Military Anthropology and the Ethics of Espionage

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Professions, just like societies and cultures, tell stories about themselves, related as myths of origin and orientation, of meaning, value, and purpose. Professions tell their individual stories in myriad ways. Many professions at present begin by setting forth their mission: that is, stating their professional purpose or very reason for being, in terms of the role they intend to play within some larger society or culture, and the values or services they intend to provide. Venerable professions, such as medicine and health care, cite their long history in a normative fashion and see their history as exemplary of the role their members have traditionally played within some larger society.[1] From that normative historical narrative, they elicit by induction their present purpose and core values.

However they choose to present themselves to the wider public in such narratives, those stories invariably aim at defining some sense of professional identity and professional stance: describing who their members are, what they collectively believe and stand for, and which skills or expertise the members of that profession portray themselves as stewards and custodians of. Through such narratives of collective self, professions attempt to convey what it means for someone to decide to join their ranks, chose to practice their collective art or craft, and thereby contribute to the well-being of the wider civic society in whose eyes these professionals thereby earn a position of respect and esteem.

As often as not, such storytelling culminates in the values and collective ideals of the profession itself, enshrined in a code of conduct, defining the limits of acceptable professional practice. For (as the German Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant first observed) human beings are legislators and lawgivers, as well as storytellers and dream weavers. Our laws define and constrain our individual

behavior in relationship to one another within some particular cosmos that is itself defined, oriented, bounded, and ordered in the stories we tell and the dreams we weave about it.

I know almost nothing about how members of the Clandestine Services themselves tell their story, or define and limit their professional practice. I do not even know whether the members of that service see themselves (as military personnel now routinely do) as members of a profession: that is, as pursuing a vocation defined by a body of expert knowledge, with its practitioners bound together and constrained by a code of conduct, and committed to a role of public service. I am keenly aware that other storytellers—novelists and filmmakers, for instance—have woven their own romantic and, I suspect, fanciful stories about the Clandestine Services, while the very nature of their work has largely prohibited the actual practitioners from properly defining and describing, in any detail, who they really are, and what they actually do.

From the fanciful and imagined accounts of nonmembers, moreover, the wider society tends to conclude that the members of such organizations, engaged in espionage or covert activities, consist of those who see themselves, or whom their society has deliberately placed, outside the constraints of conventional law, and unfettered as well by any norms or customs of professional practice. I am aware, at least, from the work of my philosophical colleagues David Perry and John Lango[2] as well as from the essays on this subject collected by Jan Goldman in his superb anthology *The Ethics of Spying*,[3] that the actual matter is far more complex and nuanced than the public realizes or than these fanciful accounts by outsiders manage to portray.

Instead, for the past three or so years, I have myself been immersed in studying another professional story—that of anthropologists—engaged in a years-long debate over the professional propriety of so-called military anthropology.[4] My attempt to untangle the moral and philosophical conundrums of that dispute led me to attend more carefully to the story that anthropologists tell about themselves as a profession, in part to describe why they are, as a group, so adamantly opposed to participating in this new practice.

The "venerable normative history" approach to professional narrative, for example, is simply not available to anthropology. Like psychology and other social and behavioral sciences, anthropology has only a brief history, emerging from the broader study of philosophy only toward the end of the eighteenth century. Even that

time frame is open to interpretation and dispute. Anthropologists tend to date that emergence variously with Montaigne, Montesquieu, or Rousseau, or more recently with Herder and Dilthey, who bequeathed us the problematic concept of *kultur*. I point out as a matter of fact in my book, however, that it was the aforementioned Kant, years before, and whose students many of these latter figures were, who first defined the field of anthropology and taught the first university classes on the subject as early as 1772–1773.[5] That turns out to be a matter of great symbolic significance, I claim, because it is also Kant to whom we look to understand some of the most basic constraints on professional practice, indeed, upon any human practice of any sort whatsoever.[6]

To my surprise, I discovered that the narrative of anthropology's history and, indeed, the very manner in which it relates its collective story, is framed in terms of what philosophers and logicians term *negation*, the process of defining an object or state of affairs through the denial or negation of *other* objects or states of affairs. That can be difficult to do and difficult to experience. Kant's successor, Hegel, described such an approach in the introduction to his influential early work the *Philosophy of Spirit* (1807) as involving the "pain and labor of the negative" and as constituting "a highway of despair." Notwithstanding, anthropologists have seemed determined as a group to set out on that highway and, accordingly, are enduring a good deal of pain in their labors at present.

The first act of negation in anthropology's case is historical. We are to understand how the discipline or profession of anthropology sees itself today largely through the negation of their shared past: that is, through anthropologists' collective repudiation of a succession of morally abhorrent things that past anthropologists have said and done (or, more accurately, are accused by anthropologists in the present of having said or done in the past). In my book, I call this lengthy, shared historical narrative the "litany of shame." That negative litany is set against a vague and only partially substantiated historical backdrop, in which anthropologists in the past are generally accused of collaboration with the colonial and imperial powers of previous centuries in the oppression, subjugation, and exploitation of indigenous peoples throughout the world.

The litany is grounded concretely, however, in terms of more recent, quite specific, and decidedly negative historical milestones drawn from the twentieth century. About these selected and ritually "forefronted" historical episodes, moreover (as I remark rather

incredulously in my book), there appears to be widespread and largely uncritical consensus among these scholars and academics who, as a matter of principle as well as customary practice, agree with one another on little if anything else. These recent historical milestones include

- the censuring by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) of its principal founding figure, Professor Franz Boas of Columbia University, for accusing and denouncing unnamed colleagues of engaging in espionage during World War I,
- the collaboration of Margaret Mead, her husband, Gregory Bateson, her colleague and close friend, Ruth Benedict, and other anthropologists at the time with the OSS during World War II and with its successor, the CIA, and military intelligence services during the Cold War,
- And, most centrally featured in this litany, "Project Camelot" in the 1960s and the so-called Thailand Affair in the early 1970s.

I call this collective historical discourse within the profession of anthropology a "litany" in that it entails almost universal agreement on the historical details included, in the order in which they are recited, and in the normative meaning or interpretation to be attached to each, despite substantial evidence of the historical inaccuracy or rampant inconsistencies, as well as the highly questionable interpretive significance, of each and every detail included within the narrative. I will return to these historical episodes in a moment.

The second act of negation consists of the tendency within anthropology to define the present practice of the discipline itself largely by what it is not. This is to say that anthropologists at present define who they are by explaining in great detail who they are not, what they eschew, and what they do not do and will not do. Who they are not are "spies." What they eschew is "secrecy." And what they do not do, nor will they approve of doing, is spying, or espionage, or secret, clandestine research.

It is clear, indeed unmistakable, that they regard the being and the doing of such things as reprehensible. It is less clear, from their collective discourse on this matter, whether that judgment constitutes a sweeping, wholesale moral indictment of such persons and activities as *reprehensible in themselves*—what we might define as a general or universal negative moral judgment about secret agents, covert actions, or acts of espionage—or whether this is a more narrowly defined stance regarding the ethics of their own profession.

In contrast to the universal condemnation of spies and espionage, the second position would merely amount to a declaration that, whatever the moral status of spies, secrecy, and espionage, it is inappropriate for those who are anthropologists ever (for reasons that must themselves be specified) to espouse such methodologies or engage in such activities.

I think it will be quite clear (even if at present it seems far from clear to most anthropologists) that those are two radically different claims. It is important to specify which claim is intended, unless both are. A physician or cleric, for example, may have a sibling or a best friend or even a spouse who is a soldier of whose activities the physician or cleric may morally approve or find praiseworthy, or at least to which they do not morally object. But it is professionally imperative that the doctors or priests not, themselves, *be* soldiers, and that they themselves not engage in military actions involving the use, by them, of deadly force—not, at least without betraying the most fundamental canons of their own professional practice. Are we meant to likewise conclude that the practice of ethnography, in particular—that is, the collection, interpretation, and dissemination for scientific purposes of data regarding the beliefs, customs, habits, and practices of the members of a society or culture (including at times the most intimate, private, and sacred of these beliefs and practices)—is inherently *inimical* to the practice of secrecy and espionage? Or are we to conclude that everyone everywhere should always abjure secrecy and espionage (but importantly, *not* ethnography) because such activities and practices are always *morally unworthy in themselves* (while presumably, ethnography is not)?

During the initial phase of this debate (2005–2008), "military anthropology" was perceived wholesale to constitute the latest episode in this long and regrettable historical "litany of shame." Its pursuit was accordingly condemned by many anthropologists as "mercenary" anthropology,[7] or otherwise criticized as necessarily engaging its members in unprofessional and unethical practices, such as espionage and clandestine research.[8] On closer inspection, much of this ado was about nothing, or at least about very little. It was fairly easy to demonstrate that anthropologists engaged in studying military cultures, for example, or others involved in routine education of military or even intelligence and security personnel in such

subjects as foreign languages and regional studies in federal service academies and colleges—not to mention reserve officer training programs in colleges and universities throughout the country—were not engaged in unethical or unprofessional practices, and certainly were not explicitly engaged in espionage or in the conduct of secret or clandestine research. Some anthropologists, in response, angrily denied that they, or any of their colleagues, had ever routinely conflated or denounced such activities within the broad category of military anthropology. They maintained this despite my having provided explicit testimony from those engaged in these harmless and benign activities in a military setting of the indiscriminate abuse heaped upon them, and despite substantial evidence gleaned and cited from published accounts of such abuse by still other anthropologists (e.g., Fosher, Selmeski, Rubinstein, passim).

In any case, during its second and most recent phase (2008–present), the debate over military anthropology has narrowed to focus almost exclusively on the U.S. Army's "Human Terrain Systems" (HTS) project, whose origins in 2005 as a "proof of concept" project, championed by anthropologists Montgomery McFate and David Kilcullen, with the support of army general David H. Petraeus, first sparked the general controversy over military anthropology. The second and presumably final report of an ad hoc commission appointed by the AAA to study the phenomenon of "military anthropology," the Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the U.S. Security and Intelligence Community (CEAUSSIC) was just released in December 2009. In that report, the commission hardens its own earlier cautious skepticism regarding the professional probity of military anthropology generally (as expressed in its initial "final report"[9]), into closer agreement with the findings of the AAA's own Executive Committee in October 2007, that the HTS program, in particular, represents an unethical, unprofessional, and hence unacceptable application of anthropological expertise. Interestingly, despite repeated allegations infusing both reports and the wider debate that HTS activities would inevitably involve spying and secret research, the gathering of covert military intelligence, and the intentional harming of research subjects, neither of these two reports, nor any other factual accounts of HTS, document any actual incidents of this sort. Indeed, the evidence appears, quite the contrary, to falsify the allegations that such clandestine activities do, or conceivably could, constitute any part of HTS work.

The second CEAUSSIC report in many respects represents a substantive advance over its predecessor. The first report (and only version available during the period of my research) was brief and almost entirely devoid of specifics. It lacked details concerning the HTS program and was not careful to distinguish this from the broader scope of military anthropology generally. In the absence of any concrete evidence of wrongdoing, moreover, it relied for its conclusions upon hypothetical case studies that were, as I demonstrated, amateurish, poorly designed for their intended purpose, and in any case largely irrelevant to the concerns of professional ethics cited otherwise in that report.[10] It showed the combined effects of absence of evidence, and of the committee itself being forced to operate in an atmosphere of crisis, far from their collective comfort zone or domain of expertise. I did not offer these criticisms publicly or maliciously at the time. Indeed, I shared those concerns with the chairman and some members of the committee, while conducting my own investigations, and shared some of my findings and suggestions. Partly as a result, I suspect, the second report confined itself exclusively to HTS and contained copious details on the founding, funding, structure, and administration of that program. Once again, however, it contained no concrete descriptions of actual professional malfeasance, nor could any of its allegations regarding HTS members engaging or being asked to engage in espionage, intelligence activities, or colluding in doing harm to research subjects be independently verified. Instead, it chiefly cited concerns about obtaining informed consent.

Interestingly, the second report acknowledged the earlier paucity of evidence concerning actual HTS practice and stated that research into such activities had only recently begun. In claiming this, the report altogether ignored any of my own published findings, despite the fact that these had been extensively peer-reviewed by the anthropological community, including some of the committee members, and published by a venerable anthropology publishing house as the first entry in an announced new series, Critical Issues in Anthropology, to be undertaken (in the publisher's own words) by "leading national and international experts in the field." Instead, as evidence of the new research being undertaken, the second CEAUSSIC report merely cited a few recent unrefereed editorials and online opinion pieces by members of the committee themselves, along with a single, self-published book by a self-styled journalist and vociferous critic of the program. Such self-interested, shoddy, and unprofessional

conduct might have been overlooked, had it resulted in any new light being shed on actual practice. Instead, for all its detail, the second report marshaled, as evidence for its findings against the professional propriety of the HTS program, only the still largely unsubstantiated complaints of mismanagement, excessive expenditures, and overall ineffectiveness—legitimate complaints, to be sure, but of the sort on the basis of which we would be obliged to dismantle most of the government bureaucracy, not to mention universities and professional organizations like the AAA.

I had likewise highlighted these separate concerns in my work, shared with the committee upon completion over a year earlier, and linked such concerns to independent moral and legal objections raised regarding the growing public–private partnership in combat zones and the uncontrolled growth of private military contracting generally. I concluded my own research in late 2008 by calling for a full government audit and program evaluation of HTS, in light of the legitimate concerns raised by critics. That investigation has since been ordered by Congress, a development that has not, I assure you, done anything to endear me to the managers of that program. Again, these prepublication results were shared with the commission upon completion of my own research in November 2008. The first CEAUSSIC report had revealed absolutely no recognition whatsoever on the part of members, for example, that HTS employees were, in fact, private military contractors rather than military personnel, and so vulnerable to a score of general complaints and peculiar vulnerabilities long lodged against this growing practice. This glaring deficiency was remedied (although again without acknowledgment) in the second report.

Alongside the claims of ineffectiveness, incompetence, and financial mismanagement, the remaining objections pertained to the danger. Three social scientists (although, significantly, no anthropologists) have lost their lives while engaged in HTS activities, and a fourth has apparently recently been kidnapped. Interestingly, in the cases of two team members (Michael Bhatia and Paula Loyd) killed in Afghanistan during the past year, the testimony revealed highly professional, competent, dedicated, relevant expertise and performance in the field. It seems wildly inconsistent, as well as professionally inappropriate, for journalistic critics and CEAUSSIC committee members to cite their deaths as an argument against the program, while simultaneously failing to acknowledge the universal and undisputed testimonials to their competence and effectiveness

in the field, and in this program, while they were alive. Those testimonials constitute powerful counterevidence to the array of charges lodged by critics against the program itself, and this duplicitous strategy strikes me as unduly cynical, as well as morally and professionally reprehensible.

Let me return now to those "concrete historical examples" in the litany of shame, in part to discern why many anthropologists see themselves as both justified in holding these decidedly negative views and in acting in what seems to most of us outside the profession in so unseemly a fashion. "Project Camelot," for example, is the sole historical event mentioned by name as a precautionary symbol in the first of those two reports by the AAA's CEAUSSIC commission. It featured centrally in the initial CEAUSSIC report, in turn, because "Project Camelot" is itself cited frequently and widely in studies of the history and ethics of the discipline by a great many authors. It is uniformly understood to designate a shameful episode in which anthropologists (and indeed, the entire American social science community) were humiliated through the public revelation of their widespread participation in what was, at the time, denounced as a global project of military espionage and counterinsurgency, financed covertly by the U.S. Army in the mid-1960s.

Because of its central symbolic importance in anthropology's litany of shame, I spend some time reexamining some of the actual historical circumstances surrounding this alleged episode of anthropologists allegedly engaged in espionage or serving as covert agents in Latin America. I then compare the factual historical findings with the manner in which the episode gets taken up, mythologized, and ritually forefronted in anthropology's historical litany. I examine at some length an exhaustive postproject investigation by an eminent and widely respected sociologist, Professor Irving Louis Horowitz,[11] whose report on this subject I compare to that of the Warren Commission on President John F. Kennedy's assassination, and which is widely cited by anthropologists themselves as the authoritative source of information about this scandal.

From that authoritative report, however, I conclude that the actual "Project Camelot" was far more of a "Keystone cops" farce than it was either a well-designed social science research project or a serious breach of professional ethics. Contrary to widespread belief, it

was not covert or secret, it did not propose using social scientists as spies, and it was instead open, public, transparent, and purportedly international in scope. Indeed, its transparency and ambitious scope are what led to its undoing and, in any case, the project never even got off the ground. It was mired in controversy and scandal from its inception and was investigated and scuttled, Horowitz reports, before it ever actually got under way.

Thus "Project Camelot," as I conclude in my book, involved no actual project and, even more importantly, involved almost no actual anthropologists. Only one ambitious and star-crossed assistant professor of anthropology was ever identified as being associated in any way with the project and then only in a decidedly marginal fashion, on account of his own repeated insistence. His subsequent and wholly unauthorized shenanigans in Chile brought the entire project to ruin. And yet, time and time again, ever after, as I document in my book, Horowitz's authoritative study is specifically cited by anthropologists as evidence for precisely the grandiose, fanciful, and wholly inaccurate interpretations of the project, and conclusions about its significance, that the author himself went to the greatest possible pains to refute. A number of anthropologists afterward abashedly confessed that they had never actually read the report themselves but cited it habitually as evidence for these flawed accounts that soon thereafter assumed the specious authority of trusted, received interpretations.

Likewise, in contrast to the opprobrium routinely heaped upon Margaret Mead and her colleagues for consenting to collaborate with military, intelligence, and security (MIS) forces during World War II,[12] my "cross-examination" of that evidence revealed that Mead, to her enormous credit, was engaging in the same sort of agonized soul-searching that we find scientists like Robert Oppenheimer, Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, and even, on his own account, Werner Heisenberg, engaging in during this conflict. That is, Mead and these other scientists were confronting and wrestling with a *moral dilemma*. That dilemma was occasioned by what they perceived as a conflict of otherwise legitimate duties incumbent upon them: as members of an international community of scientific investigators, committed to the search for truth in the public interest, on one hand; yet also as citizens, laboring under some obligation to use their discoveries and talents to defend their fellow citizens, and their own nations, from attack and subjugation to decidedly malevolent political powers.

Once again to her credit, I found that Mead, wholly in the absence of any explicit code of conduct for anthropologists, nevertheless labored to understand what "reasonable constraints" on acceptable professional practice might entail, in part by examining what core values lay at the heart of anthropology's practice. In addition, and without explicit knowledge of so-called Just War doctrine, she was attempting to examine the case for war and its justification, as well as, quite remarkably, examining the moral status of her own nation, and of any nation's alleged right to defend itself against attack. Far from being a cynical or mindlessly obedient servant of the state, let alone simply stooping to collaborate in deceitful, malevolent, or otherwise unprofessional activities, Mead was inviting a serious and sophisticated public dialogue on the responsibilities of scientists and citizens. In so doing, she raised issues that, finally, we are all responsible for examining, and she herself proceeded intrepidly to examine them with far greater intuitive philosophical acumen than did the majority of her colleagues, then and since.[13]

At the forefront of this historical narrative, however, is the censure of Franz Boas. A decade ago, in an article for *The Nation*, reprinted in Goldman's anthology, Professor David Price[14] cited and examined this event as a kind of prolegomena to what would become for him a decade-long multivolume historical exposé of anthropology's involvement in espionage during the past century. That project, grounded in documentation unearthed by Price through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) inquiries in the late 1990s, was not itself a response to the recent controversy over "military anthropology"—a program, at that time, not yet begun, in support of two wars that were not yet being fought. Instead, Price's was an effort to document, once and for all, and for the record, the long-standing involvement of anthropologists in acts of deception and duplicity, and to use this evidence to force the discipline itself to confront the need to abjure secrecy and espionage.[15] Boas's case is especially noteworthy for the inception of Price's own project, because it was for denouncing the involvement of anthropologists in espionage that this venerable figure was himself censured. That "shameful act" by fellow anthropologists has ever after, as I note, earned Boas an exalted place in anthropology's litany as a martyr, a martyr for Professor Price's own present campaign against so-called secret research. Yet that is a cause, as my own examination reveals, that Boas himself did not explicitly espouse.

Price's account is entirely symbolic, citing the incident, and what is generally taken to be the substance of Boas's complaint in his own words: "The point against which I wish to enter a vigorous protest is that a number of men who follow science as their profession . . . *have prostituted science by using it as a cover for their activities as spies.*" Scientists who stoop to such a low level, Boas argued at the time, "prostitute science" and thereby themselves "forfeit the right to be classified as scientists."[16] Price goes on to reveal the identities of the four anthropologists whom Boas anonymously accuses in this fashion and reveals that three of the four sat on the AAA Executive Committee and cast votes of censure against Boas for having allegedly abused his position for political ends (Boas was a pacifist who opposed the war, as well as an individual of German ancestry who was quite appropriately horrified by the rampant racism accompanying war hysteria at the time). Price focuses on the subsequent career in foreign espionage during both world wars of one of these "spies," a Harvard professor of archaeology and anthropology, Samuel Lothrop.

The some 280 pages of formerly classified documents that Price obtained from the FBI do reveal that Lothrop served as an undercover agent in the Naval Intelligence Service, working in the Caribbean during World War I, and that again, during World War II, he served in J. Edgar Hoover's "special intelligence service" in the FBI, stationed in Lima, Peru, to keep an eye on Axis power movements and political machinations in South America, while pretending to undertake archaeological excavations. These documents, and Price's account of them, do not appear to reveal Lothrop engaging, however, in any activities that, on their face, appear to be immoral or unprofessional, unless one accepts at face value (as Price himself clearly does) Boas's own argument that a scientist who allows his professional identity to serve as a cover for espionage is engaging in a morally illicit act, or at least unacceptable professional behavior. In my book, I show that this "self-referential" argument, that is, one that relies entirely upon premises internal to the discipline without reference to the wider world of moral principles and human practice, is simply invalid. It begs the question at hand, by requiring that we accept as true the premise that we would be required to prove.

Price's own approach to this issue is likewise hopelessly circular and equivocal. His major premise is that secret research and espionage are morally wrong, and, in agreement with Boas, that it would therefore be unprofessional for a scientist to engage in such

activities. As "proof" he offers FOIA exposés that merely show that anthropologists did indeed engage in such subterfuge. We need at least one more premise to draw such a conclusion, and that premise must come from the world beyond anthropological practice itself: to wit, that espionage itself is wrong *because* it involves deception, or secrecy, or the doing of harm to others, perhaps. And deception (or secrecy, or the doing of harm to others) is always wrong, *because*?

And here we encounter the problem, or at least, the unstated (and unproven) premise in anthropology's case. In the wider world, we know that such strategies as deception and secrecy are usually wrong (or, as philosophers and lawyers say, prima facie wrong), but such strategies can be justified on occasion. A police officer who engages in undercover work is surely engaged in espionage, for example, and if that officer apprehends and, say, wounds a criminal in the commission of some illegal and immoral act, and subsequently has that criminal bound over for trial and incarceration, then that officer has surely also harmed that individual in the course of conducting secret research about him. One can think of similar situations in time of war, to include espionage against, say, Germany during World War II, or the dramatic case study cited toward the end of Goldman's anthology, of espionage agents attempting to head off the Rwandan genocide. And it would take quite an extraordinary break from reality to conclude that merely because of the deception, secrecy, and even harm done to criminals and enemy agents by police, or by military personnel engaged in a justifiable war of self-defense, or by civilian agents from the Clandestine Services who assist both in these endeavors, that their activities were nonetheless immoral. One might worry instead, of course, as David Perry does, that undertaking such activities on behalf of others, even for morally worthy purposes, is harmful to those involved in the undertaking (not merely dangerous, but morally corrosive or damaging to one's character).[17] That concern for the moral well-being of those, like undercover agents or military and domestic security personnel, whom society's members call on to protect us by occasionally engaging in morally ambiguous undertakings, is a profound and troubling consideration, but it appears to play no part whatsoever in the positions of Boas and Price.

As the philosopher Sissela Bok once asserted about such matters in her groundbreaking study of the morality of lying and deception, "whenever it is right to resist an assault by force, it must then be allowable to do so by guile."[18] That last question, the question underlying all such activities and arguments about them, is that larger

question with which Margaret Mead (and Robert Oppenheimer and others) wrestled, about whether such larger goals and purposes are themselves clearly thought through and justifiable. The citizen, including the scientist, is on some occasions required to grapple with these larger questions that, in these instances, go under the heading of "Just War Theory." In my book I show how that underlying but utterly unacknowledged question infuses the debates among anthropologists about military anthropology at present, as well as about Price's revelations in the past. A negative position on these matters is tacitly presupposed but never acknowledged by such partisans. And so their arguments are perpetually incomplete and question begging (although by no means unsustainable, if properly formulated), and their conclusions are therefore perpetually flawed and inconsistent.

In Boas's case, it is abundantly clear that his evident devotion to science as a morally worthy activity springs from his conviction that the pursuit of "truth" in science is (or ought to be) free from the taint of other morally dubious activities (specifically, of engagement in clandestine activities in support of a morally dubious war).[19] We could possibly surmise that the two kinds of activities are simply incompatible. Science, as the pursuit of truth, should be free of the "moral taint" of secrecy and clandestine activity, both of which appear to be inimical to the pursuit of truth, very much in the same fashion that the scientific pursuit of truth is thought to be free from any ties to the scientist's own race, religion, or ethnicity. Anthropology, in particular, it might be argued, becomes a scientific practice impossible to carry out, if its practitioners are forever mistaken and distrusted by their potential research subjects as "spies." I hinted at this particular and peculiar dilemma earlier. Unlike science generally, this dilemma seems unique to anthropology, and so we will return to it in conclusion and wonder what about anthropology in this respect might set it apart from every other natural and social science pursuit.

It does not seem any part of Boas's argument, however, to claim a unique status or special exemption for anthropology. Indeed, a hidden rhetorical tactic in his own approach is to conflate anthropology with science generally, to assume the mantle of the "scientist," and from this lofty moral perch, to issue a blanket condemnation of any scientist "prostituting himself" to serve as a spy. Once again, however, the earlier discussion of Margaret Mead and her colleagues makes it clear that the issue cannot be disposed of this simply. The conflict between the two practices presents us not with a settled resolution of the conflict based upon straightforward, self-contained

(or self-referential) professional principle, but rather with a moral dilemma—the moral dilemma faced by Mead herself, and indeed, by any scientist who is also a citizen in a minimally just state.[20]

In general, the case for or against espionage and covert activity appears quite similar to the case for or against war and the use of deadly force generally. They are to be engaged in, if at all, only as a last resort, when other measures have been attempted and failed, and only on behalf of a morally compelling cause. That, of course, is the missing premise in both Boas's argument and Price's uncritical repetition of it. There is no moral dilemma if the act and the cause for it are morally unworthy. Likewise, there is no moral dilemma, and only a test of one's individual character and moral courage, if the practices in which one is called to engage are so morally abhorrent as to defy any cause for justification. That may have been the case in World War I. It was, as numerous conflicted scientists and citizens gave testimony at the time, hardly so simple a matter in World War II. It is, as the contributors to Goldman's anthology attest, far from clear cut during the Cold War, any more than now, in the struggle against terrorism. The position that all acts of espionage or covert activity are inherently immoral is fatuous and seriously uninformed by the work of a considerable body of scholars.[21]

The fact, instead, is that these activities and the strategic intentions that underlie them usually present us with moral dilemmas whose resolution depends upon the ends sought, the gravity of the crisis faced, and the morality of the means proposed to address it. These are all profound questions that moral agents, as adults, are required to adjudicate in context, and never merely in abstract or theoretical principle. Likewise, Boas's idea that the "scientist" is somehow exempt from the moral responsibilities that fall to all the rest of us to engage and resolve such dilemmas is naïve, facile, and unworthy of his own scientific colleagues, who did a better job than he of wrestling with, rather than merely pontificating about, such matters. His summary judgment, and anthropologists subsequent mindless repetition of it, flies in the face of generations of responsible moral agents who were also scientists, but who recognized that there was no high ground from which they could absent themselves from the terrors that beset their fellow citizens, nor had they any right to attempt to occupy such high ground.[22]

David Price's subsequent work includes the revelation that many anthropologists, presumably political conservatives, spied on their own, presumably more politically "progressive" colleagues, for the

FBI during the era of civil rights. That kind of professional duplicity is another matter altogether, surely scandalous, and worthy of being exposed and shamed. Once again, however, it unnecessarily muddies the moral waters to lump such jealous and small-minded unprofessional activities together with the profound questions of the legitimate conflicts of duties faced by the scientist as citizen generally. On Price's brief account, Samuel Lathrop, the Harvard archaeologist, simply didn't *do* anything wrong, other than agree to keep an eye on Nazi operatives in Peru. It is morally disturbing in its own right that Price has made an industry, and quite a name for himself, of what can only be described as sensationalist, hysterical, muckraking journalism, rather than good historical scholarship, let alone good social science.

As to the martyrdom of Boas (and his "redemption" and "exoneration" by the AAA in 2005), it is interesting to read the original letter in more detail than Price or other self-styled anthropological historians provide. Boas went on to claim the following:

> A soldier whose business is murder as a fine art, a diplomat whose calling is based on deception and secretiveness, a politician whose very life consists in compromises with his conscience, a businessman whose aim is personal profit within the limits allowed by a lenient law—such may be excused if they set patriotic devotion above common everyday decency and perform services as spies. They merely accept the code of morality to which modern society still conforms. Not so the scientist. The very essence of his life is the service of truth. We all know scientists who in private life do not come up to the standard of truthfulness, but who nevertheless would not consciously falsify the results of their researches. It is bad enough if we have to put up with these, because they reveal a lack of strength of character that is liable to distort the results of their work. A person, however, who uses science as a cover for political spying, who demeans himself to pose before a foreign government as an investigator and asks for assistance in his alleged researches in order to carry on, under this cloak, his political machinations, prostitutes science in an unpardonable way and forfeits the right to be classed as a scientist.[23]

To be sure, this rhetoric demonstrates how strongly Boas's views on "professional ethics" and the professional responsibilities of scientists depended upon his underlying moral assessment of the appropriateness of U.S. involvement in Europe's "imperialist" war.[24] Many others might likewise assent to Boas's view of the proper conduct of the scientist, at least as a general rule, but they might disagree

sharply with his sweeping moral indictment of both soldiers and diplomats (if not, perhaps, of business "men"), and might rightly complain about the accuracy or fairness of his passionate juxtaposition of so unflattering a moral portrait of these activities with what he derisively describes as "patriotic devotion" and public service.

Boas, in this instance, painted self-assuredly, even self-righteously, with a rather broad brush. One wonders how plausible, for example, his portrait of the soldier "whose business is murder as a fine art" would seem to the families of GIs who would lose their lives a little over two decades later in the invasion of Normandy or in the Battle of Okinawa. Such pronouncements ought not to have been the subject of professional censure. Rather, these remarks should have been simply ignored, as the intemperate and injudicious outburst of an eminent scientist who could also be, at times, a cantankerous, pompous, judgmental, and self-righteous old blowhard. Such uncaring and sweepingly inaccurate sentiments should have been the occasion neither of censure nor, even more ghastly, of subsequent martyrdom, but simply of embarrassed silence.

It should also be clear that such matters, and the analysis of such judgments, are the business of ethics, or moral philosophy, and are thus the proper purview of persons who, by dint of prior education and preparation, engage in this line of inquiry as a matter of course. All of us are moral agents who make and act on moral judgments, whether we do this well or poorly. Likewise, those who are members of a profession are entitled to announce their opinions concerning professional probity and on what they individually regard as the limits of acceptable professional practice, whether those opinions are expressed clearly, consistently, and coherently, or not. None of this, however, automatically equips such individuals to function as ethicists or moral philosophers, at least not without considerable additional experience, education, or preparation, any more than our all having teeth and attempting to practice good dental hygiene automatically thereby qualifies us all as dentists. I am not an anthropologist, anthropologists are not (by and large) ethicists or moral philosophers, and none of us presently engaged in this debate (as I warn in my book) are historians. Inasmuch as the debate about military anthropology nevertheless requires venturing into all of these disparate areas willy-nilly, we are all liable to find ourselves guilty of practicing one another's disciplines without a license, and hence liable to the errors and inconsistencies that might be expected to result. Unsurprisingly, this very public debate among anthropology

about the historical and moral dimensions of anthropology itself has been riddled with such errors and inconsistencies from its inception.

Let us turn finally to the question of whether anthropology, uniquely among all the sciences, earns a special exemption from what I characterized as the moral dilemma of the scientist and the citizen generally. Perhaps the most troubling of these errors, as I conclude in my book, is the revelation of a deep structural, methodological flaw in the discipline itself, what I label a kind of unacknowledged "bad faith" among anthropologists themselves about the research they undertake and the kind of "secrecy" it invariably entails. The term *bad faith* is used advisably as the translation of Jean-Paul Sartre's famous phrase "*malvaise foi*," which has the twin meaning of "deception and duplicity" on one hand, and of "guilty or bad conscience" on the other. That bad faith is revealed, I argue, in the other concrete episodes of anthropology's recent history that do not find their way so explicitly into the litany of shame, and which have nothing whatsoever to do with collaboration of government, military, intelligence, or security forces—episodes I recount in which anthropologists, engaged in the most straightforward field ethnography, do inestimable damage to their research subjects by failing to disclose to them the true nature of anthropological research, of the publication and public dissection of those peoples' most sacred and treasured patrimony, or of the humiliation of having one's most private and painful flaws and shortcomings paraded for public amusement and critique, for the alleged advancement of scientific knowledge, which is also the furthering of the individual investigator's career.

I also recount, in particular, the corresponding difficulty that the discipline has had in its history coming to terms with the principle of "informed consent," a principle that beautifully encapsulates Immanuel Kant's otherwise intricate moral philosophy. I recount how that concept was vigorously resisted by the entire association as a legitimate moral constraint upon professional conduct.[25] Until about a decade ago, for example, the AAA Code of Ethics contained no provisions regarding informed consent. Indeed, anthropologists resisted imposing this constraint upon professional practice, arguing that it involved "signing some sort of form," that it was impractical, and that it was in any event unnecessary—and that they themselves could be relied upon to protect the interests

of their research subjects.[26] In effect, anthropologists vigorously resisted imposing upon themselves, until quite recently, a moral constraint whose absence constitutes the chief moral objection to espionage itself: namely, it is deceptive in that it occurs without the knowledge or consent of those observed.[27] Their collective misunderstanding of the true meaning, history, and significance of this concept, as well as their resistance to it, is revealing in itself about what ethnography itself actually is. *And what it actually is, is espionage*. Anthropologists are troubled by a "bad conscience" about being used as spies or being mistaken as spies, because anthropology itself, in its methodological essence, consists of spying on unwary others for personal and professional gain.

I say that not to condemn it, certainly not in this audience, but to describe it and account for what otherwise seems a collective hysteria, bordering on pathology, regarding the uncritical and often perverse interpretations that members of the discipline attach to the work of their colleagues, to the military, or to people like yourselves. The true nature of ethnographic field research cannot be fully disclosed to its subjects, lest (as I remark) they cease to "behave" and start to "perform" artificially for the investigator. More troublingly, the likely use of research results and their impact on research subjects can never, even with the best of intentions, be fully disclosed, in part because that impact is nearly impossible to predict. In the name of scientific advancement, as well as for the sake of the investigator's own career advance, data are made public and interpretations of the data published so that the subjects might, in the aftermath, have preferred to keep to themselves. If this prospect is fully and fairly disclosed in advance, the pursuit of the discipline would become well nigh impossible, for most research subjects would opt for caution, if not outright prohibition, in allowing themselves to be "studied" in this fashion. Hence, anthropological research is always, to some unavoidable extent, secret and regrettably but unavoidably deceptive.

In the conclusion of my book, I weave a fanciful final story in which the ghost of Franz Boas—so often solemnly ritually invoked by anthropologists as a reminder to them to abjure espionage, secrecy, and clandestine research—is confronted by the ghost of the iconoclastic French philosopher Michel Foucault, who murmurs in response, "But, Franz! It's all espionage." Like the present debate over military anthropology, it is more a nightmare than a well-woven dream.

Notes

1. Albert Jonson, *A Short History of Medical Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

2. David L. Perry, *Partly Cloudy: Ethics in War, Espionage, Covert Action, and Interrogation* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009); John Lango, 2010, "Intelligence about Noncombatants," Fifth International Conference on the Ethics of Intelligence for National Security, Washington, DC, Georgetown University, 12 March 2010.

3. Jan Goldman, *The Ethics of Spying* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006).

4. George R. Lucas Jr., *Anthropologists in Arms: The Ethics of Military Anthropology* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2009).

5. Professor J. W. Schneewind of Johns Hopkins University first noted that the announcements of lectures at the University of Königsberg contained descriptions of lectures by Kant on this topic at least as early as 1772–1773. For a more detailed account, see Felicitas G. Munzel, "Kritischer Kommentar zu Kants Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (1798)," *Kant-Forschungen* Band 10 (Hamburg, Germany: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1999). The first full-length English treatment of this subject is by Holly L. Wilson, *Kant's Pragmatic Anthropology: It's Origin, Meaning, and Critical Significance*, SUNY Series in Philosophy, ed. G. R. Lucas Jr. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006). In chapter 1 of that work, Wilson notes that Kant began to teach a distinct course in anthropology in his eighteenth year at Königsberg, during the winter semester of the 1772–1773 academic year. He began lecturing on and advocating for a distinct "discipline," or study of anthropology, in his lectures on metaphysics as early as 1762; however, at this time this was not a distinct subject in any university curriculum in Europe (7f).

6. Lucas, *Anthropologists in Arms*, chapter 6.

7. Network of Concerned Anthropologists, "Pledge of Nonparticipation in Counterinsurgency," 2007, http://concerned.anthropologists.googlepages.com (accessed 27 November 2008).

8. American Anthropological Association, "American Anthropological Association Executive Board Statement on the Human Terrain System Project," 31 October 2007, http://dev.aaanet.org/issues/policy-advocacy/Statement-on-HTS.cfm (accessed 27 November 2008).

9. CEAUSSIC, "Final Report of the AAA Ad Hoc Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with U.S. Security and Intelligence Communities," 4 November 2007, www.aaanet.org/pdf/Final_Report.pdf (accessed 10 March 2010).

10. Lucas, *Anthropologists in Arms*, chapter 5.

11. Irving Louis Horowitz, *The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot: Studies in the Relationship between Social Science and Practical Politics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967).

12. David Price, "Anthropology Sub Rosa: The CIA, the AAA, and the Ethical Problems Inherent in Secret Research," in *Ethics and the Profession of Anthropology*, 2nd ed., ed. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 29–49.

13. Despite her advocacy of a facile moral form of cultural relativism earlier in her career, moreover, she appears to recognize the moral gravity of the situation democratic and rights-respecting regimes faced at the time and likewise recognized, as did St. Augustine 1,500 years earlier, that sometimes, despite the egregious moral flaws of our own society, we must nevertheless come to its defense with force, if necessary, as the only alternative to an even greater evil befalling us and everyone else. This courageous stance at the time perhaps serves to somewhat ameliorate her later imperious and high-handed supervision of the AAA Ad Hoc Committee appointed three decades later to investigate the involvement of anthropologists with counterinsurgency forces in Thailand. The so-called Thailand Affair was a nasty business, ending in the ritual humiliation and professional shunning of Mead herself (Lucas, *Anthropologists in Arms*).

14. For example, David Price, "Anthropologists as Spies," *The Nation*. Reprinted in Goldman, *The Ethics of Spying*, 336–42.

15. Interestingly, Price is one who frequently invokes and repeats the utterly fallacious and egregiously inaccurate reference to "Project Camelot" in his work. His would be an entirely excusable error, did he not commit it with such reckless abandon, and did he not seek otherwise to present himself as a kind of investigative historian, finally uncovering the "scandalous truth" about anthropology's storied past. The first thing an authentic historian learns, by contrast, is to criticize sources, rely scrupulously only on trustworthy archival evidence in lieu of hearsay, and distrust inherently all "received" accounts.

16. Goldman, *The Ethics of Spying*, 336.

17. Perry, *Partly Cloudy*.

18. Sissela Bok, as cited in Perry, *Partly Cloudy*, 146.

19. In later works, Price spends a good deal of time discussing the Boas case as a lead-up to the involvement of anthropologists with the military during World War II. On Price's account, which, not surprisingly, offers a radically different and more favorable interpretation of Boas, "Boas's anthropology and progressive political beliefs informed this critique, and while his critical interpretation of the cultural inculcation of patriotism can now be seen as a theoretical analysis of social superstructure, during the war such views were simply seen as subversive" (Price 2008, 3). This account seems accurate in all respects. I do not fault Boas's progressivism, and certainly not his "subversiveness." I find the case for censure inadequate, and the action itself (which was finally and fittingly "undone" by the AAA in 2005) invidious. I do not entirely share, however, in the uncritical heroic mythologizing of Boas himself.

20. That moral dilemma was more intense for Mead and her colleagues in World War II than it was for Boas, largely because the wider moral perspective to be taken on their war, and on their nation at that time, presented them with a stronger case for the moral justifiability of engaging in that war (and for scientists collaborating in it) than the circumstances of U.S. participation in World War I presented to Boas.

21. Consider as examples the wide selection of academics and practitioners featured in Perry, *Partly Cloudy* and Goldman, *The Ethics of Spying*.

22. Here again, the philosopher Hegel had a sarcastic category in his *Phenomenology of Mind* for such pristine consciousness: the "beautiful soul." Such a "soul" was, on his account, far from beautiful in its unwillingness to engage in moral reflection, or to take on moral responsibility for the well-being of others, lest such a soul dirty its hands or otherwise "sully itself."

23. Alexander Lesser, "Franz Boas," in *Totems and Teachers: Key Figures in the History of Anthropology*, 2nd ed., ed. Sydel Silberman (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), 12–13.

24. In this respect, it is useful to compare his rhetoric and positions on these matters with the rhetoric and underlying positions on the unjustifiability of America's war in Iraq, in particular, evident in the statement of the "Network of Concerned Anthropologists" against the "militarization" of anthropology (Network of Concerned Anthropologists, "Pledge of Non-participation").

25. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, "Informed Consent in Anthropological Research: We Are Not Exempt," *Human Organization* 53, no. 1 (1994): 1–10. Reprinted in Fluehr-Lobban, *Ethics and the Profession of Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 159–77.

26. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, *Ethics and the Profession of Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003).

27. To be fair, an additional objection to espionage, of course, is that it intends or does harm to its subjects. That, of course, is not strictly or even usually true, as in undercover work designed to ascertain treaty compliance, for example.

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