



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.”

# Notes from the Field



Newsletter of the Institute for Intercultural Studies

Fall 2004

## Gregory Bateson Centennial

Anthropologist, systems theorist and environmentalist Gregory Bateson (1904 - 1980) would have been 100 years old this year. Nearly a quarter century after his death, much of his work is just beginning to be fully appreciated. During this centennial year, a series of discussions, events and publications are taking a closer look at how Bateson challenged people to think in new ways and how his ideas continue to impact how we think in the 21st century. The IIS is working with individuals and institutions across the globe as they come together to examine Bateson's ideas in relation to a wide variety of topics, including ethnography and visual anthropology, communications theory, cybernetics, psychotherapy and human ecology. This issue takes a look at centennial events to date, upcoming activities and resources of interest. Updates can be found on the IIS website, [www.interculturalstudies.org](http://www.interculturalstudies.org).



Photo by Jeffrey Bloom, 1975

“What is the pattern that connects the crab to the lobster and the orchid to the primrose and all the four of them to me? And me to you?”

Gregory Bateson, from *Mind and Nature*

## The “Gang of Four” and ASAO: Not Just Sex and Temperament Anymore

The Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) continues discussions generated during the Mead Centennial of 2001 and subsequent ASAO and AAA sessions. The group's annual meeting in February 2004 in Salem, MA featured an informal session on Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Gregory Bateson, and Reo Fortune, entitled “Not Just Sex and Temperament Any More Revisited,” or “The Gang of Four” in Multiple Contexts.”

Ira Bashkow and Lise Dobrin (in absentia) discussed a range of issues related to Mead's and Fortune's Arapesh fieldwork situation and strategies, and how these circumstances were shaped by the ethnographers themselves, with special reference to Mead and Fortune's understanding or misunderstanding of reciprocity in Arapesh life. Patricia Francis discussed

Mead's participation in the Hanover Seminar on Human Relations, a Culture and Personality conference convened by Lawrence K. Frank in Hanover, NH during the summer of 1934. Preparatory to this conference, Mead wrote a lengthy document on Arapesh education which appears to be her earliest manuscript on her and Fortune's second New Guinea field trip. The discussions at that conference also influenced Mead's later work, *Sex and Temperament*. Phillip Guddemi spoke about how “the gang of four” went about the process of comparing cultures. He emphasized notions of what we now call cultural relativism, differing degrees of integration or lack of integration inherent in the cultural situation of various peoples, and what they sometimes called the “aliveness” or the “functioning” of cultures for those who lived them. Gerald Sullivan discussed

Mead's evolving ideas about culture and psychology. Against the background of the common understanding that Mead held culture to be personality writ large, he focused on the development of Mead's preferred notion of the individual in culture, starting with her early published works and proceeding through Benedict's notes on Mead's Columbia seminar on the study of the individual in culture given in 1935. Sharon Tiffany concluded with an overview of popular media representations of Mead and her New Guinea fieldwork experiences. She suggested that Mead's ethnographic narrative in *Sex and Temperament* could be read as a heroine's quest, consistent with popular notions of Mead as scientific explorer and adventurer.

Further discussions, with focus on Gregory Bateson, are planned for the ASAO February 2005 meeting in Hawaii.

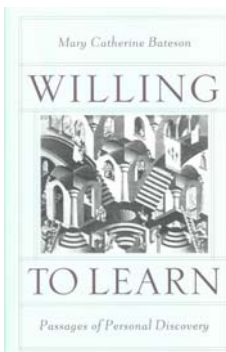


Three of the “gang of four,” Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, and Reo Fortune arriving in Sydney, Australia upon their return from New Guinea.

Courtesy of the Institute for Intercultural Studies, Inc.

## Passages of Personal Discovery

Mary Catherine Bateson has included a small group of papers about Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson in her retrospective anthology,



*Willing to Learn: Passages of Personal Discovery* (Steerforth Press, October 2004) which can be read as a memoir of unfolding curiosity. It brings together essays and occasional pieces, many of them previously unpublished or unknown to readers who know the author only from her books, written in the course of an unconventional career. Arranged thematically in four parts, the longest section focuses primarily on the contemporary United States and deals with life stages and gender. Bateson argues that because women's lives have changed

most radically, women are pioneers of emerging patterns that will affect everyone. The most anthropological section deals with belief systems, conflict, and change, especially in the Middle East, and the final section with different ways of knowing.

This piece was based on an article in the ASAO newsletter (No. 118, Spring 2004).

## Gregory Bateson — Anthropologist?

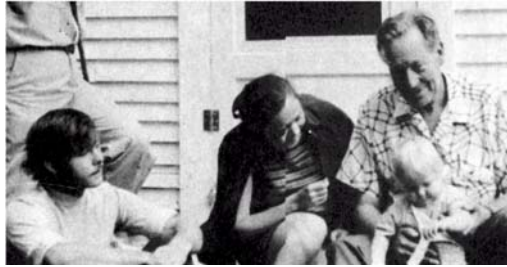
Gregory Bateson's career falls into two parts, divided by the Second World War. Up to World War II we see his education at Cambridge, his early fieldwork at three sites in New Guinea (including Iatmul, on the Sepik River, which led to his major experimental ethnography, *Naven*), and his marriage to Margaret Mead with whom he did further field work in Bali and New Guinea, pioneering visual anthropology. This is the Bateson who is most familiar to anthropologists. The documentation for the field work done in this period remained in Mead's New York office and is now in the Library of Congress South Pacific Ethnographic Archives. Bateson and Mead had one child, Mary Catherine Bateson, in 1939.

Bateson returned from WW II service in the OSS (predecessor to today's CIA) embittered and depressed, and gradually separated from Mead and moved to California in 1948. In 1949 he got a job as an "ethnologist" working with mental patients at a Veterans Administration Hospital. In spite of his job title, he began to look less and less like an anthropologist, shifting his interest



Above, Gregory and Lois Bateson  
Below left, Bateson with his three children,  
John, Catherine, and Nora on his lap.

Photos by Lois Bateson



to psychiatry and communications theory and from there to the biology of communication and to ecology. His postwar papers are archived at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Bateson married twice in California, first Elizabeth Sumner, with whom he had a son, John Sumner Bateson, in 1951, and then Lois Camack, with whom he had a daughter, Nora Bateson, in 1967, and acquired a step-son, Eric Vatikiotis Bateson, the same age as John. Between the end of the war and his death in 1980, Bateson had a patchwork of jobs; he was recognized as having made brilliant contributions in a variety of fields but was too much of a maverick for most institutions. The publication of *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* in 1972 finally gave a name to the field he had been working in, the "ecology of mind," with only about 20% of the volume labeled as "anthropology." The theoretical resources he turned to were cybernetics (systems theory) and communications theory, which he had begun to engage with in the early 40s.

So was Bateson an anthropologist? And if so, can he be assigned to one of the multitude of specialties into which anthropology has deconstructed itself in recent years? I would argue that the answer to the first question is yes. Bateson continued to describe himself as an anthropologist but the field that Bateson identified with crossed boundaries to enhance understanding of *Homo sapiens*, and this remained Bateson's focus, the "pattern that connects" his multiple interests. But he did not behave like a member of the club, going to meetings and keeping up with the literature, as Mead did in spite of her many interdisciplinary ventures. Bateson's post WWII work is rich with resources for contemporary anthropologists, resonating with some of the most recent theoretical ideas but not packaged or "trademarked" as anthropology. Today he is most quoted by theorists of psychotherapy and environmentalism. Will anthropology remain a niche specialty? Or will it speak out about the human future, the dangers and potentials that lie ahead? If it takes the latter path, anthropologists will need to read the other 80% of *Steps* as well as the books that have appeared since.

Contributed by Mary Catherine Bateson

## Bateson Centennial Events to Date

Spring and summer of this year saw some half dozen gatherings to mark the centenary of Gregory Bateson. The Circolo Bateson met at the University of Rome on May 14-15 to discuss Bateson as *un Pensiero Vivente*, a Living Thinker. This group hosts its own website in Italian, [www.gregorybateson.net](http://www.gregorybateson.net), and will publish an audio-recording of this event with the help of the Il Narratore group (see next page).

On May 17<sup>th</sup> in London, the Second Annual Gregory Bateson Memorial Lecture featured Mary Catherine Bateson speaking on "Learning in Layers: Pathology and Liberation." This conference was sponsored by the Tavistock Institute and the School of Cultural and Innovation Studies at the University of East London and explored the relevance of the double bind theory outside of psychotherapeutic contexts.

Also in May, the Brioni Islands in Croatia were the site of the Fifth International Workshop of Foundation 2020. This year's meeting, celebrating Bateson's centennial, focused on "How Can We Trust Each Other: Changing the Terms for Public Trust of People, Corporations and the State," exploring what cybernetics offers for understanding trust in leading, governing, and doing business. Guest speakers and discussants included Jerry Brown; Mary Catherine Bateson; Graham Barnes; Stipe Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia; Janez Drnovšek, President of the Republic of Slovenia; and Filip Vujanović, President of the Republic of Serbia-Montenegro. This three-day session took off from Gregory Bateson's essay "From Versailles to Cybernetics" to consider the way in which recent conflicts were affected by the punitive World War I settlements.

Summer events began in June with Marcelo Pakman and Mary Catherine Bateson presenting "The Logical Types" at the Center for Dialogic Studies in Easthampton, MA. In July, the Department of Philosophy and History of Sciences at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, dedicated its Fifth Annual Gathering in Semiotics to recognizing the work of Gregory Bateson in his centennial year. Anton Markov presided over the four-day meeting.

Back in North America, the American Society for Cybernetics (ASC) held its 2004 conference in August at Ryerson University in Toronto and featured Peter Harries-Jones speaking on "Why Gregory Bateson Insisted Aesthetics Was Necessary to the Well-Being of Systems." According to Prof. Harries-Jones, "Aesthetics, the unifying glimpse, provides a medium through which humanity can begin to communicate about how to understand wholes and thus the unity of the biosphere. Otherwise a science of ecology, and Bateson's *modus vivendi*, an ecology of mind, will be bad cybernetics and bad science."

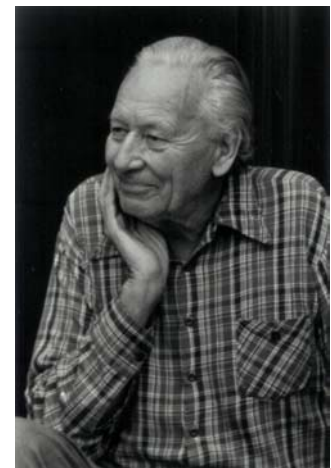


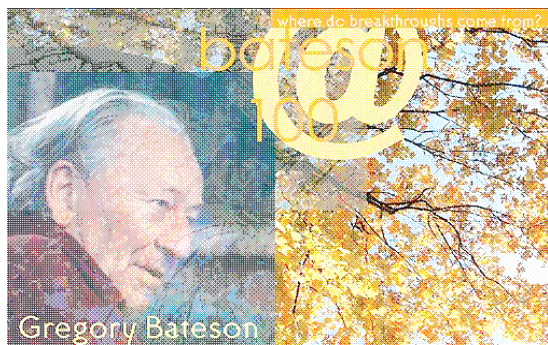
Photo by Fred Roll, 1978



## Upcoming Bateson Centennial Events

This fall brings a cluster of Gregory Bateson centennial events in two regions, one on the West Coast of the U.S. (with a New York sidebar attached), the other in Europe. Starting in late October a series of conferences in Italy will focus on studying Bateson's impact on various fields of inquiry, including epistemology, psychotherapy and family therapy. Meetings in Turin, Milan and Genoa are planned. The largest of these events is the European Festival of Science in Genoa (October 28-November 8), a lively series of public events, exhibits, meetings and conferences, music and theatre performances, movies, games — with the aim of popularizing science and technology at various levels. A special event on November 2 will commemorate *Gregory Bateson: A New Way of Thinking About Science*, with a lecture by Mary Catherine Bateson. In Barcelona, Spain, on November 2, the Centro del Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB) presents a lecture by Mary Catherine Bateson in anticipation of the *Impacte Bateson* symposium, now postponed to 2005.

In the U.S., Bateson Centennial events in November are centered in the San Francisco Bay area. The American Anthropological Association (AAA) Annual Meeting, to be held at the



### Multiple Versions of the World

Sat Nov 20 9am-5pm A Conference Celebrating Bateson's Centennial & His Continued Influence — UC Berkeley

Reception and Film Program in the same room. A limited number of special day passes for non-AAA members are available for these two events. Please contact Lucille Horn at [lhorn@aanet.org](mailto:lhorn@aanet.org) for more information.

That weekend across the Bay at the University of California at Berkeley, Gateway Foundation presents *Gregory Bateson @ 100: Multiple Versions of the World*. This symposium starts with a reception on Friday evening, November 19, including a wine tasting, a special exhibit of previously unseen Bateson photographic work, and an opportunity to meet the next day's speakers. An all-day session on Saturday, November 20 features Jerry Brown, Gordon Feller, Mary Catherine Bateson, Carol Wilder, Wendel Ray, Jay Ogilvy, Nathan Gray and Peter Harries-Jones. For more information on this event, visit [www.batesonconference.org](http://www.batesonconference.org).

Concurrently in New York City, as part of the bi-coastal Bateson centennial celebration, City University of New York will host *Art, Circuitry, and Ecology: Honoring Gregory Bateson*. This Saturday conference at the CUNY Graduate Center will explore the interplay between Bateson's ideas about art and the emerging interest in "relational" and "ecological" aesthetics. It includes a live telecast from Berkeley, CA of several presentations from the *Multiple Versions* conference to occur on the same day. This event is co-sponsored by Media Studies at New School University.

Looking ahead to 2005, we know of three Bateson centennial events. The annual ASAO meeting in February in Hawaii will continue the discussions of its 2004 informal session on *The Gang of Four, or Bateson, Benedict, Fortune and Mead in Multiple Contexts* (see page 1). Next summer, an International Conference on the legacy of Bateson's work will take place in Copenhagen, Denmark, August 18-21. This conference, *Bateson and the Epistemology of the Sacred: The Science-Religion Pattern*, is sponsored by the University of Copenhagen's Research Priority Area, Religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and will take place in the Botanical Auditorium in the center of Copenhagen. Also anticipated next year in Barcelona is CCCB's *Impacte Bateson*, a symposium of dialogue and presentations examining the significance of Bateson's contributions to various fields. Up-to-date information on these and other meetings can be found on the IIS website.



Photo from Bateson Archives at UC Santa Clara

## Bateson Books, Films, Resources

Hampton Press continues its reissue of major works by and about Gregory Bateson with three books scheduled for late 2004/early 2005. Following the 2002 reprint of *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*, Hampton will publish *Angels Fear: Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred*, first published in 1987. This collaboration between Bateson and his daughter, anthropologist and author Mary Catherine Bateson, builds on the theories in *Mind and Nature* and incorporates Bateson's last essays before his death and a series of imagined father-daughter conversations — metalogues — that explore the universal "pattern which connects" all living things. *Our Own Metaphor: A Personal Account of a Conference on the Effects of Conscious Purpose on Human Adaptation* by Mary Catherine Bateson, first published in 1979, is also slated for reissue in 2005, along with *A Sacred Unity: Further Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, edited by Rodney Donaldson.

From Italy and the internet, Il Narratore has introduced their "Visioni del Mondo" audio series celebrating the work of Gregory Bateson. Their website, [www.ilnarratore.com](http://www.ilnarratore.com), features excerpts from the collection, including "Metaphors and Butterflies," recorded live in 1975 in Big Sur, California (in English) and an excerpt (in Italian) from David Lipset's biography of Bateson. They also offer a CD audiobook in Italian, *Gregory Bateson e l'Ecologia della Mente*, an audio-documentary in two parts — with the aid of music and special effects — on Gregory Bateson's vision of life. This group also intends to publish an audio-recorded summary of the Circolo Bateson conference in Rome in May 2004.

Several journals and magazines have published or will produce editions dedicated to Bateson. The March 2004 edition of the online journal *SEED (Semiotics, Evolution, Energy, and Development)* honored Bateson's work. Peter Harries-Jones of York University in Toronto edited this special issue. Also this past spring, *Patterns*, the newsletter of the Systems Thinking and Chaos Theory Network (STCT), presented an article entitled "Multiple Versions of the World: 100 Years of Gregory Bateson's Influence" in its March/April edition.

*Common Ground*, a Bay area monthly magazine, will feature an article by Gordon Feller on Gregory Bateson in its November issue. For more information or to read it online, go to [www.commongroundmag.com](http://www.commongroundmag.com).

*The American Journal of Semiotics*, a quarterly research publication of the Semiotic Society of America, dedicates its December 2004 issue to Bateson, with Deborah Eicher-Catt editing. *Family Process*, a multidisciplinary international journal that publishes research, training, and theoretical contributions in the broad area of family therapy, includes in its December 2004 issue Marcelo Pakman's "On Imagination: Reconciling Knowledge and Life, or What Does 'Gregory Bateson' Stand For?"

Looking ahead to the coming year, *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*, the quarterly international multi- and interdisciplinary journal on second order cybernetics, autopoiesis and cybersemiotics, will publish a Bateson issue in 2005, organized by Frederick Steier and the journal's editor Søren Brier. *Kybernetes*, a leading journal in the field of systems and cybernetics, will publish its special Bateson memorial issue in Fall 2005.



For more Bateson and Mead resources,  
visit the IIS website at  
[www.interculturalstudies.org](http://www.interculturalstudies.org)

## Remembering Rhoda Metraux (1914-2003)

Dr. Rhoda Metraux, a pioneer psychological anthropologist who worked in World War II to help the U.S. and allies understand themselves and their adversaries, died in Barton, VT on November 26, 2003. She suffered from Alzheimer's disease. She was associated with the IIS for many years. With the advent of U.S. and U.N. involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, her work on "national character" is taking on contemporary significance by scholars and public servants interested in the application of the behavioral sciences to making foreign policy. Apart from public affairs issues, Metraux explored the intersections of anthropology, psychotherapy and literature.



Rhoda Metraux, 1970.

Metraux's many field trips took her to Haiti, Mexico, Argentina, Montserrat in the West Indies, and Iatmul in Papua New Guinea. She also collaborated in anthropological research "at a distance" on the cultures of Germany, France, China, and the United States. Metraux was a pioneer in the cultural analysis of media and literary materials and published widely on topics related to cultural imagery, national character, culture and psychotherapy, personality and culture, childhood, aging, culture change, deviance, and qualitative methods of data collection. Three of Metraux's most important books, each very different from the other, are *The Study of Culture at a Distance* (1953) and *A Way of Seeing* (1970), both with Margaret Mead, and *Psychotherapy and Culture* (1987) with Theodora Abel and Samuel Roll.

During World War II, Metraux lived in Washington and was Margaret

Mead's research assistant at the National Research Council's Committee on Food Habits where they worked on wartime consumer problems. It was the beginning of a long professional and personal relationship between the two women that continued until Mead's death in 1978. Metraux completed her doctorate in 1951 at Columbia University in New York. For the rest of her career she worked on a succession of anthropological research projects, the most famous of which was the Research in Contemporary Cultures, one of the largest and most influential anthropological projects of the last century. The project had been initiated by Ruth Benedict, and after her death in 1948, continued by Margaret Mead. *The Study of Culture at a Distance* and *Themes in French Culture*, both by Metraux and Mead, are products of this research. Recognized as pioneering classics, they were reprinted in 2001 by Berghahn Books.

During her professional career, Dr. Metraux served as Research Associate at the American Museum of Natural History, an advisor to the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies at the Smithsonian, and as a consultant to the Institute for Intercultural Studies of New York. Her decades of association with Mead made her particularly valuable to the Library of Congress in processing the vast collection of Mead manuscripts and related memorabilia deposited there.

A memorial service was held in Greensboro, VT in July 2004. Survivors include a brother, Paul Bubendey of Vero Beach, FL; a son, Daniel Metraux of Staunton, VA, and two grandchildren.

*This article was based on remarks by Bill Mitchell and a piece by Wilton Dillon.*

## Mead/Bateson Films in Indonesia

The Jakarta International Film Festival will include a showing from the recently acquired Mead/Bateson film collection on December 15, 2004. A complete set of edited films from this series, a gift from the IIS, has been sent to the Bali Film Commission for their use at this event. Thousands of feet of film were originally shot in Bali and New Guinea in the 1930s by Mead and Bateson, then later edited for instructional use. This work has not been readily available in Indonesia, but now these landmark anthropological studies will become part of the country's permanent film collection. In North America, copies of the edited Mead/Bateson films are available for purchase or rental from Penn State Audio-Visual Services in University Park, PA, [www.medianet.libraries.psu.edu](http://www.medianet.libraries.psu.edu).



Bateson shooting film as Mead interviews. New Guinea, 1930s.

Photo by Gregory Bateson from the Mead Collection at the Library of Congress.

## Fall Symposium in Japan Examines Mead's Influence on Social Anthropology

From October 28-30, 2004, the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan hosts an international symposium, *The Social Use of Anthropology in the Contemporary World*. Wilton Dillon, William Beeman and Mary Catherine Bateson, all of the IIS, will speak at this event. By examining the heritage of Margaret Mead, who actively communicated with the public on a variety of social issues, this meeting explores problems concerning the social use of anthropological knowledge, with special reference to socialization, gender, ethnographic film, cultural policy, and development. A public session on October 30, entitled "Anthropology in the Contemporary World: Toward a Greater Social Involvement," will present results of the deliberations among the panelists to the general public for further discussion. It is hoped that this symposium will set in motion a new field that is long overdue in Japan — anthropology in action.

## Mead Film & Video Festival at AMNH

The 27th annual Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival will be held at the American Museum of Natural History from Thursday, November 11th to Sunday, November 14th, with encore screenings on Saturday, November 20th and Sunday, November 21st. The show then travels over the next twelve months. For more information, visit [www.amnh.org/mead](http://www.amnh.org/mead).

*Notes from the Field* was published semi-annually from 1999 through 2002 during Mead Centennial activities. It will continue as an annual publication of the Institute for Intercultural Studies, and is edited by Karen Peterson. Send enquiries to [newsletter@interculturalstudies.org](mailto:newsletter@interculturalstudies.org).

For address changes, cancellations, and donations, please write to us at IIS, 67A East 77th Street, New York, NY 10021.

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