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The Challenges of Storytelling Today. Interview with Paul Stoller

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ABSTRACT

Paul Stoller has conducted anthropological research for over thirty years. In 1978, he earned his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin (United States), with work on magic, religious practices and the possession of spirits in the Songhay culture in Nigeria and Mali. He is currently Professor of Anthropology at the University of West Chester, Pennsylvania (USA). He has published numerous scientific articles and at least 15 monographic books, among them: *In Sorcery's Shadow: A Memoir of Apprenticeship Among The Songhay of Niger* (1987), *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology* (1989), *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City* (2002), *The Power of The Between: An Anthropological Odyssey* (2008), or most recently, *Adventures in Blogging: Public Anthropology and Popular Media* (2018). Throughout his career, Stoller has consistently worked on ethnographic narratives — or *theoretical storytelling*, as he considers it in this interview — visual Anthropology, public Anthropology, sensory Anthropology, and cultural critique. In recognition of his work, Stoller has received prestigious awards and scholarships, including the Guggenheim Fellowship (1994), the Robert B. Textor Award in Anticipative Anthropology and the American Association of Anthropology's (AAA) Media Anthropology Award (2015) and the Anders Retzius Gold Medal (2013), awarded by King Carl Gustaf of Sweden in recognition of his contributions to international Anthropology. He currently gives lectures and coordinates workshops on ethnographic writing for social scientists on a frequent basis in several countries in Europe and America, given that the training of the new generations of professional anthropologists is one of his most present interests today.

KEY WORDS

Public Anthropology, Ethnography, Theoretical Narrative, Songhay Culture, Religious Anthropology.

The interview was conducted on September 6, 2018 at the University of Granada, during the fourth edition of the AIBR International Conference of Anthropology. Paul Stoller gave the lecture "Slow Anthropology in a Fast World" at the closing plenary session of the Conference on September 7, 2018.

LOS DESAFÍOS DE CONTAR HISTORIAS EN LA ACTUALIDAD. ENTREVISTA CON PAUL STOLLER

RESUMEN

Paul Stoller lleva realizando investigación antropológica desde hace más de treinta años. En 1978, obtuvo su doctorado en Antropología de la Universidad de Texas en Austin (EEUU), con un trabajo sobre la magia, las prácticas religiosas y la posesión de espíritus en la cultura *songhay* en Nigeria y Malí. Actualmente, es profesor de Antropología en la Universidad de West Chester, Pennsylvania (EEUU). Ha publicado numerosos artículos científicos y al menos 15 libros monográficos, entre los que se encuentran: *In Sorcery's Shadow: A Memoir of Apprenticeship Among The Songhay of Niger* (1987), *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology* (1989), *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City* (2002), *The Power of The Between: An Anthropological Odyssey* (2008), o más recientemente, *Adventures in Blogging: Public Anthropology and Popular Media* (2018). A lo largo de su dilatada carrera, Stoller siempre ha trabajado de forma constante en la narrativa etnográfica —o la *narración teórica*, como él mismo la considera en esta entrevista—, la antropología visual, la antropología pública, la antropología sensorial y la crítica cultural. En reconocimiento a su trabajo, Stoller ha recibido prestigiosos premios y becas, como la

beca Guggenheim (1994), el Premio Robert B. Textor en Antropología Anticipativa y el Premio de Antropología de los Medios (2015) de la Asociación Americana de Antropología (AAA), y la Medalla de Oro Anders Retzius (2013), otorgada por el Rey Carlos Gustavo de Suecia en reconocimiento a sus aportaciones a la antropología internacional. En la actualidad imparte conferencias y coordina talleres de escritura etnográfica para científicos y científicas sociales de manera frecuente en varios países de Europa y América, dado que hoy en día la formación de las nuevas generaciones de profesionales en antropología es uno de sus intereses más presentes.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Antropología pública, Etnografía, Narrativa teórica, Cultura *songhay*, Antropología religiosa.

La entrevista fue llevada a cabo el 6 de septiembre de 2018 en la Universidad de Granada, durante la cuarta edición del Congreso Internacional de Antropología AIBR. Paul Stoller ofreció la conferencia Antropología Lenta en un Mundo Rápido en la sesión plenaria de clausura del Congreso, el 7 de septiembre de 2018.

Cristina Moreno and Juan Antonio Flores [CM&JAF]: We are delighted to have you at the 4th AIBR International Conference of Anthropology. To start with, we would like to talk about the topic of the talk you will deliver at the closing plenary session of our Conference on Friday September 7th, 2018, which is titled “Slow Anthropology in a Fast World”. We would like to know how you have come to this topic.

Paul Stoller [PS]: I chose this topic because Anthropology is a slow science in a fast world. Anthropologists develop their insights over a very long period of time, and it takes many, many years to learn another language. My teacher Adamu Jenitongo, my master of Songhay culture, said to me that you can talk to us for many, many years, and you can understand a lot, but to truly understand us, you have to grow old with us. Your mind develops over time, and there are some things that a young mind cannot understand. So, it takes a long time in Anthropology to develop insights. It’s ironic that Anthropology is a slow science, but we live in a fast world. So, first of all, my talk is about how the culture of speed — which is social media, and the world we live in today — is supposed to increase our mutual understanding and increase the spread of information; but in fact, according to some people like Mark Taylor and Sherry Turkle, the culture of speed has increased our disconnection, diminished interpersonal empathy and has limited our processes of thinking. There are a lot of people who have written about this issue; they’re worried about the quality of human social relations in a culture of speed where people are always looking at their cell phones. So, based on thirty years of fieldwork among the Songhay people in West Africa, I’ve learned that their wisdom, their

knowledge, is one possible way of confronting the culture of speed in a way that will enhance human wellbeing. My talk will be about some of the struggles that I have had. You see, I was trained in the culture of speed, I'm part of the culture of speed. But my teachers believed in taking things very slowly. My teachers believed in learning at a glacial pace. I'll tell the story of peppering my teacher for information — always asking him questions: What does this mean? What does that mean? What does this do? What does that do? And he would say: "Well, we can talk about it". At 1:00 or 2:00 a.m., I would visit him in a little hut, his spirit hut, and I would look forward to lessons about incantations and Songhay wisdom. But after twenty minutes, he'd say: "Okay, come back tomorrow". But I had more questions to ask! "Come back tomorrow". So, one day after another, he'd say: "Come back tomorrow, come back tomorrow". Finally, he got very frustrated with me. I said: "What does this mean? Why do I have to come back tomorrow? I want, I want to know now". Because I was a graduate student and had a limited amount of time. I had a fast depleting budget. Was I going to have enough data to do my doctorate or not? And he said: "Well, you'll have to do it our way". And I said: "But I don't have time to do it your way". And he said: "Listen, listen to this. You cannot walk where there is no ground. You cannot walk where there is no ground. It takes a long time to build the foundation. If the foundation is strong, then you will learn, you will understand". And so, my talk will be about those foundations, and also about how we can apply the wisdom of the South to make life better for us in the North.

[CM&JAF]: We would also like to ask you what you think about the AIBR Conference, and what's your feeling when you are here.

[PS]: Well, I think the Conference is fantastic! My Spanish is such that I can follow a little bit here and there, but I looked at the program. The program is varied. It's rich and very impressive. It covers lots and lots of different subjects. But what really impresses me is the energy and vitality of the people who are here, and the warmth of the collegiality that I sense here. And so, I'm just very, very impressed and so honoured to be here, to participate in this Conference.

[CM&JAF]: The honor is ours! You have been learning and teaching Anthropology for over thirty years now. After all these years of experience,

how do you conceive your writing and teaching, and the dissemination of your work and your experience doing Anthropology?

[PS]: When I started to do my work, I was trained as a social anthropologist. So, I was trained in collecting data, I was trained in how to do a census, I was trained in producing logical argumentation. I was trained to write, use my data to refine theory. All the things that we do as anthropologists; that's what I was trained to do. When I first started writing, I wrote journal articles that conformed to this pattern of using jargon, making an argument, refining theory. And then, I set about to write my first book *In Sorcery's Shadow* (1987). But it turned out that the first version of *In Sorcery's Shadow* was a very traditional anthropological book. It had an introduction with theory, lots of data and a conclusion that sort of reinforced my introduction, right? I thought, since I had such a personal relationship with my teacher Adamu Jenitongo, maybe it would be a good idea to go to Niger and see what he thought about this Anthropology book. So, we had more of the same: I'd go to the spirit hut at 1:00 a.m., and I translated the book page by page into Songhay from English, and he would say, after about 5 minutes, "Ah, I'm tired, come back tomorrow". Another five pages, "Come back tomorrow". It took me two and a half months to get through the book, and never once did he say what he thought. When it was time for me to leave, I was very nervous, and I said: "Baba — which means *father* — I've translated the whole book and you've not said a word!" He says: "That's right, I have not said a word". "Well, I'm leaving tomorrow. What do you think?". And he looked at me very seriously and said: "It's not so good". I said: "Well, what's wrong with it?" And he said: "There's not enough of me in it, and there's not enough of you in it". And then he said something that set the challenge for all of my anthropological writing. He said: "If you want to do your job well, you need to tell a story, and you need to tell the story in such a way that my grandchildren and your grandchildren will be able to read it and have a discussion about it". So that set the course. The challenge for me is to try to write anthropological works that would pass the test of time, that someone could read them ten, twenty or thirty years from now, and make sense of them and maybe even debate about them, right? And if you look at most anthropological works that are written and published, most of them do not pass that test. It's a difficult challenge. How many people are still reading Lévi-Strauss, right? We've gone through so many different theories, we've had structuralism, we've had structural-functionalism, we've had ethnographic semantics, we've moved through ethnoscience... All these theories — they come, and they go. What's left in their wake is

the story. To reiterate, theories will come and go, but the stories that we live and tell can pass the test of time. So that's been my challenge, to write what I call theoretical stories. Stories that indirectly speak to anthropological issues and theory.

[CM&JAF]: You are interested in practicing and writing about Public Anthropology and engaging with the public outside of the anthropological discipline. Actually, you have worked with different forms of media, such as social media, blogging and film, for a long time. How has this engagement of your anthropological work with different media has evolved throughout your career?

[PS]: Well, in the past, I was very lucky to have stumbled upon the great ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch. He became my mentor. This is the way that that happened, if I may tell the story. I was doing my doctoral research in Niamey, Niger, and I was using the library at the Institute of Social Research. I was going down the corridor one day, and I saw this white man sitting on a ledge. He was dressed in khaki pants, baby-blue socks, baby-blue shirt, He wore an Ascot with a diamond in it that framed a big wide face. He had hardly any hair. So, I asked myself: Who the hell is this person? And he gave me a big smile and said: "Can I help you?" So, who, who is this man? And I said: "Well, I'm, you know, I'm Paul Stoller, I'm here doing research. I'm an anthropologist". "Oh, are you an anthropologist?" I said: "Yes, Sir". "Where are you going to do research?" I said: "I'm going to do research in Mehanna". And he slapped his thigh and he said: "Ah, I did research in Mehanna thirty years ago". "You did? Well, Sir, may I ask, what is your name?" He said: "Jean Rouch". I said: "Oh my God, Monsieur Rouch, I'm so terrible! How impertinent of me! I'm terrible, I had no idea. I've read all of your books; I've seen almost all of your films. I'm so sorry!" He said: "Don't worry about it. Sit down next to me. Let's talk". So, I sat next to him and we talked for three hours, at the end of which time he stood up, dusted off his pants and says: "I have to have a meeting with the Minister of Interior. I don't want to go, I'd much rather talk to you, but I have to go". But then he said to me, with a wink, echoing the great film *Casablanca*: "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship". And we were friends for thirty years, until he died. And his model of shared Anthropology, an Anthropology that is accessible to a large public, became sort of the foundation of my orientation too. So, I have two mentors. Mentorship is undervalued, it's very, very important. Everyone needs to have a decent mentor. So, Rouch was my

mentor in the world of Anthropology, and I'd go to Paris and spend time with him. And then, Adamu Jenitongo was my mentor in the Songhay world. And, I like to say this, I sit on their shoulders. Everything that I've done is based on the foundation they provided for me. But, you know, a mentor gives you a foundation, and then you go your own way. You take it, and use that foundation, but you find your own path into the world. That made me want to write Anthropology that a large audience might understand. And Jean Rouch would always ask the question: "Why are you doing this? Why are you spending all this time in Niger, in hot and sweaty straw huts, sleeping on straw mats, gathering information, putting in all the time to write or film? Why are you doing it? You are doing it because it's your obligation to extend your knowledge to the public, and to make the world a better place". And he always said, I'll never forget this, he said: "When you're doing your work, there are three audiences". The first audience is yourself: you have to satisfy yourself and think: does this work satisfy my own aesthetic conditions? Second audience is the people who are being represented or filmed. Would they think that this is a faithful representation of their society? And then the third audience is the general public, right? But all three are interconnected. My work has always been public Anthropology. All my writing, except for some of my journal articles, all of my writing is structured by narrative. And the wonderful thing about narrative is that it can create an environment in which complexity can be described and explained. But not in a direct way, in an indirect way. There's something about narrative that connects people, connects a writer and a reader. There's a psychologist, his name is Jerome Bruner, who talked about the narrative construction of reality. And he says that most of us learn about how the world works, not by reading academic texts, but by listening to stories. Somehow stories create a resonance in a person, such that they take away some lesson from the story. So, if you go to an anthropological meeting, and someone is reading a text, very full of jargon, how many people will remember that text? Very few, probably. But if you hear someone tell a story that is funny, such as the wonderful stories that Nigel Barley told us at AIBR2018, we'll remember them. And this is a principal lesson that I learned from Jean Rouch: *tell the story*. He always wanted to know: where's the story? How can I make the story better? If there's no story, he would say, what is there? And for blogging, I started blogging because I was getting frustrated. I thought no one was reading anything that I wrote. That is the writer's greatest insecurity. Most writers think that no one will ever turn the page or read what they're writing. I certainly feel that way. I'm always surprised when people have read something that I've written... So, I felt that no one was reading my

essays and fewer and fewer people were reading my books. And you know, people would come up to me and say: “Oh yes, I saw your article”. And I would say: “Did you read it?” “Oh no, I didn’t read it, but I saw it”. “Would you like to have coffee; I’d love to discuss it”. “Well, maybe some other time”. People are not reading as much as they used to. So, out of that frustration I decided to begin a blog. My first blog was a total failure. I blogged, I went to Niger, and I wanted to celebrate the fifth anniversary of Jean Rouch’s death and go to the place in Niamey where he’s buried. I started doing a private blog, and the only response I got was spam. I got offers of marriage, I got all sorts of offers of products that I didn’t want. And so, a colleague of mine named Gina Ulysse, who is a Haitian-American anthropologist, said: “Why don’t you try the Huffington Post?” So, I pitched them a story, and that was the first of 150 blogs I did for them, and all of a sudden, I had this huge audience! Some of my blogs were read by 100,000, 150,000 people. This went to my head, to some extent! Wow, 150,000 people reading my blogs! Unfortunately, you have to compress the blog into 850 words. In a blog you can’t produce a nuanced argument! Blogging is great because you reach a much larger audience. But at the same time, you’re constrained: you only can write about “x” in a very limited way. And a blog only represents a sliver of anthropological knowledge. So, I had to weigh the pros and cons of blogging, and I decided that I would continue to blog, because it was worth getting even a sliver of my anthropological insights out into the public sphere. And so that was the beginning of my blogging, and I’ve very pleased to report that many people got to know my work by way of the blogs. The younger generation was introduced to my work, not through reading it in courses, but by way of the blog. They see something in the blog, and they said, hey, maybe I should read some of this guy’s other things, right? Because there are always links to publications in the blog. But ultimately, blogging has made me a better writer, because you have to be very economical, you have to be very to the point, you have to be snappy, because in social media attention spans are so limited, you have to be worried about putting things in there that will not bore the reader. Ultimately, when I write something that’s not a blog, I think that it’s better, because I’ve forced myself into the discipline of writing these short, snappy sentences. So, a selection of my blogs is now collected in my new book, *Adventures in blogging* (Stoller, 2018), and they cover topics of North American politics, they cover higher education, I also blog about social science, the media and wellbeing. I think it’s very important to take the slow insights of Anthropology and inject them into the fast media, and

that's one way we can do it. In blogs, you have a perfect storm of a slow science — fast media.

[CM&JAF]: In some of your writings, you have talked about wellbeing. We would like to ask you about the concept of “the between”, and how it may have affected your practice of Anthropology and your own wellbeing, and vice versa.

[PS]: The question about wellbeing and “the between” is very important. I had no sense of the notion of the between other than reading Victor Turner, who talks about liminality, and that you are betwixt and in between when you're in the liminal state. But I didn't really give it a whole lot of thought. And then, circumstances in my life changed that. About seventeen years ago, I was diagnosed with a blood cancer. I was facing my mortality, and I had to submit to regimens of chemotherapy and things of that nature. That turned my world upside down, and I found myself in what I call the space between health and illness, or as I call it, “the village of the healthy and the village of the sick”. In the village of the healthy, you don't have to think about your health. Occasionally you get sick, you take some medicine, and then you return to your healthy state, right? But if you're in the village of the sick, and you have a condition which has no cure, you have to think about your illness every day. So, in the village of the sick, you are always *between*. You are between health and illness on a continuous basis. I call it “continuous liminality”. That notion compelled me to read the Sufi mystics of the twelfth and thirteen centuries. And there was one particular person named Ibn al-'Arabi. He was an Andalusian Sufi mystic, who wrote thousands upon thousands of pages, and the idea of “the between” is his. There is an Arabic term called *barzakh*. *Barzakh* is the bridge, and the bridge is the perfect metaphor for the between. If you are on the bridge, you're neither on this side or that side. And on the bridge, something mystical happens for Ibn al-'Arabi. That is, when you're on the bridge, and you're neither here nor there, sometimes your mind clears, and you have creative thoughts. Your imagination expands. And so, on the bridge, on the *barzakh*, you are neither here nor there, but he said that's the space of imagination, that's the space of creativity. It's an inchoate space that is very stressful because in most of our cultures we would rather be one place or the other, not between two places. But that stress and anxiety can be transformed into unimaginable creativity. The poet John Keats said that the space in-between is one of “negative capability”. The ability to live in contradiction or between things is the space of creativity. He said that

Shakespeare had it, Keats had it, the philosopher John Dewey wrote about it a lot. And with my illness, I took it to heart. And what that meant for me was to try to come up with texts and ideas that challenge received wisdom; challenge the traditional way of doing things. Creating different forms of representation that attempt to be creative and attempt to reach people. So, I put a primacy on two things. One, being in the between compelled me to focus on storytelling. Theoretical storytelling is told from the space between things. And then, the other thing was putting a primary emphasis on mentorship. So, for the Songhay, this is how you learn to be a master... You start out as an apprentice and as an apprentice, you know nothing, your head is empty. And this was a very difficult lesson for me, having had done PhD studies, my head was full of lots of things. But my teacher said: “No, your head is empty. Don’t talk, don’t ask questions. Listen, right?” And listening is very difficult. The young brain is ready to listen and memorize incantations and learn about plants. If you pass the test of memory, and your teachers are satisfied with your progress, then you move on to mastery. Then, you practice what you have learned. You talk to people, you heal people, you do seances, you do whatever you do. If you do that well, then you reach the stage of being an elder. And if you are an elder, you continue to practice what you’ve learned, but your greatest obligation, your most sacred obligation is to pass the knowledge that you’ve learned on to the next generation. So, at this point in my life, that’s what I see is my fundamental obligation as an anthropologist. It is to mentor as many young anthropologists as possible. When you’re a mentor, you just show people the way. You don’t say: “This is the way you have to do it”. You say: “This is the way I’ve done it, here’s the path, follow it and find your own way, which I hope will not be the same as mine, but with your own particular twist”. And so, all of that stems from my own very sort of emotional and my physical confrontation with mortality.

[CM&JAF]: Considering the notion of the anthropologist as the medium of others, we would like to ask you how your work on spirit possession may have affected you or transformed your practices as an ethnographer and an anthropologist. Besides, how do you feel about it when talking to your students, when writing, or when speaking for your informants, teachers or healers who worked with spirits, and who might have already passed away?

[PS]: I see myself as a storyteller. I apprenticed myself to my teacher, so he remains my teacher, and all that he taught me sort of transformed my being. Everything that I do is... I mean, he said: “Look, if you’re going to

study with us, you have to take this seriously. You are an apprentice”. So, he gave me objects. I have an altar in my house. I make offerings, I do divination. I practice all of that in a limited way, but I do it. And the whole notion of the objects... These rings you see in my hand are given to me by my teacher. So, if I wear these rings, he is... he says: “Wear these rings, and you are with me, you are with me”. I dream about him a lot, and he gives me advice. And I have the same kind of relationship with Jean Rouch also. I think about him and he comes to me in my dreams as well, less so than my teacher, but he does. And all of that is driven by being serious about knowledge and experience that affects who I am as a person. It’s transformed me; it’s made me appreciate slow learning, the slow progress of knowledge. You know, I end one of my books, *Fusion of the worlds* (1989), with a statement that my teacher made. He said: “The spirits are in front of us, the spirits are behind us, the spirits show us the way”. And that’s certainly the case for me.

[CM&JAF]: So, our final question. It’s very difficult to classify or categorize your anthropological work. You have done work in many different topics and themes for several decades. But if there is something we do find in your work, your interest with writing and sharing knowledge to others. Do you think the field has changed over this time? Has the field changed you and the way you see your work today?

[PS]: Well, the field has changed. I mean, I’ve been an anthropologist for a very long time. The field has changed quite a bit. The way we write, the theories that we attempt to use to some extent. Obviously as an anthropologist, you are part of an institution, and it’s impossible to operate as an anthropologist completely divorced from the institution. Very often the institution places constraints on what you want to say, how you want to say it... You have to use a certain language to get funding, to support your research. So, all of that is a part of a set of institutional constraints. You can push up against those constraints to a certain point. For me... you know, one of my professors said: “Well, you know, the key is to understand that, and utilize it so that you can use the institution to do what you want to do, right?” So, if you’ve somehow got funding — and I’ve been fortunate to have a lot of funding over my career — then you go to the field, you do what you’re going to do, and you write the way you want to write, right? And, if you write in a different way, people are going to criticize you. They’re going to take issue with what you’re doing, and sometimes it takes a long time for you to publish something because it breaks

with institutional constraints... So, my first book, *In Sorcery's Shadow* (1987), was rejected by twelve publishers before it was published. Some of the publishers said it was too academic. Other publishers said it wasn't academic enough. Finally, a reader, my editor at the University of Chicago said: "We are the University of Chicago, we can take the risk to publish this book". So, they published it, and you know, it's sold many, many, many, many thousands of copies. It's still in print. People still use it in undergraduate courses. If you want to do things your own way, a way that cuts against the grain of the institution, you need to be resilient. You need to keep at it. And eventually, you find the light of day. In 1994 I received a Guggenheim Fellowship. I applied for this fellowship five times, it got rejected. On my sixth try, they gave it to me, because it came to an evaluator who happened to like my work. Persistence pays off in doing this sort of things. These days things are different. When I was coming up as an anthropologist, things were still very academic, people were writing for other anthropologists — not really worried so much about the public... You know, public Anthropology, it was "oh, that's not good". People made fun of Margaret Mead because she was a public anthropologist. They said she wasn't a "serious" anthropologist. Other people who sometimes, if they published works that were for a popular audience, would use a pseudonym, right? If they wrote poetry, they wouldn't talk about it so much, because that's not the real thing. But now things are different. There's still that institutional bias, there's still that sort of notion, that we have to be scientific. There's nothing wrong with doing that, it's a good thing. But there's a bit more acceptance of other forms of an ethnographic and anthropological expression, like blogging, creative non-fiction, collaborations with artists, or poetry. But, there's still a resistance to public anthropology. So, we have to be persistent. But what I really want to say is that we live in very troubled times. There are the issues of immigration, there's a lot of seriously troubling populism in Europe and in the United States, there's a lot of discrimination, there's a lot of prejudice. This state of affairs is very, very troubling. And so, it's a moment for anthropologists to contribute their insights about these issues. As we say in American baseball: it's time for anthropologists to step up to the plate. Step up to the plate and participate in the public sphere. We have ideas, based on the slow evolution of our insights, that are important. Which means that we should take up one of the major obligations of being an anthropologist — cultural critique. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, perhaps the first anthropologist, was as the first person to really advocate cultural critique. Margaret Mead was a cultural critic. Cultural critics use insights taken from afar and apply them to the analysis of her or his own society — all in the effort

to make a more perfect union, a better society. And I think that today, that's our central obligation. Use whatever means necessary, articles, newspaper articles, talking to audiences, writing blogs, producing plays, writing accessible ethnographies that people will read... All of that contributes to the public good, and I think that today, that's a very, very important thing for us to do.

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