Abstract: This article addresses the epistemological problem in anthropology of woman as Other—the subordinate, the muted, the peripheral—with particular reference to the ethnographic literature on Oceania. The ideas and images that form the value-loaded premise of woman as Other reflect ongoing controversies about power, sex, and gender in the West—controversies that influence the discipline of anthropology in ways that feminists have yet to consider systematically. My purpose is to examine, from a feminist perspective, the paradigmatic problems of gender and politics in anthropology and to illustrate these problems with selected works that have influenced anthropological theory and Pacific ethnography. This discussion will help provide feminists in other disciplines with background necessary for understanding the diverse contexts of gender relations across cultures and for assessing the epistemological problems confronting current anthropological research and discourse about women.

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PARADIGMS OF POWER: FEMINIST REFLECTIONS ON THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF WOMEN IN PACIFIC ISLAND SOCIETIES

Because I was a woman and could hope for greater intimacy in working with girls rather than with boys, and because owing to a paucity of women ethnologists our knowledge of primitive girls is far slighter than our knowledge of boys, I chose to concentrate upon the adolescent girl in Samoa (Margaret Mead 1961 [1928]: 9).

To use Simone de Beauvoir's (1952: xix) classic term, women are the problematic "Other"--the subordinate, the muted, the peripheral. Women are also the Other in the discourse of conventional (androcentric) anthropology. Distinguished from humanity in general, women of other cultures are categorized in the literature as problems and rendered silent and unseen. This invisibility of women reflects the exclusion of feminist issues from method and theory. Androcentric anthropology accepts and legitimizes men's experiences and views of their social worlds as the bedrock of ethnographic data:

The fact is that no one could come back from an ethnographic study of 'the X', having talked only to women and about men, without professional comment and some self-doubt. The reverse can and does happen constantly (E. Ardener 1972: 138; emphasis in original).

As the presumptive creators of culture, men are considered the appropriate subjects of ethnographic research. Indeed, as one woman anthropologist concluded:

One gets the impression from many ethnographies that culture is created by and for men between the ages of puberty and late middle age, with children, women, and the aged as residual categories; women are frequently portrayed, at best, as providing support for the activities of men (Schlegel 1977: 2).

Women remain outside this domain of male-defined interests that informs the conventional enterprise of anthropology.

Aware of feminist criticisms, a few anthropologists have acknowledged the need to conduct research on women and to include more material about women; however, these same researchers proceed to publish ethnographies based on fieldwork that relies primarily on male informants. Karl Heider (1979: 10), for example, noted the omission of "the women's side of culture" in his ethnography about the Grand Valley Dani of the central Highlands of Irian Jaya (Indonesian New Guinea):

Someday an anthropologist--probably a woman--will examine the women's side of Dani culture. I do not really think that it will drastically change much of what I say here, but it will expand our picture of the Dani significantly (Heider 1979: 11).
As the opening quotation of this article demonstrates, Margaret Mead recognized the importance of gender and the female perspective in her own pioneering research conducted nearly sixty years ago in Samoa. As observers and interpreters of the human condition, fieldworkers today can no longer ignore the paradigmatic implications of an androcentric anthropology.

This article addresses the epistemological problem of women as the Other in anthropology, with particular reference to the literature on Oceania. The ideas and images that form the value-loaded premise of women as the Other reflect ongoing controversies about sex and gender relations in the West—controversies that influence the discipline of anthropology in ways that feminists have yet to consider systematically. A detailed analysis of the anthropological enterprise from a feminist perspective, which I discuss elsewhere (Tiffany 1983), is beyond the scope of this essay. Rather, I examine the paradigmatic problems of gender and politics within the context of Pacific Island research. My discussion, which uses selected works that have influenced anthropological theory and Pacific ethnography, should be viewed as exploratory and suggestive, rather than definitive. I do not attempt a systematic review of the Pacific literature, a challenging task for further feminist research. My main purpose is to provide feminists in other disciplines with background necessary for assessing the epistemological problems confronting current research and theory in anthropology, for using illustrative material from Pacific Island ethnography, and for contextualizing gender relations from a cross-cultural perspective.

**Feminist Paradigms and the Science of Man**

Categorizing women as the Other in conventional anthropological discourse poses several interesting questions from a feminist perspective. One of these questions concerns the relationship between knowledge about women and the social structure. Access to and sources of knowledge about women and men of other social worlds are differentiated by many factors, including the researcher’s gender, theoretical orientation, and cultural values (Poewe 1982). In addition, knowledge, expressed in the culturally-loaded vocabulary of a presumptively value-neutral science, is not isolated from the social agendas and concerns of the day, as feminist scholarship in anthropology has demonstrated (Fee 1974; Leacock 1981, 1983; Martin and Voorhies 1975: 144-177; Sacks 1979: 3-64). Anthropological paradigms of human behavior are influenced by ongoing debates about the nature of human nature, female sexuality, and women's appropriate social roles. The history of anthropological discourse, including the current controversy over sociobiology, is necessarily a history of social ideas about sex and gender that remains to be written from a feminist perspective.

Thomas Kuhn’s (1970) work on scientific revolutions suggests several issues relevant to assessing conventional anthropological knowledge about women from the perspective of feminism and paradigmatic change. Scientific revolutions, according to Kuhn, are not based on gradual increments of knowledge, but on rejecting old paradigms for new ones. Paradigmatic change entails re-evaluating existing data and reformulating theory that cannot
adequately explain recurrent anomalies. Kuhn (1970: 175) used paradigm in at least two senses: as models, or "concrete puzzle-solutions"; and as "the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given [scientific] community." In a later essay, Kuhn clarified the membership of a scientific community:

Bound together by common elements in their education and apprenticeship, they see themselves and are seen by others as the men responsible for the pursuit of a set of shared goals, including the training of their successors (1977: 296, emphasis added).

The "shared goals" and paradigms constructed by such male-dominated scientific communities in all fields are subjects of considerable feminist criticism (Keller 1978; Lowe and Hubbard 1983; Sayer 1982; Sherman and Beck 1979; Spender 1981). Kuhn's analysis isolates the processes of scientific inquiry and paradigm building from the social setting and cultural values in which such activities take place.

During the early stage of a scientific revolution, fact gathering, which assumes some criticism of prior data and theory, is initiated (Kuhn 1970: 15-18). This stage corresponded to the "natural history" phase of anthropological studies of women's status. During the 1970s, a few anthropologists questioned cross-cultural generalizations about women's status, including definitions of women's social roles in terms of reproductive constraints. Assertions about the status of women were premature, it was argued, until research focusing on women was conducted and theory generated (Brown 1975; Quinn 1977; Tiffany 1978, 1979a).

Attempts to match early research findings about women with conventional paradigms focused on the need for additional studies. Research in the Pacific during the late 1960s and early 1970s, for example, demonstrated the importance of understanding women's experiences in Melanesian societies characterized as "male-dominant." Contrary to androcentric depictions of Melanesian women as passive gardeners and pig-tenders, Marilyn Strathern's (1972) work with Hagen women of the western Highlands of New Guinea presented a complex picture of gender relations. Jill Nash's (1974) research on Nagovisi women of Bougainville Island, Papua New Guinea, questioned anthropological models of matrilineal descent as "unstable" and conflict-ridden and the problems women were thought to pose for men in these social systems. Annette Weiner's (1976) study of women's ceremonial exchanges in the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea examined an important domain of social life ignored by previous anthropologists who had worked in the archipelago.

These and other publications on gender relations stimulated the transition from "normal" to "extraordinary" research, which intensified feminist re-evaluation and criticism of prior data and theory (Kuhn 1970: 77-91). This transition, accompanied by efforts to formulate new concepts and frameworks, resulted in expressions of discontent by some members of the
scientific community and a "crisis" within the discipline. The emergent crisis in anthropology concerning feminist criticisms of established paradigms coincided with rapid changes in the socioeconomic roles of Euro-American women, resurgence of the feminist movement, and growing numbers of professionally trained women anthropologists, many of whom were sponsored by mentors in the academy—mentors unable to pursue feminist research themselves during their own graduate careers. Such crises, according to Kuhn (1970: 84), may be handled in one of three ways: by resolving the problem with traditional paradigms; by concluding that no solution is possible at the present time; or by developing a new paradigm "with the ensuing battle over its acceptance." In effect, the crisis in anthropology reflected dissensus among its practitioners over the relative merits of competing paradigms.

Following Kuhn's argument, I suggest that the crisis in anthropology concerning feminist issues illustrates the processes of polarization and debate prior to and during paradigmatic change. Criticism of androcentric anthropology by feminists outside the discipline was accompanied by disagreements within the discipline among anthropologists, including feminist anthropologists, over assumptions, frameworks, and language. The use of sexual paradigms built upon premises of power asymmetries and androcentric language illustrate this crisis.

Sexual Paradigms and the Language of Biology

Androcentric anthropology is linked to the problem of language—a problem that is not resolved by cosmetic changes of titles of introductory college texts from man and mankind to human and humankind (Tiffany 1979a: 25). Edmund Leach's (1982) introduction to his text, Social Anthropology, illustrates this classic problem of language in anthropology—a discipline in which practitioners, trained to be sensitive to linguistic and semantic issues, are also expected to learn the indigenous language of the peoples they study.

Finally a word of apology to half my potential readership. Humankind is male/female, betwixt and between. Anthropologists and book readers are likewise. However, the English language fairly consistently treats 'unmarked' nouns as male rather than female. Ordinarily this does not matter but a male anthropologist, writing in 1980, risks his neck with feminist colleagues if he implies, even by oversight, that either the anthropological observer or the individual who is observed is more likely to be male than female (Leach 1982: 10, emphasis added).

Prefatory apologies for not wishing to write a book "excessively littered with 'he(she)', 'him(her)' expressions" (Leach 1982: 10) similarly fail to address the epistemological consequences of using androcentric language.

Man is used (and confused) generically and nongenerically in the English language. The consequences of semantic shifts from Man as member of the
genus Homo to man as the male member of the human species are subjects of a large literature surveyed elsewhere (Spender 1980; Thorne and Henley 1975). An important implication of the generic Man problem from a feminist perspective is that while women are included in discussions of mankind, they are categorically distinct from men at a lower level of generality. Women are usually distinguished by linguistic markers, suggesting that "All people are male until proven female" (Murray 1973: 46). The linguistic contradiction for women is clear: "The generic Man convention sets up a linguistic structure whereby women can be portrayed in English either as women, or as people, but not both" (Adams and Ware 1979: 493, emphasis in original).

This linguistic asymmetry is common in the anthropological literature. Taking an example from the literature on Highland New Guinea, consider Mervyn Meggitt's (1965: 163, emphasis added) discussion of Mae Enga ideas about conception and childbirth. The first paragraph begins, "People believe that"; and the second starts, "Men say that." The third paragraph elaborates further with, "the people's everyday comments on human conception and childbirth." The last two sentences of this paragraph continue:

But, on the other hand, people constantly stress the mother's physical share in the formation of the child's body that houses the spirit. It is her blood, they say, that really makes the child's skin and flesh (Meggitt 1965: 163, emphasis added).

The footnote at the end of this sentence reveals, however, that "people" are men. The ideas attributed to both sexes are, in fact, "opinions of Mae men" (Meggitt 1965: 163, fn. 2). Such examples are not unique (see also O'Brien 1984). They reflect important issues ignored in conventional anthropological discourse, which assumes that the world of men encompasses women. The male world is, in effect, generalized, while the female world (if it is acknowledged as existing) is depicted as narrower in scope and exclusive of men (see Hastrup 1978: 54-55); moreover, women presumably concur with men's views. The semantic and paradigmatic implications of this linguistic asymmetry, and its association with sexual models of gender hierarchy, require further consideration.

The Semantics of Female Nature. The limitations of female biology inform background assumptions in anthropological discourse about women. Publication in 1949 of George Peter Murdock's Social Structure and Mead's Male and Female, influential works in American cultural anthropology, illustrate the continuity of nineteenth- and twentieth-century premises of sex-based differences in temperament. These premises, which associated women with procreation and men with cultural innovation, persist in the contemporary literature (see MacCormack and Strathern 1980; Tanner 1981; Tiffany 1979a, 1982b, 1983).
Murdock (1949: 7) stressed the "exceptionally efficient" nature of a sexual division of labor and the biocultural constraints of women's reproductive roles, a theme recurring in more recent anthropological works as well. Women are "handicapped," according to Murdock (1949: 7), "by the physiological burdens of pregnancy and nursing," whereas, men "can range farther afield to hunt, to fish, to herd, and to trade."

It is unnecessary to invoke innate psychological differences to account for the division of labor by sex; the indisputable differences in reproductive functions suffice to lay out the broad lines of cleavage (Murdock 1967 [1949]: 7).

This passage suggests the unalterable "cleavage" of biology dividing women from men--a cleavage resulting in differential access to economic resources and political power.

Mead's works, however, presented conflicting paradigms of biology and gender. Male and Female (Mead 1967 [1949]), based on research in Samoa, Melanesia, and Bali, included observations on contemporary American society. Citing numerous references to studies on rats and nonhuman primates, Mead focused on biological and gender differences between active, achieving males and passive, nurturant females. Men's occupations and achievements, she wrote, are universally regarded by both sexes as more significant than those of women (Mead 1967 [1949]: 159). Women's need to achieve, in contrast to that of men's, can be fulfilled through biological destiny:

The recurrent problem of civilization is to define the male role satisfactorily enough--whether it be to build gardens or raise cattle, kill game or kill enemies, build bridges or handle bank-shares--so that the male may in the course of his life reach a solid sense of irreversible achievement. In the case of women, it is only necessary that they be permitted by the given social arrangements to fulfill their biological role, to attain this sense of irreversible achievement (Mead 1967 [1949]: 160).

Women need only conceive or "be"; whereas, men must create and "do."

Mead's discussion of motherhood, like Murdock's, used the language of natural law, in which natural is evaluated as (or interchanged with) "good" or functionally efficient. Stark consequences are implied for those women who would deny their nature:

Women may be said to be mothers unless they are taught to deny their child-bearing qualities. Society must distort their sense of themselves, pervert their inherent growth-patterns, perpetrate a series of learning-outrages upon them, before they will cease to want to provide; at least for a few years, for the child they have already nourished for nine months within the safe circle of their own bodies (Mead 1967 [1949]: 192, emphasis added).
Cultural conditioning, in other words, may "pervert" or "distort" the fundamentally natural condition of motherhood. The implication is that women everywhere are victimized if they avoid motherhood--an act which is unnatural.

*Male and Female* is only one example of the semantic and evaluative considerations associated with sexual paradigms built on presumptions of women's "natural" functions. An important implication of this discourse is that denial of nature constitutes subversion of the feminine self and the social fabric; thus, feminist redefinitions of women's reproductive roles may result in societal stress and breakdown--psychological dysfunction, family disorganization, and the blurring of gender differences--prominent social agendas among present-day politicians, the public, and the scientific community (see Hubbard and Lowe 1979 and Sayers 1982).

The sexual paradigm of gestative women and culturally creative men explicit in *Male and Female* reversed what Mead wrote fourteen years earlier. In *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, Mead (1935) stressed the importance of cultural conditioning in shaping individual differences. In her earlier hook she questioned the notion of maternal instincts and reproductive definitions of women's abilities:

> We have assumed that because it is convenient for a mother to wish to care for her child, this is a trait with which women have been more generously endowed by a careful teleological process of evolution. We have assumed that because men have hunted, an activity requiring enterprise, bravery, and initiative, they have been endowed with these useful attitudes as part of their sex-temperament (Mead 1963 [1935]: 286).

Feminists continue to cite *Sex and Temperament* to illustrate the importance of culture in shaping human responses and to demonstrate that women are not biologically locked into a fixed set of behaviors.

Mead herself was aware of the connection between current social issues and the paradigmatic frameworks used to interpret human behavior. In her preface to the 1950 edition, Mead (1963 [1935]: i) described *Sex and Temperament* as her "most misunderstood book." She detailed the "contradictory responses" generated by *Sex and Temperament* and *Male and Female* in her autobiography:

> Feminists hailed it [*Sex and Temperament*] as a demonstration that women did not 'naturally' like children, and recommended that little girls should not be given dolls to play with. Reviewers accused me of not recognizing the existence of any sex differences. Fourteen years later, when I wrote *Male and Female*, ... I was accused of anti-feminism by women, of rampant feminism by men, and of denying the full beauty of the experience of being a woman by individuals of both sexes (Mead 1972: 221-222).
Her preface to the 1963 edition of *Sex and Temperament* clearly stated the reason for re-examining relations of sex and gender in three societies of New Guinea, published twenty-eight years earlier, for American readers:

I would hope that this exploration of the way in which simple primitive cultures have been able to rely upon temperamental clues may be useful in shifting the present extreme emphasis upon sex roles [in America] to a new emphasis on human beings as distinct personalities, who, men and women, share many of the same contrasting and differing temperamental approaches to life (Mead 1963 [1935]: ii).

Mead's work is significant from a sociology of knowledge perspective. Spanning a half century, Mead's publications reflect conflicting paradigms of sex and gender relations—paradigms formulated within the contexts of changing social conditions and political controversies concerning the biological and cultural determinants of human behavior.

Mead's cultural paradigm, based on research conducted almost sixty years ago with adolescent girls in Samoa, has focused public attention once again on the nature/nurture controversy. Derek Freeman's (1983) recent book fiercely criticizes the validity of Mead's conclusions about the premarital sexuality of Samoan adolescent girls, published for a general audience as *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928)—her most famous book and the best-selling anthropological work ever published. Freeman's (1983) androcentric paradigm of male dominance, phrased in the legitimizing vocabulary of furthering scientific inquiry into the biological determinants of human behavior, is applied to gender relations and politics in a ranked Polynesian chiefdom noted for its complex social organization (see Holmes 1974; Schoeffel 1979; Shore 1982; Tiffany 1975). Freeman's criticism of Mead's research, which emphasized the importance of culture, has to be viewed within the broader context of continuing debate over genes and gender and the resurgence of political conservatism in the West.

In the remainder of this article, I shall consider sexual paradigms of power in Pacific Island anthropology. My purpose is to illustrate paradigmatic issues that inform anthropological discourse about gender and politics, using works influential in Oceanic theory and ethnography, and to explore areas for further feminist inquiry.

**Politics and Gender**

Women are invisible in anthropological studies of politics, which is assumed to be a male domain. Failure to recognize the diversity of women's political roles is built into background assumptions of male dominance and men's monopoly of power. These assumptions are further reinforced by the notion that politics occur beyond the domestic sphere associated with women. According to this view, women are parochial or disinterested in the public world of male politics; in other words, women are nonpolitical.
Anthropological models of political organization are influenced by dualisms of public/private spheres and political/nonpolitical action. These dichotomized relations assume a theoretical and ideological opposition between the nonpolitical, domestic woman and the political, public man. Women who cross the boundary from the domestic to the public domain are explained as exceptional or anomalous. Such women are post-menopausal, barren, high ranking, suffering from psychological or organic disorders, or are acceptable substitutes when men are unavailable. Moreover, it is frequently assumed that those women who do participate in the public arena must abide by men's rules and deny their "real" feminine nature. Women who participate in the public world, then, are viewed as masculinized interlopers or usurpers of men's rightful prerogatives (Tiffany 1979b, 1982a).

These conceptualizations, which can be traced back to Aristotle, continue to inform anthropological thinking about the nature of politics. Jural models, emphasizing formal role relations and institutions, overlook informal political roles of women. Processual models of politics, concerned with nonformalized arenas and spheres, similarly ignore women. Equating government with politics obscures relations of power and authority involving both sexes in a wide range of social relationships, as the work by women anthropologists in Melanesia demonstrates (Counts 1984; Gewertz 1983; Nash 1978; Sexton 1983; M. Strathern 1984b).

Gender, Rank, and Power. Feminist research suggests that female chiefs in Africa were viewed by missionaries, traders, colonial officers, anthropologists, and other foreigners as anomalous exceptions to the norm of male control (Van Allen 1979 [1972]). Histories of pacification and colonial administrations in Africa describe how succession rights and chiefly prerogatives, particularly those enjoyed by women, were subsequently undermined by imposing primogeniture or other forms of male succession to titles and economic resources (Bay 1982; Hafkin and Bay 1976).

Similar processes occurred in the Pacific. Polynesian women of rank, particularly those who held chiefly offices, presented early western observers with an anomaly. Westerners had difficulty reconciling their preconceptions about the nonpolitical nature of women with the presence of female chiefs and other elite women who commanded considerable economic and political resources. This ambivalence is reflected in the vague, often conflicting historical accounts about the political power and sexuality of high ranking women (Ferdon 1981; Gailey 1980; Gething 1977; Sinclair 1971).

Douglas Oliver's (1974) monumental work on Tahitian society illustrates the difficulties faced by the ethnographer in reconstructing a detailed picture of women's roles in domains other than marriage, sex, childbirth, and childcare. Tahitian women of rank, unfortunately, remain politically marginal in Oliver's three-volume book. Marshall Sahlins's (1981) account of the Hawaiian Islanders' responses to western explorers, traders, and
missionaries simplifies women's participation in the contact situation by sexualizing them. Island women are not political actors in the processes of social change. Rather, Sahlins refers to Hawaiian women in the context of their erotic appeal: Women provide "sexual services" to visiting seamen; provoke Captain's Cook's concern about introducing "the venereal" to his crew; and engage in "sexual traffic" between island and western men (Sahlins 1981: 38, 41, 43). By contrast, feminist scholarship has provided more complex and compelling accounts of islander-westerner contacts through the perspective of a woman of rank (Sinclair 1976) and through the eyes of American women missionaries stationed in Hawaii during the first half of the 1800s (Grimshaw 1983).

Early observers tried to explain the anomaly of high ranking women by demonstrating their secondary status to men. Women, it was argued, became chiefs because no suitable male was available; or, high status women were viewed as ceremonial instruments and sexual pawns of men's political intrigues. The "Great Women" of Tahiti, first-born daughters who acquired sacred titles (as distinguished from other high ranking women), wielded diverse powers and prerogatives. These included, for example, the right to violate strict food taboos associated with paramount chiefly status. Moreover, Great Women were served by a 'set of men' (mahu), "effeminate" males who provided friendship and food to their female superiors (quoted in Gunson 1964: 58). Missionaries described men belonging to the 'set of men' as "deliberately emasculated or 'degraded' to the position of women in order to serve the Great Women," suggesting that in the eyes of westerners, island women of rank remained inferior to their men, regardless of the latter's social station (Gunson 1964: 58). Viewed as masculinized females or women served by feminized males, the Great Women of Tahiti could not be accepted by outsiders as persons of superior social status with exceptional powers and privileges. Great Women and their 'set of men' retinues represented an aberrant practice that set the western paradigm of male dominance on its head.

The anthropological literature contains notably little information on Polynesian women of rank. Felix Keesing's (1937) article on the Samoan 'ceremonial maiden' (taupou) represents one of the few attempts to document mission and colonial policies towards women of high birth. Julia Hecht's (1977) discussion of the 'sacred maid' (mayakitanga) explores the hitherto ignored political importance of this office for understanding the dynamics of gender, kinship, and social organization in Pukapuka, Cook Islands. High ranking women in Tonga exercised mystical powers to curse and cause illness or sterility, and they provided positive supports to their brothers' children (Rogers 1977). In Samoa, women's organizations developed into significant political forces (Schoeffel 1977). Such studies have stimulated anthropological interest in relations of gender, rank, and sexuality in Polynesian social systems (Bott 1981; Hanson 1982), but little analysis from a feminist perspective (Gailey 1980; Orner 1981; Schoeffel 1979).
Women and the Politics of Ceremonial Exchange. Women in many Pacific Island societies produce for the domestic economy; they also contribute to and participate in ceremonial exchanges of wealth, which are important political events. Conventional anthropological discourse about ceremonial transactions dismissed or ignored the economic and political participation of women (Feil 1978).

In the western Pacific islands of Belau (formerly Palau), women manufactured turtle shell money, which Homer Barnett's (1979 [1960]: 37-38) ethnography described as "subsidiary to and less valuable" than male money made from pottery, porcelain, and old glass. Although Barnett considered female money less valuable, it was used, like male money, to stimulate production beyond immediate consumption needs and to acquire prestige (Barnett 1979 [1960]: 38). Belauan women also engaged in turtle-shell-money transactions; yet, Barnett described women's exchanges as "subordinate" to men's exchanges, which occur during the same occasions:

Just as a husband owes only money to his wife's brother in compensation for food and service, so his sister is required to pay his wife so many [turtle] shell trays for her share of the same food and service. Similarly, just as a man is obliged to give money to the brother of his daughter-in-law, so a woman gives shell trays to her daughter-in-law. In all instances, money and trays are classed together, and both are set over against food and service (Barnett 1979 [1960]: 40-41).

This passage suggests an alternative interpretation, which is supported by Barnett's (1949: 52-53, 56, 84) earlier and more detailed work on Belauan society. Instead of illustrating a negative valuation of women's economic transfers, exchanges by both sexes are structurally parallel to each other, rather than hierarchically ordered. Imputing greater social value to male exchanges may reflect more accurately the paradigmatic premises of the ethnographer and the cultural values of Barnett's male informants than the diverse social contexts in which Belauan women and men conduct economic transactions.

Barnett (1979 [1960]: 86-116; 1983) lived with a male graduate student in the islands during 1947 and 1948 and worked with male informants, who associated him with the U.S. Navy and the postwar government administration. Barnett's ethnography is primarily about men and male informants' perceptions of women in a society characterized by a "sharp separation of the sexes," which precludes men researchers from working regularly with women informants (Smith 1983: xvii). Containing ambivalent and conflicting statements about Belauan women, Barnett's work raised intriguing questions that it did not answer adequately. For example, Belauan men publicly acknowledge the value and importance of women, who confirm male attitudes with positive feelings of their own self-worth. However, the reader is cautioned that this is a verbal facade hiding the "fundamental reality of
male dominance" (Barnett 1979 [1960]: 18). Women are depicted in this matrilineal descent system as passive genealogical links through which wealth and power are transmitted to men:

men hold and disburse the family wealth, are invested with family titles and the governing prerogatives that go with them, and take precedence privately and publicly over their sisters, mothers, and wives (Barnett 1979 [1960]: 19).

Both sexes claim that women exercise power and authority, but Barnett explained this assertion as an ideology to which every Belauan subscribes. Indeed, men's pronouncements about women "have been known to trap sympathetic but unwaried foreigners into believing that the Palauans live under a matriarchal system presided over by respected, kindly, elderly women" (Barnett 1979 [1960]: 18; 1983: 163-164). Matriliney, Barnett was careful to emphasize, did not mean matriarchy. Furthermore, matriline did not interfere with male monopoly of politics: The specter of women exercising power and authority over men is assigned to the realm of ideology.

Answers to this paradigmatic puzzle of formally powerless women accorded informal power may be found in a subsequent study of Belauan society conducted during 1972 and 1973 by a woman anthropologist. DeVerne Reed Smith writes:

I do not argue that women have greater or lesser power than men; instead, I seek to show the rich complexities of male and female domains. My basic tenet is that the failure to analyze women's participation in social systems has resulted in distorted or partial portraits of the cultures we seek to describe (1983: 8).

"Like any other human endeavor," Barnett (1983: 172) observed, "scientific activity is governed by a set of values." Accordingly, androcentric values and paradigms of male dominance obscure multiple ethnographic realities of gender differences in behavior, values, and perceptions.

Barnett (1979 [1960]: 19-20) noted the presence of Belauan "women's government" observed by German anthropologists during the early 1900s. While the women's government structurally paralleled that of the men, women remained, according to Barnett, politically subordinate. Contradictory images of Belauan women as passive chattels and active conspirators in male intrigues reflect a lack of concern with political and economic change. Barnett's fieldwork took place shortly after the islands were devastated by World War II. Gender relations in Belau were radically affected by changes resulting from successive colonial administrations under Spain, Germany, and Japan, whose policies assumed that women were socially and legally inferior to men. The static model of society described in Barnett's Being a Palauan obscures the impact of 150 years of colonial history in evaluating the participation of women in the political process.
The extensive anthropological literature on Trobriand Island exchange provides another case in point of how women's transacting roles have been ignored. Weiner (1976: xvi-xvii) observed ten women's mortuary ceremonies involving exchanges of thousands of bundles of banana leaves and skirts, "objects of female wealth with explicit economic value," during her fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands, Papua New Guinea, between 1971 and 1972. These important economic events were ignored by Bronislaw Malinowski, one of anthropology's "forefathers" and a pioneer of extended field research, and by subsequent anthropologists who worked in the archipelago. Weiner provided a simple answer to this paradigmatic puzzle:

A critical difference between myself and my male predecessors is that I took seemingly insignificant bundles of banana leaves as seriously as any kind of male wealth. I saw Kiriwina [Trobriand] women as active participants in the exchange system, and thus I accord them an equal place beside Kiriwina men (1976: 11).

Apparently, women's exchanges were not considered sufficiently important to study, even by anthropologists, including Malinowski, who emphasized economic transactions in their own research.

Women and Wealth. Ceremonial exchanges of wealth are important occasions in the Samoan Islands. Even the most casual observers of such events, which are daily occurrences, cannot help but notice the degree to which women participate in them. Perhaps the presence of women at these functions was taken so much for granted that women were unremarkable and, therefore, unremarked in the anthropological literature on Samoan redistributions (Tiffany and Tiffany 1978).

Samoan women are subsistence producers, and they are transactors in the ceremonial sphere of the economy. Women cultivate gardens, collect on the reef, raise pigs, manufacture 'barkcloth' (siapo) and weave pandanus mats. Finely woven pandanus mats ('fine mats' ['ie tōga]) are highly prized as valuables for ceremonial exchanges. Samoans consider 'fine mats' the most important source of wealth and prestige, despite the primitiveness of cash and trade store goods (including canned mackerel and plastic kegs of salted corned beef) in ceremonial redistributions. A 'fine mat' takes several months (even years) to complete, depending upon its overall size (which averages about four by five feet), the woman's time, her eyesight, and width of the dried pandanus strips. A superbly woven mat has a texture similar to coarse linen. High quality mats are extremely valuable, since few made today have such consistency; associated with rich histories of prior ceremonial exchanges, these mats are priceless, despite their tattered and mended appearance.

In addition to their roles in subsistence and production of valuables, Samoan women exercise rights of control over the public distribution of wealth. Ceremonial exchanges are frequent occasions in Samoan society, as important events--funerals, weddings, title installations, and dedications of new houses or churches--must be validated by distributing food and
wealth. These events are linked to considerations of status and rank, important concerns in this Polynesian chiefdom. A chief confirms or enhances his/her status by generously giving away valuables, while members of the titleholder's kin groups (as well as members' affines [relatives by marriage]) acquire prestige by contributing goods for redistribution.

A woman can participate formally in an exchange ceremony in one of several capacities. She may weave a 'fine mat' and contribute it directly as the untitled representative of her household. If she holds a chiefly title, she may represent a localized segment of a 'cognatic descent group' (āiga) with its contributions of mats from women belonging to related households. If a woman's title is high enough, she may represent an entire descent group, although comparatively few senior ranking titles are currently held by women.

One of the most important responsibilities of women closely related to the sponsor of a ceremonial exchange involves grading and preparing 'fine mats', which frequently number in the hundreds, for subsequent distribution. Women display these mats during the ceremony so they can be admired before formal presentations. (Men may also help with the grading and display if there are many mats to be given away.) Female chiefs receive 'fine mats', and untitled women, who represent (with men) a particular descent group or political constituency, dance and shout to proclaim their group's delighted thanks upon receipt of mats. Women who hold 'talking chief' tulafale titles, or who are wives of orators, may take the liberty during formal ceremonies to engage in stylized clowning and joking for which they receive a 'fine mat' or two.

Distribution of 'fine mats' is the highlight of every exchange event. This phase of the ceremony is politically charged as people expectantly await their mats, which will be critically evaluated for commensurate quality and quantity with the status, rank, and gift of recipients. Women make these politically-loaded decisions. Women are primarily responsible for grading and organizing 'fine mats' according to quality, age, and size and for selecting individual mats for distribution to specific recipients. In an installation ceremony that I observed during 1978 in Western Samoa, the sponsor of the event, a chief who had received two politically important titles, sat in isolated dignity while his male talking chief spoke on his behalf. Seated next to the orator, the newly installed chief's two sisters and about twenty female relatives determined which particular mats, of the fifteen hundred neatly graded, folded, and stacked around them, were to be given away. After making their selections, the sponsor's eldest sister notified the orator, who announced each presentation.

Like other women anthropologists who initiated their field research during the late 1960s and early 1970s, I too have been concerned with the domain of women and with the paradigmatic problems of assessing previous ethnographic "truths" about gender relations in Pacific island societies. Like the literature on Belau and the Trobriand Islands, the political and economic significance of women's participation in ceremonial transactions in Samoa had escaped previous anthropological notice.
Big-Men and Invisible Women. Similarly, the absence of women in anthropological studies of Pacific Island politics, particularly women of commoner or nonelite status, is striking. Indeed, the absence of women from the anthropological literature on politics in general, and the premises that reinforce this absence, are taken so much for granted that few researchers have questioned them. After reading the essays in Politics in New Guinea (Berndt and Lawrence 1971), for example, it must be concluded that either women are truly nonpolitical in Melanesian societies or that women are dismissed as politically insignificant. Politics in New Guinea concentrates on formalized big-man roles. These achieved positions are, of course, important for understanding Melanesian political organizations, but politics cannot be equated with big-men in these societies. The dynamics of political relations involving both sexes are obscured by stressing specific roles held by men, by interpreting women as passive supporters of male decisions, or by conceptualizing women as subversive power brokers who have no legitimacy in the eyes of men (Tiffany 1979b, 1984a, 1984b).

Exclusive concern with men and politics is evident in Leopold Pospisil's (1978) ethnography on the patrilineal Kapauku Papuans of the central Highlands of Irian Jaya (Indonesian New Guinea). After reading this richly documented work, I am impressed with the vigorous characterizations of men in a society depicted as a male world in which women marginally participate: Kapauku women bear children for men, cultivate gardens and raise pigs for men, marry in accordance with male interests, and constitute the major cause of warfare among men.

Politics, in other words, is men's business, according to Pospisil's androcentric paradigm of Kapauku social organization. Yet, despite their general exclusion from political life, Kapauku women manage somehow to cast aside their exclusive concern with domestic responsibilities during warfare. Women collect stray arrows on the battlefield, shout "advice concerning the enemy's movements to their fighting husbands" behind enemy lines, act as scouts, and even wield walking sticks against male enemies "mortified" by the women's onslaughts (Pospisil 1978: 59). The participation of women in warfare suggests they are not asapolitical as Pospisil's account implies.

Women pose special problems in the anthropological literature on kinship and descent, as Pospisil's (1978) ethnography on the Kapauku Papuans illustrates. Anthropologists emphasize the mechanisms whereby men exercise rights over the procreative and economic services of women as sisters, daughters, wives, mothers, or widows. In addition to being valued for their bodies and labor, women are considered genealogically significant. They bear and nurture children, who are descendants of kin-based groups, and women themselves comprise genealogical links in the political histories of such groupings. However, women remain problematic in the literature. Entire ethnographies, in addition to works with extended treatments of kinship and social organization, provide little or no reference to women (O'Brien 1984; Tiffany and Adams 1985).
The possibility that male perspectives of kinship and patrilineal descent reflect one view of a social reality to which women do not necessarily subscribe requires a feminist consideration of women as social actors. As Marilyn Strathern (1980, 1981, 1984a) has shown for the Hagen of the western Highlands of New Guinea, women and men differentially perceive kinship relations articulated within a formal structure of patrilineal descent that emphasizes the social primacy of men.

These gender differences in perception translate into conflict over the disposal of pigs and interpreting women's appropriate economic roles. Hagen women take pride in their gardening industry and full pig stalls, and they claim the right to exercise control over distribution of the goods they produce. Hagen men, by contrast, view women as caretakers of male property. Men claim they own the garden land and pigs that women merely cultivate and maintain. While acknowledging the importance of female production and openly admiring a successful pig-raiser, men deny women's roles as transactors of wealth. In other words, men view women as producers in the lower status subsistence sphere; men also maintain that transactions associated with ceremonial exchanges are exclusively male domains. Differing understandings and expectations are a source of tension, particularly between husbands and wives and brothers and sisters (M. Strathern 1972, 1984a).

From the male perspective, Hagen women accept the priority of men's claims to their labor and produce. However, the "passive pawn" view of women idealized by male informants (as well as by anthropologists) is seldom realized in daily living. Hagen women assert claims to their own productivity while simultaneously managing the frequently conflicting demands on it by their husbands and brothers, demands accelerated by increased participation in the labor intensive activities associated with coffee cash cropping (A. Strathern 1979, 1982; see also Sexton [1982, 1983] for discussion of economic change in the eastern Highlands of New Guinea). The diverse responses of Highland men and women to new economic and political opportunities generated by cash cropping demonstrate the need for anthropological frameworks that incorporate men and women, and the need for changes in conventional anthropological discourse about gender, kinship, and the politics of exchange.

**Submitive Drudges--Powerful Old Women**

This survey of Pacific Island ethnography concludes with the anthropological literature on Australian aborigines, a literature characterized by its denigrating and patronizing discourse about women. The large ethnographic material on Australian aborigines contains numerous examples of an "economy of sex" interpretation of social behavior. According to this androcentric view, men exchange women for their economic, sexual, and procreative services, thereby controlling or ceding rights over women to other men. Thus, men may threaten or use physical force against each other and against women to assert claims over them (Bell 1980; Berndt 1981; Gale 1974, 1983; Rohrlich-Leavitt et al 1975).
Meggitt's (1962) ethnography on the Walbiri aborigines illustrates this sexual paradigm. During the course of a twenty-nine-page chapter on husband/wife and co-wife relations, I counted twenty separate instances of male violence against women. Meggitt (1962: 108) summarized that particular chapter as a detailed examination of "the significant affective, conventional and jural features of the marital relationship." Meggitt's emphasis on men's presumed preoccupation with controlling female sexuality and procreation is supported by cataloging examples of physical abuse against women. Accounts of "trashings" and neglect of wives and female kin are thought to reflect the "conventional" means by which men manage marital disputes in this society. Meggitt reinforced this image of male brutishness by depicting Walbiri women as promiscuous, violent, and provocateurs of male aggression. The implicit message in this book is that women encourage male abuse by their wrongful acts. Brief asidees on cooperative relations among co-wives and women in general, relations apparently observed and recorded by the author's wife, were not explored (Meggitt 1962: xiii-xiv; see also Elkin 1962: vii). Meggitt's claim of spousal affection and stability of Walbiri marriages is not satisfactorily reconciled with the emphasis on male violence against women and men's attempted usurpations of other men's rights over women.

C. W. M. Hart and Arnol Pilling's (1979 [1960]: 53) ethnography on the Tiwi conveys similar messages about the proper "place" of aboriginal women. In addition to being mistreated, Tiwi women serve as dependent pawns in men's intrigues. Older women are derogated as "old crones" and "toothless old hag[s]" (Hart and Pilling 1979 [1960]: 14, 35). Regardless of age, women are useful: They are "investment funds," "political capital available for investment in gaining the goodwill of other men;" and they are "the main currency of the influence struggle, the main 'trumps' in the endless bridge game [of men]" (Hart and Pilling 1979 [1960]: 52). Women's politically assertive behavior is dismissed as "collaboration" with men (Hart and Pilling 1979 [1960]: 53).

This sexual paradigm of male dominance is not supported by Hart and Pilling's own research. Hart's discussion of his fieldwork during 1928 and 1929 described senior women as repositories of complex genealogical knowledge (Hart and Pilling 1979 [1960]: 132-133). Older women who remained in camp were, therefore, "useful" to Hart, or at least those who were not "stupid and senile" like his adopted Tiwi mother. Hart and Pilling recognized the significance of genealogies as keys to understanding the dynamics of Tiwi social organization. The point that women memorized and disseminated genealogical information--a source of political power in this kinship-based society--and the political implications of having this knowledge to give or withhold, was ignored. Despite their data to the contrary, Hart and Pilling conceptualized Tiwi women as abused chattel and passive onlookers of men's affairs (Tiffany and Adams 1985).

The Tiwi are of special interest from a feminist perspective because different paradigms by different researchers have been used to interpret
gender relations in the same society. Jane Goodale's book, Tiwi Wives (1971), presented a complex world in which women's experiences and social ties are an important focus.10

Daughters, Mothers, and Grannies. Groups of related women play significant roles in the lives of both sexes in Tiwi society. Residential groups organized around related women are called "'one-granny' sibling sets," consisting of persons of both sexes who share descent from a common mother's mother. A one-granny sibling set includes one's siblings (brothers and sisters) and mother's sister's children. These people are linked together by sharing descent from a common maternal grandmother. Goodale (1971: 71) described these female-focused sibling sets as "one-granny" groups; in the aboriginal form of pidgin English, "granny" refers to a person's maternal grandmother.

Related women provide group continuity, since sisters frequently marry the same man as they achieve sexual maturity. Ties among sisters are reinforced, since they are likely to "move as a unit of co-wives into the domestic group of their successive and common husbands" (Goodale 1971: 74). In other words, sisters grow up together, often marry the same man, and move as a common unit to their new husband's camp. Successive marriages do not break up these lifelong relationships; sisters continue to provide mutual assistance, regardless of whom their common husband happens to be at the time.

According to Harl and Pilling (1979 [1960]: 33), "What held the [domestic] unit together was the central position and dominance of the father or husband, and hence the life of a household was only as long as his lifetime." Goodale's ethnography suggests that Pilling's conclusion is an oversimplification. Related women provide group continuity, whereas, husbands come and go. Successive husbands must negotiate with their prospective mothers-in-law for brides, since wives are likely to outlive their own husbands. A woman's first husband is usually considerably older (the average age difference between spouses is about nineteen years), since she may have been promised before puberty to a man already in his thirties or forties. A woman, therefore, expects to outlive a number of husbands; and, as she matures, her decisions in selecting future spouses, including husbands for her own daughters and granddaughters, are politically significant (Goodale 1962).

Thus, a father's or husband's position is not as central as Hart and Pilling claimed, since supportive female relationships persist irrespective of a husband's or father's death. The pivotal figures in a woman's life are, according to Goodale (1979: personal communication), her mother, mother's one-granny sisters, and mother's mother. These women provide her with economic, political, and emotional support, and they help arrange her future marriages. Mothers are also important to sons, who maintain close ties with their sisters throughout life.
Comparison of Hart and Pilling's and Goodale's ethnographies illustrates how applying different assumptions and paradigms to the same society can result in differing emphases and interpretations. As Goodale (1971: xix) observed in her introduction to Tiwi Wives, readers familiar with her work and that of Hart and Pilling "will be aware of the apparent lack of agreement of the various analyses, primarily in the area of social structure." These studies also pose critical questions about the presumptively neutral enterprise of anthropological fieldwork and about the epistemology of multiple ethnographic realities of the same society articulated by competing paradigms. Are Tiwi women assertive wielders of digging sticks? Brutalized drudges? Passive pawns in male intrigues? Whose perceptions are emphasized or disregarded in anthropological fieldwork, and why?

**Conclusion**

How human behavior is described has considerable consequences for the kinds of explanations that are developed about it. Feminist inquiry questions the established premise that male-dominated science is value-free. Thus, feminist inquiry necessarily involves a reflexive stance. The complex dialectic of self-evaluation, cross-cultural experiences, researcher/informant relations, and the role of ethnographers as interpreters of others' behavior, links the anthropological enterprise to feminist inquiry. The process of knowing entails perception, articulation, judgement, selection, and synthesis. What anthropologists (and feminists who use anthropological data) think they know about women of other societies is therefore bound up with culturally-loaded valuations of gender, sex, and power.

Examining the premises of androcentric anthropology provides insights into the interconnected processes of fieldwork and theory construction, including the means by which feminism can transform these processes. The presumption of a unidimensional reality in androcentric anthropology structures a social domain that is considered both male and human. The result, as we have seen in this survey of Pacific ethnography, is a discourse in which the rich complexity of gender relations is compressed within the conceptual boundaries of an imposed reality constructed by, for, and about men.

The semantic and paradigmatic consequences of this discourse for women cross-culturally demand critical feminist assessment. Defined by their reproductive functions, women in androcentric anthropology are the Other—the deviates from male standards and understandings. Women are depicted in such discourse as the silent anomalies or exceptions requiring explanation, but only, it appears, when women step out of their place and thereby create trouble for men. Power is associated with this apparent contradiction of women's problematic nature and muted presence. Whereas the problematic (deviant) woman threatens to use her power, the muted woman is impotent. The woman who poses problems (for men) must be "handled;" whereas, the woman who poses no problem (for men) fades into the background and keeps her mouth shut. The ethnographic literature is filled with examples of semantic
derogations of women, including varieties of physical punishments women ought to get or receive from men for "getting out of line." The metaphor of the "wild" woman "tamed" by running a horse's bit through her mouth, in contrast to the image of the sullen drudge brutalized into submission, convey denigrating meanings about women of other cultures that inform androcentric anthropology. Indeed, the anthropologist as "hero"--as survivor of the self-imposed trauma of fieldwork-as-a-rite-of-passage and as "custodian" of the primitive and exotic (Sontag 1970 [1963]: 184, 1961)--reflects the strongly masculine attributes of conventional anthropological research and its discourse.

The emergence of women's lives and experiences in recent anthropological writings, reflecting the development of feminist scholarship during the last two decades, is a result of paradigm-induced changes in values, perceptions, methods, and conceptual frameworks. The formerly muted voices of women are being heard as feminist anthropology sensitizes fieldworkers to the reflexive awareness of the research process, researcher/informant relationships, and to the dynamics of intracultural variation and gender differences within specific social systems.

The Kuhnian crisis in anthropology can be resolved with the emergence of new paradigms at many levels of discourse and analysis. No single framework is capable of explaining the entire spectrum of female realities across cultures, let alone the human condition. Formulations of new paradigms and redefinitions of the goals and methods of anthropology are a positive affirmation of--and a challenge to--the entire discipline.

Feminist scholarship is more than supplemental information about women added to existing paradigms. The goal of feminist anthropology is to reformulate the "Science of Man" by asking different questions and by constructing new frameworks that contribute to an integrated understanding of human experiences. Achieving this goal requires sensitivity to gender differences in perception and values and to the complexity of women's lives across diverse histories, cultures, and classes. As anthropologists, we owe this personal and professional commitment to the peoples of other societies with whom we live and work.
NOTES

1. This is an expanded and revised version of a paper initially presented in 1980 at the Women in Oceania symposium convened in Galveston, Texas, and sponsored by the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania. Portions of this paper were subsequently presented in 1983 at the American Anthropological Association meetings in Chicago. I am grateful to Denise O'Brien and Marilyn Strathern for their careful readings of subsequent drafts of the manuscript and to Jane C. Goodale for her critical evaluation of the Tiwi material.

References to Samoa refer to fieldwork conducted during 1969 and 1971 and during four shorter periods between 1973 and 1979. I wish to thank the American Philosophical Society, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and the UCLA Department of Anthropology for their support. I am grateful to the governments of the United States and Western Samoa for assisting my research and to the many Samoans who generously contributed their efforts.

2. A lineage is a kinship-based group whose members reckon descent, either matrilineally (through females) or patrilineally (through males). Members of a matrilineage reckon their descent from a common female ancestor through known genealogical links traced through the maternal line. Children in matrilineal descent systems, then, are members of their mother's matrilineage. I. M. Lewis's text on social anthropology illustrates the androcentric paradigm of matriliney:

> it is clear that the difficulties in matrilineal systems stem directly from the conflict between male domination and citizenship traced through women. If women were to seize political control, making matrilineal matriarchy, or to employ artificial insemination, things would be very different (1976: 273-274).

This sexual paradigm of male dominance differs considerably from more recent approaches to gender relations by female anthropologists who have worked with matrilineal peoples in the Pacific (McDowell 1984; Nash 1981; Smith 1983). For further discussions of matriliney and matriarchy, see James (1978), Poewe (1981); and Tiffany (1982a).

4. Defining women as productive and reproductive "valuables" is commonplace in anthropological discourse. Using a vocabulary of commercial economics, women are variously described as "liquid asset[s]" (quoted in Service 1971: 35), "a kind of property" (Beattie 1964: 194), or as "the most precious of all currencies" (I. M. Lewis 1976: 234). According to this androcentric view, women are constrained by pregnancy and childcare; whereas men exchange women in marriage alliances and use them as political booty.

5. The use and abuse of animal studies and their generalizations to human behavior are the subject of a considerable feminist literature (Bleier 1984; Hubbard and Lowe 1979). The exchange between Sidney Greenfield (1968) and Ann Chowning (1969) illustrates the epistemological problem of constructing anthropological explanations of female sexuality in the Pacific extrapolated from animal studies. Greenfield argued that the low fertility of sexually active, unmarried girls in the Trobriand Islands could be explained by the mating behavior of female mice. In refuting Greenfield's argument, Chowning questioned the scientific validity of equating premarital sex in the Pacific, professional prostitution in America, and the behavior of laboratory mice.

6. Sanday (1980) presents a different interpretation of Male and Female and Sex and Temperament, focusing on the interpersonal dynamics of Mead's varied fieldwork experiences and the men in her life at the time.

7. Published in sixteen languages, the Morrow edition of Coming of Age in Samoa has more than 2 million copies in print (Davis 1983: 62).


9. Unlike lineage membership, which is exclusive to one group only, cognatic descent reckoning enables an individual to claim membership in several kin-based groups concurrently. In a cognatic descent system, a person minimally belongs to the groups of his/her mother and father, in addition to both maternal and paternal grandparents. Group memberships do not extend infinitely, however, as participation in political and economic affairs is important for maintaining active affiliations. Samoans claim memberships in a smaller number of groups than those to which they belong through kinship alone, with the number of active ties varying from around four or five to over twenty. Residence is ambilocal; that is, a couple chooses to live with the wife's or husband's kin. In practice, residence is likely to change several
times during a lifetime. The flexibility of residence patterns is consistent with a cognatic descent system and ideology that stresses individual choice in kin group affiliations.

The principles of cognatic descent group organization entail important economic and political consequences for Samoan women. There are no specific categories of men who can claim exclusive rights to the labor power and procreative functions of women. Samoan women do not view themselves, nor are they defined by men, as exchangeable property or political pawns (see also Hrdy (1984a, 1984b).


11. The most recent example of this kind of paradigmatic disagreement is Freeman's (1983) criticism of Mead's Samoan research. A classic example in the literature is Oscar Lewis's restudy at various intervals between 1943 and 1948 of Tepoztlan, a Mexican village initially studied in 1926 and 1927 by Robert Redfield (1930), a pioneer in the anthropology of peasant societies. In a summary of what he considered "the broader and more fundamental differences in the findings of the two studies," Lewis observed:

The impression given by Redfield's study of Tepoztlan is that of a relatively homogeneous, isolated, smoothly functioning, and well-integrated society made up of a contented and well-adjusted people. His picture of the village has a Rousseauian quality which glosses lightly over evidence of violence, disruption, cruelty, disease, suffering, and maladjustment. We are told little of poverty, economic problems, or political schisms. Throughout his study we find an emphasis upon the cooperative and unifying factors in Tepoztecan society. Our findings, on the other hand, would emphasize the underlying individualism of Tepoztecan institutions and character, the lack of cooperation, the tensions between villages within the municipio, the schisms within the village, and the pervading quality of fear, envy, and distrust in inter-personal relations (1963 [1951]: 428-429).
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