How would you answer these three questions?

1. Why is cultural anthropology not as beloved as it was in Margaret Mead’s time?

2. Why are the most popular anthropology books now written by non-anthropologists?

3. Why has much of the significant good done by anthropologists gone under-appreciated?

Robert Borofsky, Director of the Center for a Public Anthropology and Professor of Anthropology at Hawai‘i Pacific University

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 3:00 PM, IN CRAWFORD HALL 115

Anthropology has often had an ambiguous relationship with the broader society that funds it – hence the above questions. Since many in the audience will be asked to participate, you might start thinking: How would you answer them? For me, anthropology needs structural changes that reframe our (a) sense of accountability, (b) scholarly transparency, (c) disciplinary ethics, and (d) how we work with those beyond the discipline. Karl Marx famously suggested, “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please . . . but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.” Under such conditions, is structural change within anthropology possible? Could our collective suggestions be, as Bateson phrased it, the difference that makes a difference?

Robert Borofsky is the Director of the Center for a Public Anthropology as well as Professor of Anthropology at Hawaii Pacific and Editor of the California Series in Public Anthropology. Well published (with 6 authored or edited books) and well cited (in Google Scholar), he is currently working on two major projects. First, in association with Altmetric.com, he is developing a metric for assessing the public impact of anthropological publications. Second, he is creating a patented process that encourages graduating seniors to develop the critical thinking, problem solving and effective writing skills that foster meaningful/successful lives and careers following graduation.

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