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MARGARET MEAD
(1901–1978)

*Wilton S. Dillon**

When we look about us among different civilizations and observe the vastly different styles of life to which the individual has been made to conform, to the development of which he has been made to contribute, we take new hope for humanity and its potentialities.

Margaret Mead, 1930

The centennial of the birth of Margaret Mead (1901–78) offers parents, scholars, educators, diplomats, public servants and all other citizens a rich opportunity to project hope into the twenty-first century. Mead's legacy compels us to revisit questions raised by her and her cohorts and to form 'clusters' aimed at gaining knowledge about human learning. [1] Although Mead was a great individualist and celebrated individual uniqueness, she also advocated (and practised) group effort—thus the leitmotif of her centennial commemoration: 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.' The vast collection of Mead manuscripts and memorabilia in the Library of Congress in Washington is a monument to her intellectual debts to others and of interdependent inquiries into human potential.

Mead often used the Ancient Greek term *plastikos* (capable of being moulded) in referring to the capacities of humans to grow and change and adapt within (and sometimes beyond) the range of their biological and cultural inheritance. The nature/nurture dichotomy was a chimera to her. Her systems approach to knowledge demanded inclusion of all variables. Her web of thought, available in writing and film, remains seamless.

As her onetime student, mentored by her for the last thirty years of her life, and as a friend and collaborator, I was privy to and an admirer of her insatiable curiosity. Her

curiosity can still be contagious in a new generation. Her enormous intellect and powers of synthesis and observation were intact until sedatives and death stilled her in the cancer ward of New York Hospital on 15 November 1978. *The New York Times* editorial mourning her death called her 'grandmother to the world'. Fellow scientists visiting China noted that she did 'not go gentle into that good night'. She was a participant-observer doing an ethnographic study of the process of dying as a part of living. She resented death's rude interruption of her work, and she never said 'good-bye'.

What can we learn in this new century about her own education and how she learned to study the continuities and discontinuities in what one generation transmits to the next? From her infancy in Philadelphia until her death, Mead's life revolved around education. Pointing out her role as the most famous anthropologist in the twentieth-century world and as a one-person UNESCO is only one way of identifying the elements that make her an enduring educational force. The on-going debates about her legacy are in themselves 'educational'. Debaters are forced to think more clearly, to reshape their questions, to keep alive a sense of wonder about who we are as humans, where we come from and where we are going. They are forced to question how we fit into the animal kingdom and the larger universe and how we can learn to make the ethical choices to protect all species and a fragile planet from human predators. Mead was a responsible and caring scientist, humanist, citizen, parent, grandparent and teacher—roles that were sometimes fused.

The education of Margaret Mead

Mead's autobiography, *Blackberry winter: my earlier years* (1972),[2] tells us about herself, her educator parents and her ancestors—school superintendents in nineteenth-century Ohio. Her life story gives us many clues about what influenced her approach to anthropology, a form of 'disciplined subjectivity'. For Mead, being 'objective' includes revealing what can be learned about the observer and the interactions between the observer and the observed.

She writes in the prologue to her autobiography: 'In this book, I have tried to describe the kinds of experiences that have made me what I am, myself, and to sort out

the kinds of experiences that might become part of a way of bringing up children and of seeing the world that includes the past and future as aspects of the present—the present of any generation.' Early on in the book, Mead writes that she 'was the first child, wanted and loved' (Mead, 1972).

Her self-revelation would have enabled her friend, Erik H. Erikson, to write an insightful reconstruction of her life, just as he did in unravelling the tapestry of the lives of Martin Luther and Gandhi and then re-weaving the threads. While he did not write a psychological history of his friend, his writings and Mead's reflect what they learned from each other about perspective on time, namely, discovering the benefits of counting in 'biological time'—i.e., measuring the flow of time in twenty-five-year generations. This kind of counting contrasts with measuring time in, say, fiscal years—based on when institutions collect budgets and spend money. One of the advantages is the easier avoidance of the idea of a 'quick fix'—naively expecting hasty solutions to problems. Mead regularly reminded us that the dissemination of a new idea or an invention could take twenty or more years. She even cautioned new United States presidents about trying to implement campaign promises within the first hundred days of office. Nevertheless, Mead was impatient to move herself and others to action on a number of fronts, from child-rearing to an end to warfare. Her education turned her into both a practitioner and a prophet (Toulmin, 1984).

Mead's perspective on time has profound implications for understanding education as the selective transmission of culture, the elements of which are changed in each generation. Counting in biological time serves also as a useful corrective to the current, and much debated, United States government reliance on test scores as measures of learning or as definers of 'education'. Mead's life and mentoring legacy steers her followers toward taking a longitudinal view of a child's unique gifts, interests and talents, toward a focus on developing curiosity in young people. This curiosity can endure for a lifetime, irrespective of the temporary mastery of a set of facts and a predetermined choice of a career. While focused and disciplined, she personified the Prince of Serendip from Horace Walpole's fanciful book, *The three princes of Serendip*, which has provided science with a beautiful metaphor for discovering the unexpected. Serendipity is good for science; literalism can kill curiosity.

Mead's childhood was important in developing in her a respect for individual difference (and its long-term development). Her mother, Emily Fogg Mead, adapted to and cherished the uniqueness of each of her four children who were exposed to the contrasting personalities of their parents and benefited from living in a three-generation household. They, in turn, drew different lessons and followed different career paths. Decades later, the influences of her mother can be found in Mead's university classrooms. She required students to submit brief biographies along with photos of themselves in order to learn more about 'faces in the crowd'.

At the time of Margaret Mead's birth, her mother accepted, in principle, the advice of I. Emmet Holt and his son, who from 1894 on authored many books on child care. They advocated, for instance, scheduling for bottle-fed babies. 'She read the book,' Mead wrote,

> but she nursed her babies. She accepted the admonition about never picking up a crying child unless it was in pain. But she said her babies were good babies who would cry only if something were wrong, and so she picked them up. Believing that she was living by the principles of modern child-rearing practices, she quite contentedly adapted what she was told about children in the abstract to the living reality of her own children. (Mead, 1972)

Mead, like her mother, expected children and adults to respect rules but to be imaginative in adhering to them, without hurting others. From parental and sibling influence, she learned early to look for value in one's individual acts rather than regarding the act as a means to an end, enjoying the process of moving sequentially from one good deed to another without forcing oneself to meet some blue-printed goal.

The education of Margaret Mead never ended. Out of her family relationships, including a professor father who taught finance at the University of Pennsylvania, and her early embrace of writing poetry, acting in pageants and studying psychology, Mead 'found her voice' in anthropology as a holistic framework for integrating the humanities and the sciences. These evolutionary steps are beautifully described in her autobiography, which her daughter, Mary Catherine Bateson, recommends as the best personal account of how she evolved as an educator.

Her autobiography reveals a pattern of learning that endured for her seventy-seven years. Frequent moves by the family left her alternating between home schooling and attending traditional schools, which her parents often criticized for their emphasis on

rote learning or memorization. Much of her early learning was at home through the influence of her mother and with the help of her grandmother, who was a teacher and who gave her 'lessons'. Mead's mother was a pioneer sociologist who conducted ethnographic studies of Italian immigrants. When she went out to interview Italian families, she took young Margaret along with her. Note-taking was to become an essential part of her career as an anthropologist. As the eldest child, she even took notes on the development of her younger siblings, long before reading Jean Piaget. (Her siblings were eventually sent off to a progressive school in Fairhope, Alabama.)

Drawing on what she had learned from her experiences, changing schools and communities around Philadelphia, she developed an approach to education with a strong experiential component that bore some resemblance to John Dewey's model of 'learning by doing'. She learned not only with her head but also with her hands—engaging in handicrafts, needlework and carpentry. (She seemed disappointed in me, decades later, when she discovered how poor I was at carving a duck for a Christmas dinner at her house in New York.) Her extraordinary verbal skills were honed by conversations at the family table and eventually through college debating. Television interviewers were astonished by how she could expand or shorten her spoken thoughts according to minutes or seconds available.

Her life experiences helped her in her fieldwork in Papua, New Guinea where she was able to observe patterns of education that emphasized a different set of gifts—those unlike what would be expected from American school children. Howard Gardner, the Harvard psychologist, takes note of these perceptions in his new preface to Mead's *Growing up in New Guinea* (Mead, 2001*b* [1931]).

Following upon formal and informal learning at home and in private schools in Pennsylvania; undergraduate studies at DePaul University in Indiana and at Barnard College; and graduate studies at Columbia University, Mead made a dramatic entry into anthropology with her still debated 1928 book, *Coming of age in Samoa.* In preparation for this book, the 24-year-old Mead, mentored by Columbia University anthropologists Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict, launched a study of adolescent Samoan girls. Her book became an immediate best-seller, coinciding with the receptivity Americans in the 1920's were giving to the ideas of Sigmund Freud. Its critics claim that her alleged 'cultural

relativity' helped to loosen American morals. But to many readers anthropology and its holistic vision became a part of the American ethos, spawning both friendly and unfriendly cartoons and caricatures of Mead, currently exhibited as part of the Library of Congress centennial exhibition: *Margaret Mead, human nature and the power of culture*.

Fifteen years after Samoa, Mead made five field trips, focusing mostly on Bali and New Guinea, studied eight different cultures, generated a large corpus of professional and popular works and became a favourite on television interviews and as witness before congressional committees. The anthropologist Robert Murphy reports in *The body silent* (1987) that it was difficult to have an opinion of Margaret Mead because 'she was like the air we breathe'.

From her tower office in the American Museum of Natural History, her home base for more than half a century, Mead combined her curatorship of Pacific ethnography with her career as a teacher and public intellectual. This included adjunct professorships at Columbia University's Teachers College and Graduate School of General Studies, and visiting professorships in psychiatry at the Menninger School and the University of Cincinnati's School of Medicine. She influenced the start of urban anthropology at New York University and enthusiastically met students at the new Manhattan campus of Fordham University near the Metropolitan Opera in order to understand first generations exposed to higher learning. She greatly respected Jesuit contributions to education, and enjoyed having as a colleague Father Ewing who chaired the anthropology department on the Bronx campus of Fordham University. (Her daughter, Mary Catherine Bateson, also taught anthropology at Ateneo, a Jesuit university in Manila.) But her largest 'classrooms' consisted of readers of popular journals and television viewers.

In her earlier career, before becoming a household word, Mead sometimes wrote two versions of the same materials, one for the academy and the other for the general public. For example, *Coming of age in Samoa* was followed by *The social organization of Manu'a*. Like St. Paul speaking to the Corinthians, she adapted her material to her audiences, also a form of cross-cultural communication.

Personal perspectives

Professional evaluators of educational 'outcomes' prefer quantitative rather than qualitative evidence. Nevertheless, inspired by Mead's use of herself as data, I shall serve up some personal stories or 'outcomes' of my being a part of the educational process influenced, but not generated, by Mead. My story is but one of the scores of case studies that can be written regarding the life-long intellectual residues of exposure to Mead as a teacher and collaborator. In my case, this entails 'civic betterment' based on anthropology rather than joint fieldwork. The first residue is a recurring, Mead-inspired belief that knowledge constantly needs testing, challenging and revision. Like Albert Einstein, Mead welcomed proof or debate that she might be 'wrong'. Furthermore, she was more polite to people she thought might not be worth arguing with.

In an unpublished reminiscence about Mead, 'The old turtle', delivered to the Literary Society of Washington, I described my first encounter with her in February 1951. I had come to Columbia from Berkeley to follow Alfred Kroeber who had retired from the University of California. Mead's Columbia course, 'Cross-cultural communication', being held at her museum, attracted me because of my earlier work in Tokyo with MacArthur's Civil Information and Education staff. I dutifully filled out some biographical forms to accompany my student photograph. Mead, who spoke with an accent that I associated with Eleanor Roosevelt, noticed me and, suspecting that I had read Benedict's *The chrysanthemum and the sword* (1946), invited me to come to her office for a consultation. She began the conversation by asking me what I thought of Benedict's work, especially the distinctions she makes between Japanese conceptions of shame and guilt. She was interested in the class I was taking with Kroeber, 'Value systems and national character', in which he was speculating on similarities between the Scots and the Yurok Indians of California. She quickly understood that I was interested in the study of cultures in industrial, literate nation-states, including the American Indian tribal cultures of my native Alabama and Oklahoma. My mother's birth on a covered wagon entering Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) in 1898—three years before Mead's own birth—was to become, years later, a frequent point of reference in her discourse on women pioneers. She was interested in exploring what they brought with them and what they left behind.

Early on in our conversation Mead learned that I was the eldest of six sons, that I had become head of the family upon the death of my father in 1946, and that I had brought my widowed mother and four youngest brothers to live with me in Tokyo. She asked about the curriculum in the Tokyo American School and what young Americans were learning about Japanese language and history. She was an excellent interviewer, or rather, conversationalist. She spoke about being the first-born herself and mentioned some of the psychological literature on birth order. I found myself being addressed as a colleague rather than a student being sized up by a professor for grading purposes. She was interested in gathering from every person she met clues about kith and kin, and gender and diversity in American culture. For her, students from overseas provided a rich resource of additional insights and clues. She maintained that they knew things she did not know. Everyone she met contributed to Mead's quest for knowledge of humans as one species with many cultures.

Upon learning that I was heading for Paris after only one semester at Columbia, Mead opened doors for me that changed the course of my life. My nearly two years in Paris, and a brief sojourn in Leyden, were greatly enriched by her sending letters of introduction for me to Alfred Metraux, UNESCO anthropologist; Geoffrey Gorer, the British anthropologist with a keen interest in English, French, Japanese and American cultures; and Clemens Heller, economic historian, son of Freud's Vienna publisher, and founder of the Salzburg Seminars in which Mead and other American intellectuals met with European counterparts shortly after the war. Heller was to become the academic entrepreneur *par excellence* in Paris, founding the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme and numerous academic journals dealing with European, African and Asian cultures. He and his then wife, Paris-born American Mathilda Mortimer, opened their apartment on the Rue Vaneau in the Paris salon tradition. There, I met French savants, historians of diplomacy, technology, literature, music and architecture. I was enjoying a taste of Paris that had enchanted Franklin and Jefferson. Through this milieu, I came to know Claude Lévi-Strauss, then less well known to the world than Mead, but already a pivotal figure. Education, I was discovering, takes many forms, including the practice of collegial referrals.

Mead came to Paris several times during my stay there, meeting me at the UNESCO bar, then on Avenue Kléber. During these visits, she showed me signs of her mental processes that had not been so apparent to me when we first met: a combination of deductive and inductive thinking. She contrasted, as did the French, Anglo-Saxon empiricism with French Cartesian thought, and urged me to take advantage of both. She queried me about Marcel Mauss, Durkheim's nephew and Lévi-Strauss's teacher, whose ideas I was being introduced to in a seminar. His 1927 *Essai sur le don* [translated into English as *The gift; forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies*] was to become the wellspring of my dissertation, later published through Heller's good offices as *Gifts and nations.* Mead was quick to connect my earlier interest in Japanese patterns of gift exchange and reciprocity (the concepts of *giri* and *on*) with what I was learning through Mauss's 'armchair anthropology' in Paris. Three universal obligations were identified by Mauss: the obligation to give, to receive and to repay. Such generalizations served as magnets for attracting all kinds of inductive data and insight from a variety of human societies (Mauss, 1954). Mead helped bring these abstract obligations into observable focus within family, religious, work and school environments.

These Paris conversations with Mead and her friends planted the seeds for my awareness that the United States prefers to be a donor and teacher nation than to be a recipient or a pupil nation, and that international comity would be helped by the United States learning to alternate those roles. I also owe to the New York and Paris encounters with Mead the start of my concocting the phrase 'the Gaullist effect' to refer to people who take revenge on their benefactors by becoming nationalistic leaders not unlike those leading 'nativistic revivals' in cultures resisting loss of autonomy. Mead's analysis of 'Cargo Cults' and the case of the leader, Paliau, in *New lives for old* (1956) prompted me to make such an outrageous leap of comparison to Charles de Gaulle.

Conversations with Mead and Gorer consistently included phrases like 'that's a nice little point'. They were always searching for small clues about human behaviour that might fit into a larger pattern, a mosaic. Heller complained whenever a day passed when he did not come upon a 'new idea'. Mead always gave credit to Gregory Bateson for being a better theoretician than she was, though both, especially in their Balinese research, dealt with micro-behaviour through analyzing photographs of parent-child

interactions. I felt lucky to be absorbed into such webs of discovery and support at the start of our thirty-year association, the outcomes of which did not end with her death. The centennial of her birth provides me with more continuities than discontinuities for I am still involved with her foundation, the Institute for Intercultural Studies of New York, having served as its president while she was secretary. I am now passing on the post of secretary to a member of the younger generation—just as she would have prescribed.

In a recent book, *Uncommon lives: my lifelong friendship with Margaret Mead* (1999), by another of her former students, the late Patricia Grinager, Mead is described as 'an employment agent [who] mixed and matched hundreds of jobs she heard about to people she considered could do them'. She believed anthropologists needed to learn to take jobs that seemed to have nothing directly to do with their formal education. So she helped with career counselling and job placement long after students had left her classroom. (Her godson, Daniel Alfred Métraux, who was raised in the household Mead shared with his mother, continues the Mead tradition of placing his students, writing recommendations, and visiting them around the world.)

In the years since I first met Mead, she figured in recommending or endorsing me for the editorship of an anthropology journal of the Society for Applied Anthropology; teaching appointments in three institutions; administering an educational foundation committed to 'education of Negroes in the United States and in Africa, as well as American Indians'; organizing science co-operation between the National Academy of Sciences and the new nations of Africa; and finally, the Smithsonian Institution where she played a key role in various international, interdisciplinary symposia I organized to produce books. The jobs I was not offered or did not take were also a part of my education. When nominated for several college presidencies, I was not discouraged by her, but was reminded that I would be more useful in broad, lateral relationships connecting various institutions than to sit on top of a pyramid, troubled by faculty tenure, parking problems and the sex lives of students.

Her open-endedness and belief in the versatility of individuals influenced her support of the assumptions behind President John F. Kennedy's efforts to appoint persons to African ambassadorships who knew something about the cultural regions they were intended to serve. Though I did not become the United States ambassador to Sierra

Leone, Mead was happy that this might have been the case had Kennedy not been assassinated. My 'qualifications' included my friendship with an African woman, Paramount Chief, Madam Ella Koblo Gulama of Moyamba, who would have given me entrée to several Sierra Leone chiefdoms and her network of relations with educators and politicians in Guinea and Liberia. Mead, who was intrigued by the importance of grandmothers, was interested to learn that Madam Ella's grandmother was the Paramount Chief who negotiated the British protectorate, and that Ella's father had chosen her as his successor ahead of her older brother—all with due electoral process—because she showed greater signs of leadership.

Apart from these professional links with applied anthropology, Mead taught me a great deal about friendship. There seemed to be no limit to the number of new persons she would bring into her life and make a part of new 'clusters'. She believed that friendship is kinship by choice. So when I presented to her the woman who finally had agreed to marry me, a Virginian whom I had met in France and a dancer, she was delighted. My bride was immediately absorbed into her circle. She concluded that dancers made good anthropologists because they had experience with choreography—the way elements come together to form patterns and movement. It was a special pleasure for us to be invited to the ceremony at the American Academy of Arts and Letters when Mead was elected. In the presence of Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller, we admired the exhibition of Mead's field note texts with drawings of textile patterns from Bali. Mead was much at home with the poets, as well as the main speaker at the ceremony, Salvador de Madariaga, well known to Mead for his 'national character' book, *Englishmen, Frenchmen and Spaniards* (1928).

When my wife Virginia and I were to set sail for Ghana in 1961 to do some field work on the life histories of African intellectuals, Mead gave us a farewell dinner in a Balinese restaurant off Times Square. The following year, returning with a new son to live in an apartment near Columbia, Mead often visited our flat for supper before teaching her Columbia evening class. If the baby cried during supper, Mead advised Virginia, 'go to your baby'. The same baby, now older, was carried around Greenwich Village by Mead's and Rhoda Métraux's Haitian nurse and housekeeper, Tulia, our son riding on her hip or back as in Dahomey, the Haitian motherland. A Christmas gift to our

son later came from Mexico City where Mead was attending an anthropology conference, and returned with a creche on her lap. It was presented with a note, 'gentle things, fragile things'. The baby grew up to become the godfather to her godson's biological son, David Métraux. All in the family.

Despite the access Mead gave us to her life and, by extension, to the lives of her daughter and much celebrated actor granddaughter and son-in-law, Barkev Kassarjian, I was acutely aware that Mead always championed the autonomy of her protégés. She did not wish them to be known as 'Maggie's boy or girl'. She cultivated our independence and individuality as she did that of her daughter. At the marriage of her daughter to Kassarjian, Mead, in a wheelchair from a broken ankle, entered the church from a side door to take her place, unassumingly, beside her former husband. She did this in order to avoid stealing the spotlight from the bride. Such behaviour matched well her protocols for doing research in clusters of groups, not unlike a jazz band when different performers wait their turn to shine together and individually.

The post-Mead world of education

Professional educators in the United States are using the centennial of Margaret Mead's birth to evaluate critically the Mead legacy. She would welcome the scrutiny. Two leaders of this benign 'revisionism' are Ray McDermott of Stanford University's School of Education and Hervé Varenne, McDermott's former colleague at Columbia University's Teachers College. A provocative essay by McDermott called 'A century of Margaret Mead' is soon to be published by the *Teachers College record*. Varenne, a French-born anthropologist, has written the preface to a new edition of Mead's *And keep your powder dry* (1999*a* [1942]), her pioneer analysis of American culture faced with mobilization for World War II.

'Mead focused on learning as habits developed in the context of social relations,' McDermott observes. 'She was early influenced by the Gestalt psychology of Kurt Lewin and later by the cross-cultural work on stages of identity development by Erik Erikson . . . and Gregory Bateson, natural historian, husband of a decade . . . [who saw] little reason to distinguish communication and learning.' He adds that the Bateson and Mead model

of learning anticipates much of what is currently under debate in the ethnographic study of learning.

McDermott's critique comes later: 'Mead could be so taken with patterning she could easily forget about the ingenuity it took for participants to squeeze into or out of the patterns even a little change. She was so taken with patterning she would often write as if, once socialized, the person is nothing more than an internalized pattern.' Implicitly, he suggests that Mead was impaled by her own acceptance of 'the American frame' while trying to change it. Mead took ideas from the rest of the world and she took away core American beliefs about adolescence and learning. McDermott continues:

> She confirmed science and democracy as their frame without an acknowledgement of the even wider frame of capitalism and colonialism [or] Western systems of signification that come with guns and money . . . . [She] never developed a systematic critique of the capitalism and colonialism that supported her version of either anthropology or public service.

With that caveat, he concludes:

> We still have her work to do and then some. Received ideas of adolescence get worse . . . school performance is increasingly the only measure of the young person . . . our sense of how to measure knowledge and intelligence has been narrowed to fit the heightened competition that allows children of plenty to continue to lord over the rest of us. Margaret Mead would be terribly disappointed. [...] She always came to help. No wonder we miss her. (McDermott, 2001*b*)

In a book on which he is currently working, *America without Margaret Mead*, McDermott provides a longer focus on Mead (and Bateson's) work:

> Mead's position on various issues—gender, race, adolescence and learning—were caught in the effort of defining cultural differences that could define what was intrinsically American. [...] Her positions need to be updated, resituated, reformulated, or discarded. [...] America has changed and so can our reading of her work. (McDermott, 2001*a*)

'Bravo,' Mead would say, instead of her occasional 'fiddlesticks'. But she would have every right to object fiercely to McDermott's suggestion that she was caught up inside 'America's institutionalized racism'.

Mead did not publicly inveigh against racism or capitalism. She tried to set a good example as a citizen who worked to end racial segregation, promote human rights, and who shared her personal income with others. She proudly served as a trustee of Hampton

University, which was once restricted to the education of African-Americans and American Indians. Her *Rap on race* conversations with the celebrated author James Baldwin revealed her resistance to 'apologizing' for slavery just because she was white. She disavowed 'guilt by association' (Baldwin & Mead, 1971).

Perhaps one of the major benefits of these new evaluations concerns the controversy surrounding Derek Freeman's attacks on Mead under the heading of biological-versus-cultural determinism (Freeman, 1983; 1999). McDermott is right in asserting that 'Nature and nurture should not stand as conceptually opposed and only in the real world sometimes interactive. The dichotomy has to be challenged. The very existence of a category called human nature has to be challenged' (McDermott, 2001*b*). But that challenge has not yet been made so that 'human nature' reappears along with 'the power of culture', as the theme of the Library of Congress exhibition for the Mead centennial.

Varenne notes Mead's prophetic role in his analysis of *And keep your powder dry* when he detects a shift from 'scientific detachment' to full engagement as a teacher-leader in wartime. According to Varenne, '[s]he is not describing, she is prophesizing' when she writes:

> If we are to fight, if we are to win, if we are to hold before us as we fight a goal we will count fighting for, that goal must be in American terms, in the mixture of faith in the right and faith in the power of science: Trust God—and keep your powder dry. (Mead, 1999*a* [1942])

Varenne asserts that:

> [Mead's] goal is not cultural critique, [but] cultural construction . . . . This is the realm within which many intellectuals quiver, and some may say they snigger as they express their irony—Mead's challenge is all the more radical that, having decided that a war had to be fought because it was just on American, that is universal terms, she also volunteered to act within the institutions of the United States, both governmental and private . . . . She trusted America, and she honed her rhetorical skills as an anthropologist. (Varenne, 1998)

Both McDermott and Varenne, by quoting other critics of Mead, provide useful insights into Mead's growth as a commanding public intellectual intent on helping to improve American education by shaping what is now known as 'civil society', the interplay of governments and voluntary associations. Peer-review mechanisms in United States academia often punish scholars who dare to step outside their disciplines and 'go beyond

their data'. Mead more clearly fit the expectations of Peter Kapitza, the Russian physicist, who once told me at a Pugwash conference: 'It is the duty of the intelligentsia to tell right from wrong.'

Regardless of what role Mead was playing—the 'pure scholar' or the prophetic moralist—she left a prodigious literature on education. Categories on education, family, psychology and children are the longest entries in her complete bibliography compiled by Joan Gordan (1976). Those articles should keep (at least) historians of education busy for another generation.

Epilogue

In her prologue to *Blackberry winter,* Mead wrote of the need to see the past and future as aspects of the present—the present of any generation. Counting in biological time, I realize that I have been a part of the Mead universe for two generations—half a century—thirty years while she was alive and now twenty after her death. I have furthermore been much engaged in the commemoration of her centennial. Commemorations function as a way of teaching history in order to see the long-term past and speculate on the long-term future.

Regardless of today's necessary re-evaluation of the Mead legacy, shaped by her work with others, I invite our successors in yet another millennium to challenge my comparison in 1980 of Mead with Aristotle, a comparison one might describe as 'generous' (Dillon, 1980). I then wrote in a special issue of *American anthropologist*: 'Did Aristotle foreshadow Margaret Mead?' In examining Mead's experience with statecraft and governance as a public citizen, teacher and anthropologist, the Aristotelian model provides a metaphorical point of departure. She enjoyed the jokes about her oracular qualities when she spoke at Delphi but might have regarded as outrageous any hypothesis that she provided some continuity between twentieth-century American thought and classical Greece. Aristotle (384–322 BC), the Greek philosopher, educator and scientist, was much concerned with ethics and politics, which require knowledge enabling humans to act properly and live happily. He believed that the most striking aspect of nature was change; his philosophy of nature included psychology and biology.

Mead, too, was much pre-occupied by the mind/body relationship and made her forays into public affairs with a keen awareness that human behaviour must be understood in the context of the size of our brain and the intricacy of our nervous system.

Aristotle's method of inquiry focused on human rationality and yet stressed the continuity of humanity and nature rather than a basic cleavage. He integrated the ethical and social, as contrasted with the dominant modern proposals of a value-free social science and an autonomous ethic. Mead indeed resonates with Aristotle on that point. He extrapolated from the older city-state, the *polis*. Mead extrapolated, in her analytical modes and personal style of leadership, from traditions far removed from ancient Greece or pre-revolutionary Philadelphia. She often drew from the Village of Peri in New Guinea where there is now a Margaret Mead Community Center, opened as a memorial to her in 1980. Its inhabitants and Mead taught each other a great deal about citizen rights and responsibilities, the latter including techniques of reconciling divergent viewpoints to reach goals beneficial to the community at large.

Mead was engaged incessantly in extrapolations from small, organized communities to the world as *polis*. Her shifts from micro to macro analysis were essential tools in her efforts to teach Americans how to understand themselves in the light of human experience in other cultures.

Disavowed by some fellow academics as 'too popular', Mead was undeterred from using the media to get across ideas. Aristotle, in the pre-Internet world, produced writings of *exoteric* (popular) quality aimed at a general audience outside Plato's Academy, as well as technical (*esoteric*) treatises for students inside the Lyceum.

Print media and later electronic media were essential in Mead's roles as teacher-scholar-citizen. She seemed quite aware of Thomas Babington Macaulay's observation that reporters in the gallery become a fourth estate of the realm. Her prophetic time perspective often made news: 'We may have twenty-five years left to . . .', but she knew that the press was no substitute for institutions, that it should not be burdened with accomplishing whatever representative government, industrial organization and diplomacy failed to accomplish.

Like Aristotle, Mead wanted people to act properly and live happily. When asked by her godson, Daniel Métraux, what she most hoped to have accomplished in her life,

she replied, 'To make at least one person happy.' But she also had wider ambitions for helping to create the good society, and more like Plato, wanted mayors of a megalopolis like New York and aldermen of New England towns to be philosopher-kings. She hoped that the fourth estate would share in that *esoteric* and *exoteric* task of governance. Her duty as a citizen was to serve as a pilot to both realms.

From oral tradition rather than reading her vast output of writing, I am guided by her almost daily in remembering at least two admonitions: 1) never expect recognition, gratitude or appreciation for what you do—your only reward is whether you meet your own standards, and 2) if you do not have access to a child every day, then borrow one.

Discussing whether anthropology is an art, a science or both should not inhibit us from borrowing from Mead and earlier generations to encourage the use of poetry in communication/education about children. Witness Mead's last poem, written in 1947 and dedicated to the daughter who made her a grandmother:

That I be not a restless ghost
Who haunts your footsteps as they pass
Beyond the point where you have left
Me standing in the newsprung grass,

You must be free to take a path
Whose end I feel no need to know,
No irking fever to be sure
You went where I would have you go.

Those who would fence the future in
Between two walls of well-laid stones
But lay a ghost walk for themselves
A dreary walk for dusty bones.

So you can go without regret
Away from this familiar land,

Leaving your kiss upon my hair

And all the future in your hands.

Notes

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Senior Scholar Emeritus, Smithsonian Institution. An anthropologist and educator who studied at Columbia University with Margaret Mead and at the Musée de l'homme in Paris with Claude Lévi-Strauss. Having spent three years as a civilian on General MacArthur's staff in Tokyo during the Occupation, Dillon became interested in Ruth Benedict's *The crysanthemum and the sword.* Mead encouraged him to build on that interest with fieldwork in France. The result was *Gifts and nations: the obligations to give, receive and repay* (1968). He has also written on African education, particularly the role of universities in nation building. Associated with Mead for the last thirty years of her life, he serves as secretary to the international honorary committee for the Mead Centennial, chaired by Lévi-Strauss.

1. Creating such clusters of collaborators is no simple task, Mead concludes in her most seminal theoretical work, *Continuities in cultural evolution,* based on her Terry Lectures at Yale University in 1963. 'We need, now, a view of the future that neither minimizes the immediate peril nor generates despair', she wrote in a context of prescribing clusters of individuals, members of a small village council or the cabinet of a great nation, led by at least one irreplaceable individual (Mead, 1999*b*).
2. The title of her autobiography refers to the time when the hoarfrost lies on blackberry blossoms, causing the berries to set, the forerunner of a rich harvest.

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