/GB 5/21/34, R2:6; MM/RF 5/23/1934, R4:10.
85. FBP: RF/FB 7/27/1934; Fortune 1935.
86. MMP: RF/RB 6/5/1934, R4:11.
87. MMP: RF/MM 6/8/1934, R4:11; see also RF/GB 3/14/1935, S1:4.
88. MMP: RF/MM 5/13/1934, R4:10.
89. MMP: MM/RF 5/20/1934, R4:10.
90. MMP: MM/RF 5/4/1934, R4:10; MM/RF 6/6/1934, R4:11.
91. MMP: MM/RF 6/19/1934, R4:11. It is ironic, when Freeman so strongly criticized Mead for her supposed commitment to cultural determinism, that from this time onward Mead never let go of her interest in the role of biology in shaping human behavior (see also Murray 1990).
92. MMP: RF/MM 6/8/1934, R4:11.
93. MMP: RF/MM 6/19/1934, R4:11.
94. MMP: RF/MM 6/27/1934, R4:11.
95. MMP: RF/MM 7/15/1934, R5:1.
96. MMP: MM/RF 7/6/1934, R5:1.
97. MMP: MM/RB 9/23/1934, S4:2; RB/MM 8/28/1934, 9/4/1934 and 10/11/1934, S5:7–8.
98. MMP: MM/Barter Fortune 11/16/1934, R5:2.
99. MMP: MM/GB 12/13/1934, R2:8.

100. MMP: Fortune affidavit, 12/14/1934, R5:3.
101. MMP: RF/MM 12/15/1934, R5:3.
102. MMP: MM/RF 1/30/1935, S2:2.
103. MMP: MM/RF 4/8/1935, R5:5.
104. MMP: MM/RF 4/25/1935, R5:5. It could well have been his receipt of these letters, rather than a notice that their divorce had gone through as inferred by McLean (1992), that prompted Fortune to shoot a local man in frustration. Explaining his departure from the Highlands in his response to these letters in June 1935, Fortune repeatedly says that he had “humbugged” (a Pidgin English expression meaning he made a nuisance of himself), causing a “frightful stew” (MMP: RF/MM 6/12/1935, R5:5). We presume this is a veiled reference to the shooting. See also note 205, below.
105. MMP: RF/MM 5/25/34, R4:10.
106. MMP: RF/GB “early December” 1934, S1:4.
107. MMP: RF/RB c. 1/1935, R5:3.
108. MMP: RF/RB “early December” 1934, R5:3.
109. MMP: RF/RB “early December” 1934, R5:3.
110. MMP: RF/RB c. 12/15/1934, R5:3.
111. MMP: RF/RB “end of October 1934,” R5:2.
112. MMP: “Summary Statement,” 110:4.
113. MMP: “Final statement,” 110:4.
114. MMP: RF/MM c. 6/1934, R5:3.
115. MMP: RF/MM c. 10/1934, R5:3; RF/MM 10/25/1935, R5:6. For the reference to twins, see Banner 2003a:82 and note 49 above.
116. MMP: RF/RB 10/30/1934, R5:2.
117. MMP: RF/MM 11/13/1934, R5:2.
118. MMP: RF/GB 4/30/1935, S1:4.
119. MMP: RF/MM 6/13/1935, R5:5.
120. FBP: RF/FB 7/8/1941; Fortune 1941b.
121. FBP: RF/FB 4/10/1941.
122. FBP: Fortune, 1941, “Matrilineal and Patrilineal Cultures”.
123. FBP: “Matrilineal and Patrilineal Cultures”. Elsewhere Fortune writes, “It is exceedingly probable . . . that habitual play with the clitoris (especially when it begins at puberty, as it does on the New Guinea coast) changes the endocrine balance in women” (FBP: “The Social Psychology of Family Life,” 12 n.1). Fortune appeals to the then recently discovered biochemical compounds acetylcholine and sympathin as possible mechanisms (Fortune 1941a; FBP: RF/FB 4/10/1941).
124. Fortune did realize that Boas might disapprove of what he was doing, as it was “not the No Mental Differences proven by Social Anthropology” (FBP: RF/FB 3/7/1935).
125. FBP: RF/FB 4/10/1941.
126. FBP: FB/RF 10/9/1941.
127. MMP: Kroeber/RB 7/12/1941.
128. MMP: RF/RB 5/12/1935, R5:5; RF/GB 6/12/1935, S1:4.
129. FBP: Fortune, “The Social Psychology of Family Life,” 13. In having as its subtext a rejection of Mead’s “free sex” agenda, “The Social Psychology of Family Life” is remarkably like Edward Sapir’s “Observations on the Sex Problem in America” that was written as a covert attack on Mead after she rejected him as a suitable husband. In that paper, Sapir criticized “the modern woman” who “makes an intellectual fetish of ‘freedom’ and abolishes jealousy by a fiat of the will” (Sapir 1928:528).

130. MMP: MM/RF 8/9/1935, R5:6.

131. Fortune's publication of "Arapesh Maternity" while he was at Toronto in 1943 similarly "outraged" his colleagues, though he "failed to understand why" (Thomas 2009:314). According to Edmund Carpenter, Fortune was ultimately fired from Toronto "for suggesting in class that the unique feature of face-to-face sexual intercourse might have influenced human development. . . . That point can now be found in many introductory textbooks. Jacob Bronowski was fascinated that a subject he had discussed over TV in the 1970s cost a scholar his job thirty years earlier" (Howard 1984: 267-268).

132. FBP: RF/FB 10/13/1941.

133. MMP: RF/MM 10/29/1935, R5:6.

134. MMP: RF/FB 10/28/1935, R5:6; see also McLean 1992.

135. MMP: RF/MM 10/29/1935, R5:6.

136. MMP: RF/RB 10/29/1935, R5:7.

137. MMP: RF/RB c. 2/1935, R5:7.

138. MMP: RF/FB 10/28/1935, R5:6.

139. FBP: RF/FB 7/19/1935. As Fortune came to understand, the violence was actually intensified by the native police that the government stationed near any outsider. "For example, they rape and bayonet too many native women, under the strain of threat of hostilities against them, and a constant risk of their being overwhelmed by the superior numbers of the local country men. They precipitate situations" (MMP: RF/RB 8/25/1935, R5:6).

140. MMP: RF/FB 10/28/1935, R5:6.

141. MMP: RF/FB 10/28/1935, R5:6.

142. MMP: RF/MM 6/13/1935, R5:5.

143. MMP: RF/MM 6/12/1935, R5:5.

144. MMP: RF/MM c. 3/1935, R5:7.

145. MMP: RF/MM 10/29/1935, R5:6.

146. MMP: RF/RB 7/19/1935, R5:5.

147. MMP: RF/MM 10/25/1935, R5:6; see also 10/30/1935, R5:6.

148. MMP: MM/GB 12/5/1935, S1:5.

149. MMP: RF/RB 1/1/1936, R5:8.

150. MMP: RF/RB 1/1/1936, R5:8.

151. MMP: RF/RB 1/1/1936, R5:8.

152. MMP: RF/MM 11/28/1935, R5:6.

153. MMP: RF/RB 1/1/1936, R5:8; RF/MM 10/25/1935, R5:6.

154. MMP: RF/MM 5/14/1935, 6/12/1935, 6/13/1935, R5:5.

155. MMP: RF/RB 1/1/1936, R5:8.

156. MMP: MM/RF 11/23/1935, R5:6.

157. MMP: RF/RB 2/22/1936, R5:8.

158. MMP: RF/GB 3/14/1935, S1:4.

159. MMP: RF/GB 8/13/1935, R5:6.

160. MMP: GB/RF c. 5/1935, R5:5.

161. As indeed they were. In their many communications to Fortune, Mead and Bateson carefully formulated their wording so as to be unrevealing but not untruthful, and they took care to write nothing that would embarrass them should he circulate their letters as they did his. For example, Mead expressed her appreciation to Bateson for "how carefully you counseled me to write [Fortune] a letter which would in no way injure my reputation" if he showed it to others, and she called the evasive wording he had proposed she employ a "masterpiece" (MMP: MM/GB 1/30/1935, S1:3; 2/5/1935, S1:5). When they were plan-

ning their fieldtrip to Bali, Mead complimented as “excellent” Bateson’s “plan of telling [Fortune] you are going and that I know nothing of it” (MMP: MM/GB 12/5/1935, S1:5; see also MM/RB 3/15/1936, S4:2).

162. MMP: RF/RB 2/27/1936, R5:8.

163. MMP: RF/MM 2/23/1936, S2:2. The topic of children was highly emotionally charged for Mead, who “throughout her life . . . dreamed and daydreamed of dead babies and kidnapped or missing children” (Caffrey and Francis 2006:xxiii; see also Banner 2003a:82, 176, 264). Although Mead later remembered Fortune as refusing to give her a child, and “she used the story” of his striking her and causing her to miscarry “as justification for the end of [their] marriage” (Caffrey and Francis 2006:88–89), her recollections about this were inconsistent (see Mead 1972:237–238, 289–290; MMP: Jean Houston interview, 441, Q18:5).

164. MMP: RF/RB 5/14/1935, R5:5.

165. MMP: RF/RB 2/22/1936, R5:8.

166. MMP: RF/RB “near New Year” 1935, R5:3.

167. MMP: RF/RB 2/27/1936, R5:8.

168. MMP: RB/RF 11/9/1935, R5:6.

169. MMP: RF/RB 2/22/1936, R5:8.

170. MMP: RF/RB 2/22/1936, R5:8.

171. MMP: RF/RB 6/24/1936, R5:8.

172. MMP: RF/RB 2/22/1936, R5:8.

173. MMP: RF/RB 2/22/1936, R5:8.

174. MMP: MM/RF 9/11/1935, R5:6.

175. MMP: RF/MM 2/23/1936, S2:2.

176. MMP: RF/RB 10/10/1936, R5:8. When Mead learned that Fortune had returned for a “second unauthorized Arapesh trip” she was irked. “[T]he sooner he is out . . . the better,” she wrote to Benedict (MMP: MM/RB 3/31/1936, S4:2). Mead had Benedict ask Fortune for “a confidential—i.e., not to be printed—report” on his results, so she would at least “have something to go on.” There was no particular criticism she feared so much as the prospect of points still unknown, and hence out of her control. The “whole idea of his lying in wait with great contradictions about the Arapesh is getting on my nerves” (MMP: MM/RB 9/11/1936, S4:2).

177. MMP: RF/RB 6/24/1936, R5:8.

178. MMP: RF/RB 2/27/1936, R5:8; RF/RB 7/17/1936, R5:8.

179. MMP: RF/RB 6/24/1936, R5:8.

180. MMP: RF/RB 6/24/1936, R5:8; cf. MM/RB 10/26/1936, S4:2.

181. MMP: MM/RB 5/7/1936, S4:2.

182. MMP: RF/GB 6/24/1936, R5:8.

183. MMP: MM/RB 9/11/1936, S4:2. For more on Fortune’s response to *The Mountain Arapesh*, see Dobrin and Bashkow (2006).

184. Apart from its conclusion, which is that we “must reject” the theory that views Arapesh culture as having “selected a maternal temperament . . . for both men and women” (Fortune 1939:36), and in addition to the fact that *Sex and Temperament* is the sole reference it cites, “Arapesh Warfare” contains an interesting formal indicator that Fortune conceived of this paper specifically as a piece of responsive writing. In each of Fortune’s major ethnographic works—*Sorcerers of Dobu*, *Omaha Secret Societies*, *Manus Religion*—he confidently “integrate[s] himself into the frame of reference of the total work” using the first person singular pronominal forms *I*, *me*, and *my*—a feature that contributes to the

“authoritative tone” of Fortune’s “best ethnography” (Young 1980:106). By marked contrast, Fortune incorporates himself into “Arapesh Warfare” with the ego-distancing plural pronouns *we*, *us*, and *our*. This use of the plural for responses is highly systematic across Fortune’s writings; indeed, its presence is so salient that in encountering some of these uses one begins to wonder who else he might have had along (see also McLean 1992:47). It is ubiquitous, for example, in the preface and the eighth appendix to the 1963 edition of *Sorcerers*, both of which are direct responses to the introduction by Malinowski which was published with *Sorcerers* some thirty years earlier. He even used the plural in arguing against his own earlier work (Fortune 1960).

185. MMP: RF/RB 2/22/1936, R5:8.

186. The strategic use of “veiled” (Strathern 1975), “bent” (Merlan and Rumsey 1991) or indirect speech is a well developed theme in the literature on Pacific societies. The use of such practices allow speakers to distance themselves from the negative implications of their speech in contexts such as oratory, gossip, and disputes. See, for example, Brenneis and Myers 1984; Watson-Gegeo 1986; Brison 1992; Stroud 1999; Watson-Gegeo and White 1990; Besnier 2004.

187. Whether Fortune did this consciously or not, we do not know. For an analysis of what led him to approach his critique indirectly, see Dobrin and Bashkow in press.

188. As Paul Roscoe observes, various other factors are commonly cited as grounds for war in the Sepik area, including “sorcery accusations, revenge for murder, theft . . . and infringement on land or sago groves,” suggesting the possibility “that Fortune radically over-emphasized elopement as the causative factor in war in seeking to reproach Mead” (PC, 11/13/2008). The existence of other causes of warfare besides adultery concerned Fortune as well, and he subsequently expanded his motivations for Arapesh war to include occasions of imputed sorcery, as “when a young man fell from a tree-top and died of his fall” (Fortune 1947:253; see also MMP: RF/MM 3/10/1948, R6:1). But Roscoe’s observation raises an important question: whether Fortune’s representation of Arapesh culture is any less projective than Mead’s. Here we only note that Fortune’s emphasis on the stealing of women was reiterated to us independently by Arapesh people we have spoken with; it is also implied by the Arapesh term for “social conflict,” “trouble,” and the important Christian concept of “sin”—*inabas*—which has as its root meaning “adultery.” Finally, we note that there are other areas on the New Guinea north coast where adultery apparently *was* the primary cause of warfare, such as southern Madang (see, for example, Lawrence 1989[1964]:46). But we fully agree with Roscoe that this question is important and deserves further study.

189. The clearest statement of Fortune’s position is contained in a letter he wrote to Boas in early 1937. Arapesh men were relatively gentle in domestic life, he said, “presumably so that women will not too readily run to the enemy upon solicitation and precipitate war.” In other words, the “peculiar character of Arapesh family life” was due to its “interweaving” with “the cultural trait of warfare” and had “nothing to do with culture determined sex linked character, at all” (FBP: RF/FB 2/9/1937).

190. As anthropology turned increasingly away from “mere description” in the 1950s and 1960s, Fortune seems to have felt at home in the emerging discipline of folklore studies. It was an area he lectured in at Cambridge in the 1960s, to the disdain of some of his departmental colleagues (Dorson 1973:187).

191. FBP: RF/FB 4/16/1934.

192. Or, as he wrote elsewhere, “In the question in general of dominant emotional controls in culture, I believe that . . . most cultures preserve a balance, weighing many senti-

ments near the human norm of sentiment against any special trend in any one emotional direction.” In Mead’s account, the Arapesh “become grotesques—not enough c.h. (common humanity)” (MMP: RF/RB 3/6/1939, R5:9).

193. MMP: RF/MM 2/22/1936, S2:2.

194. Caffrey and Francis 2006:241; see also MMP: MM/RF 7/16/1948, R6:1; Shankman 2009: 61.

195. Lapsley (1999:238) mentions a letter in which Mead congratulates Fortune on the appearance of his article, taking it not to imply any criticism of her own work. We have not been able to find this letter in the Margaret Mead Papers. Even so, Fortune would have hardly felt this kind of response to constitute “acknowledgment.”

196. MMP: RF/MM 2/23/1936, S2:2.

197. MMP: RF/MM 1/19/1948, R6:1; RF/MM 3/27/1948, R6:1. See also Gewertz 1984 on the downplaying of history in Mead’s analysis of Tchambuli culture.

198. MMP: RF/MM 2/14/1948, R6:1.

199. MMP: RF/MM 12/6/1939, A3:2.

200. The analytic terms developed in Fortune’s early work on dreams (Fortune 1927) also provide a source of insight into his inability to let go of Mead, Arapesh ethnography, and the squares. Fortune saw dreams as expressing the lingering emotions that are associated with one’s previously held ideas, even when one has thoroughly rejected them intellectually. In other words, it was a notion of Fortune’s own that people do not fully give up what they once held dear; rather, they maintain a subconscious ambivalence toward it. Some of Fortune’s own dreams, reported in his dream study and insightfully re-examined by Lohmann 2009, reveal that he had such an ambivalent regard for an orderly religion-like system. Though he rejected Christianity (as did his father), he seems to have transferred to science a dedication which became unsustainable and hence charged with powerful ambivalence in the wake of his experiences with Mead. We are grateful to Roger Lohmann (PC, July 28, 2009) for helping us see the implications of Fortune’s dream research for understanding his personality.

201. It was class, after all, that Mead had in mind when she wrote in *Blackberry Winter* that Fortune “came from a culture in which boys were physically disciplined and men beat women” (Mead 1972:230). And it was class (albeit more covertly) that separated Mead and Fortune on the matter of open marriage. For more on class and sexuality in Mead’s work, see Lyons and Lyons 2004.

202. MMP: RF/MM 5/15/1936, S2:2.

203. Fortune’s archive includes numerous unpublished manuscript fragments, written over several decades, taking issue with Mead’s interpretations of Arapesh culture.

204. Before his evacuation from China when Canton fell to the Japanese in 1938, Fortune made a fieldtrip to the southwestern provinces of “Kweichou and Kwangsai” where he “found killings,” with the Chinese “driving hard to census and tax and assimilate” and the ethnic minorities resisting (FBP: RF/FB 7/24/1937). The violence of the New Guinea Highlands Fortune described vividly as “culture impact in 1st flush . . . fighting mad . . . on the native side, and nervous and ratty as hell on the white side—stinking corpses, except those mercifully first eaten—everywhere—mad, mad as blazes” (MMP: RF/GB 4/15/1935, S1:4).

205. While Fortune may have taken aim at the man, and while he may have intended to pay him compensation, this story is apparently rather more complicated than is usually related (cf. Anderson 2008). Fortune’s shot may not in fact have injured the man; though it caused him to drop in fright. When Fortune returned to the Kamano area in 1951, he learned that the man had died for unrelated reasons in the intervening years. We are in-

debted to Caroline Thomas and Ray Abrahams for clarification of these details (PC, July 6, 2009; PC, July 27, 2010).

206. MMP: MM/Kroeber 11/2/1933, C3:4.

207. Even as we were preparing this paper, a Papua New Guinea daily newspaper published an article on the need to reform contemporary anti-sorcery laws in light of the difficulty of prosecuting individuals for acts that grow out of “belief systems” that are “deeply rooted” in “customs and tradition” (Gumar 2009).

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