



Continuities in Cultural Evolution

By Margaret Mead

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Margaret Mead once said, "I have spent most of my life studying the lives of other peoples--faraway peoples--so that Americans might better understand themselves." *Continuities in Cultural Evolution* is evidence of this devotion. All of Mead's efforts were intended to help others learn about themselves and work toward a more humane and socially responsible society. Scientist, writer, explorer, and teacher, Mead brought the serious work of anthropology into the public consciousness. This volume began as the Terry Lectures, given at Yale in 1957 and was not published until 1964, after extensive reworking. The time she spent on revision is evidence of the importance Mead attached to the subject: the need to develop a truly evolutionary vision of human culture and society. This was desirable in her eyes both in order to reinforce the historical dimension in our ideas about human culture, and to preserve the relevance of historical and cultural diversity to social, economic, and political action. Given the present state of academic and public discourse alike, this volume speaks to us in a language we badly need to recover.

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Review

"Margaret Mead lives on. She is with us in the brilliant studies she conducted on human behavior; she lives on in the many books she has authored; her ideas thrive in the minds of her students whom she stimulated with her zeal and zest for the search for knowledge and truth."

—Senator Jacob K. Javits, *The Congressional Report*

"Margaret Mead was a unique person, prodigious in her work and achievements. She almost single-handedly represented us to the public by her gift for depicting, beautifully and with deep respect, other cultures and other peoples."

—Donald F. Tuzin and Theodore Schwartz, *Oceania*

About the Author

Margaret Mead (1901-1978) was associated with the American Museum of Natural History in New York for over fifty years, becoming curator of ethnology in 1964. She taught at Columbia University and the New School for Social Research as well as many other universities throughout her lifetime. Some of her books include *Culture and Commitment*, *Continuities in Cultural Evolution*, and *The Mountain Arapesh*.

Stephen E. Toulmin is the Henry R. Luce Professor for the Center for Multiethnic and Transnational Studies at the University of Southern California. His works include *The Inner Life, the Outer Mind*; *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*; and *Beyond Theory*.

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