



"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 2009

After 65 Years, IIS To Close Down December 2009

This is the final issue of the IIS Newsletter, *Notes from the Field*, which we have been publishing for a decade. With this edition we are announcing the decision to dissolve the Institute, the plans that have been made for the Institute's assets, including literary rights, and what we see for the future. For the thinking behind this decision and a review of the Institute's history, see page 2. By the time this issue reaches you, the assets of the Institute will have been distributed and the legal papers required for the dissolution of a non-profit organization will have been drawn up.

The Boards of Directors and Advisors of the Institute, which normally meets in the spring, met on February 27 to discuss the dissolution process. We gathered again for a celebratory dinner on May 1, at which all were thanked for their efforts over many years and presented with an "In the Spirit of Margaret Mead" award, followed by attending a performance of City at Peace, a program for metropolitan youth that received an award during the Mead centennial and one of our closing grants.



City at Peace actors perform in NYC.

FINAL ISSUE



The IIS Board of Directors and Advisors gathered one last time in NYC in May 2009. Seated from left are William Beeman, Harold Conklin, Mary Catherine Bateson, Rev. James Morton, Lynn Rosansky, Ann Sloane. Back row, Deborah Tannen, Sevanne Kassarian, Maria Striar, James Magid. A full roster of past and present members is on page 3.

The Work Ahead – Celebrating What Mead Stood For

Several years ago the IIS received a significant bequest from Fred and Barbara Roll, both of whom had worked with Mead in Peri Village in Manus. At about the same time, the IIS received a proposal for the creation of a monument to Mead, which has been on the back burner. Originally proposed as a single figure, in the genre of the many lofty statues of famous men that ornament our cities,

this proposal has evolved into a concept that will convey an entirely different message: a group of figures communicating key ideas about anthropology and about the legacy of human diversity. We currently envision two seated figures, one of them Mead as she dressed in the field, the second a woman of Peri village, accompanied by or holding a small child.

We visualize the figures in human scale, at eye level, accessible to children who want to test their laps, with Mead listening to and learning from the second woman on a basis of respect, equality, and friendship.

The choice of artist and location will of course affect many details. Although a number of

suggestions have been made, we do not now know where this monument will be located but believe it should be in a public place, visible to passers-by, especially children, of every race and class. We are reserving a sum roughly equivalent to the Roll bequest in a special trust, sufficient to cover most of the costs of the monument and provide a substantial grant to an institution associated with the site for programs that fit the goals of promoting intercultural, interracial, and international understanding.

Many readers of this newsletter have donated to the Institute over the years. If you would like now to make a tax deductible final donation, please make your check out to: Mead Fund, Fidelity CGF (which stands for Charitable Gift Fund) Acct # 1026618. Mail to: The Mead Fund, 2576 Broadway #172, New York, NY 10025. New donations will have extra value as indications of public support for the Mead Monument Project. If you have a suggestion for a site and can help us in bringing it about, please contact me at mcatb@attglobal.net. Please tell us if you wish to be kept posted on developments, which will take several years. If for some reason the project becomes impossible to realize, remaining funds will go to the American Anthropological Association as unrestricted endowment.

The Story of IIS — History and Tradition

In its six decades of existence, the Institute has had three different incarnations. Its first incarnation was as Columbia University Research in Contemporary Cultures, an array of research projects initiated by Ruth Benedict during World War II to increase understanding both of our opponents in that war and of our allies, which eventually included over 200 researchers in multiple study groups and resulted in an array of published findings. The methodology of these studies is described in Mead and Metraux's *The Study of Culture at a Distance* (U of Chicago Press, 1953), now available from Berghahn Books (2000).



Bateson and Mead in 1978
Photo: Fred Roll

After Benedict's death, Mead continued the management of what came to be called "The Project" into the 1950s. The Institute for Intercultural Studies was incorporated as a framework for this on-going work and it was housed at the American Museum of Natural History. Mead sustained it for thirty years, assigning most of her honoraria and royalties to the Institute, using it to cover field research expenses and much of the work on the Peoples of the South Pacific Hall at the Museum, and giving small grants to students or colleagues doing research or writing that she felt would promote intercultural and international understanding.

Thirty years ago, following Mead's death in the fall of 1978, the members of the Board convened for their regular spring meeting and invited Mary Catherine Bateson, Mead's daughter, to attend and accept the leadership of the Institute, which began a third incarnation. Bateson believes there were two aspects to that invitation: "One was the hope that the Institute could use its assets to continue a useful role in the funding of research. The other was the hope that the Institute could serve as a vehicle for the preservation of my mother's intellectual and ethical legacy."

A great deal has happened since that time, and the contributions and advice of the Boards have been invaluable. An administrative base was found at the firm of Sloane & Hinshaw, which served the IIS well. It took years to complete the transfer of the Mead papers to the Library of Congress. A small grants program was publicly announced and maintained until the mid-nineties, when it became too labor-intensive to be practical. The Institute's by-laws were revised and democratized. The Boards lost long term members to death or retirement and brought on new members who had been Mead colleagues. With the passage of time, younger members, who had not worked with Mead but understood the importance of her work and the contributions of anthropology to a diverse and sustainable world, joined the group. Perhaps the most significant events of those years were the centennial celebrations for Mead in 2001 and for Gregory Bateson in 2004, leading to multiple conferences around the world and the reissue of some twenty books, as well as new publications and the stimulus for a new generation of researchers.

Information on all these activities will remain on line at www.interculturalstudies.org.

What's On My Mind - Mary Catherine Bateson The End of an Era

The Institute has occupied a major place in my life for three decades, roughly the same period that my mother ran it. It has seemed to me that supporting my mother's ideas – and keeping them current and accessible – was probably more useful to the world than developing my own, and this has been even more important in relation to my father's ideas, which are still less well understood and assimilated. I cannot count the number of conferences I spoke at during the Mead and Bateson centennials, occasionally to contribute new understanding, more often to enhance their credibility by my presence. As long as I live I will sometimes have to make myself available to people trying to access their legacies, simply because I have detailed memories that may help. This is an inherited obligation which I cannot avoid, simply because I am sometimes the only person who can fulfill it.

The members of the Institute's boards have achieved a great deal in these decades and have much to be proud of. However, I do not believe that keeping institutions and organizations alive is a good in itself. My daughter, Sevanne, has worked with me on many



Photo courtesy of George Mason University

of these projects but the obligation is not, after all, genetic – it is primarily derived from conversation and memories that she does not have, so it is not binding on the next generation. My half sister, Nora Bateson, is undertaking much of the task in relation to Gregory Bateson with a new non-profit based on the west coast. Furthermore, the transition of the independent firm of Sloane & Hinshaw to Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors is not a perfect fit for the Institute – RPA is not oriented to the management of intellectual estates, which has emerged as our central mission.

I am about to turn 70, having retired from teaching in 2001. I have a book that I have been trying to finish, *Composing a Further Life: The Age of Active Wisdom*, to appear in 2010, and a range of other projects, not the least of which is the effort to understand what each generation owes to its predecessors and what we all owe to our descendents in the effort to build a peaceful, sustainable, and diverse world. It is to the future that our efforts must now be dedicated.

Visit www.marycatherinebateson.com to read what's currently on her mind.

In the Field: Current Projects

In earlier issues of this Newsletter we have reported on continuing research on regions where Mead did ethnographic work: various sites in New Guinea, Bali and Samoa. In this edition we group together items concerning a region of the world where intercultural understanding is sorely needed.

A Wandering Director

In 2008, Mary Catherine Bateson was invited to the Sultanate of Oman to give a plenary address at the annual conference of the Society on Organizational Learning. For Bateson this was a return to her intellectual roots as her earliest work was on the linguistics of Arabic and of the Arab poetic tradition, and she lived in Iran for several years prior to Mead's death and has written on Iranian culture.

Bateson's topic was to be "Learning in a Cross-Cultural Context." Speaking to an

international audience in the city of Muscat, she used the greeting conventions of Arabic, in which the courteous responses almost always differ from the initial greeting (e.g. one answer to "good morning" is to wish the other a "morning of light") to exemplify the importance of intercultural encounters in which learning is understood to move in both directions rather than as a one way street.

Applied Anthropology in the Middle East

IIS has recently supported several projects that entail a substantial base of research.

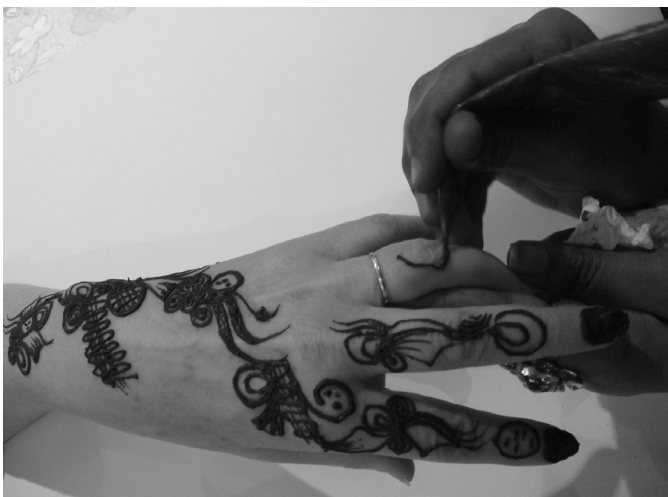
▪ **Arabic Great Books to Open Minds:** One of the sources of bitterness and tension in the Middle East is the eclipse of past glories of Islamic civilization, which included speculative and open debate, and rich interaction with and tolerance for Christian and Jewish communities. This model was replaced by an emphasis on memorization and orthodoxy in the centers of learning, so that the skills of considering and discussing issues from different sides were no longer part of the curriculum. In 2008 and 2009, IIS gave grants to an organization called **Touchstones** which supports the teaching of discussion based on traditional (not imported) texts in many parts of the world, for a project developed by Arabist (and former Dean of Students at the American University of Beirut) Graham Leonard, to prepare teachers and materials to reintroduce discussion in Arabic language schooling. The program has now been adopted for schools in Jordan. Since teaching is primarily in classical Arabic throughout the Arab world and the texts are a common cultural heritage, the curriculum materials are readily adaptable in other countries.

▪ **Just Vision and Skillful Caring:** These terms describe two other Institute grants that address the conflicts in the Middle East and their global ramifications.

Just Vision is an organization that has been filming conversations with Israeli and Palestinian families that have lost sons or daughter to the conflict, developing materials to evoke empathy.

The Institute also gave a grant in 2008 to Rita Carty of George Mason University School of Nursing and June Goodfield, a historian of biology, to chronicle a program that brought young men from Saudi Arabia to the GMU School of Nursing and to consider the factors that made this program successful while some Arabs who study abroad become radicalized or alienated from their home cultures.

▪ Another grant is going to the Prince al-Waleed ibn Talal **Center for Muslim Christian Understanding** at Georgetown University to prepare curriculum materials for teachers to use to address the mounting prejudice against Islam in this country.



In Oman, Dr. Bateson had traditional designs painted on her hands with henna to carry the interactive meaning of her gestures to the audience.

About the IIS 1944-2009

The Institute for Intercultural Studies was founded by Margaret Mead in 1944. She defined its concerns as "advancing knowledge of the various peoples and nations of the world, with special attention to those peoples and those aspects of their life which are likely to affect intercultural and international relations."

2009 Board of Directors

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and Fred Roll.

For information on past projects, books, resources and archival materials, visit www.interculturalstudies.org which will remain on line.

Intellectual Rights of Mead, Bateson and their Colleagues

The IIS is in the process of providing for the intellectual rights of Margaret Mead and her colleagues which it has been administering, including most of those held by Mary Catherine Bateson. Here, in brief, is what is envisioned:

- **The rights in the unpublished papers**, correspondence, and field notes of Margaret Mead and many of her colleagues, now archived in the Library of Congress, including the pre-war notes and photographs of Gregory Bateson, are now declared in the public domain (or, as the Library puts it, donated to the people of the United States of America). There are three important exceptions to this: a) a small number of files remain closed to protect the privacy of individuals who may still be living; b) the files include letters, photographs, and other materials created by individuals other than Margaret Mead, whose permission must be sought before publication; and c) although this permission includes the use of materials for documentary and teaching films, it does not include permission for dramatizations for film, theater, or other media, which must be sought from Mary Catherine Bateson or from her daughter Sevanne Kassarian.

SCA Awards Bateson Prize

From the Society for Cultural Anthropology website

In late 2008, the Society for Cultural Anthropology announced the creation of a new book prize, the Gregory Bateson Prize, to be awarded annually at the meetings of the American Anthropological Association and carrying a honorarium of \$1000.

The first annual Bateson Prize (2009) will go to Barry Saunders of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill for his book **CT Suite: The Work of Diagnosis in the Age of Noninvasive Cutting** (Duke University Press). The world of visual diagnosis wrought by computed tomography and conducted in "CT suites" in hospitals around the country receives extraordinary attention in this finely tuned work at the crossroads of anthropology, art criticism, literary history, philosophy, and science studies. Explaining how this state-of-the-art technology bears the legacy of its origins in nineteenth-century visual cultures, Saunders argues for an abiding historical consciousness in a world that is normally understood as ephemeral, urgent, and of the moment. **CT Suite** reveals the history of the senses that lurks at the heart of modern medical sleuthing and the aesthetic disciplines on which contemporary medical knowledge rests.

The Bateson Book Prize Committee also recognized four Honorable Mentions from the 2009 shortlist: Jessica Cattellino, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty* (Duke); Gayle Greene, *Insomniac* (California); Susan Greenhalgh, *Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng's China* (California); and Chris Kelty, *Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software* (Duke).

Welcoming a wide range of styles and argument, the Bateson Prize rewards work that is theoretically rich, ethnographically grounded, and in the spirit of the tradition for which the SCA has been known—interdisciplinary, experimental, and innovative.

For more information, visit the SCA online at <http://sca.culanth.org>.

- **The rights in publications of Margaret Mead**, and most of the income, are being donated to the American Anthropological Association which has a Publications Department managing and giving permissions for its various journals and monograph series, to manage for the benefit of the profession and to provide income for their continuing work.

For works under contract and in print, existing contractual rights continue, and journal articles are often copy righted by the publishing journals. For permissions, contact the AAA by mail at 2200 Wilson Blvd, Suite 600, Arlington VA 22201, Attention: Permissions, or by e-mail at permissions@aaanet.org. The copyrights in all publications of the Institute are also being transferred to the AAA at this time.

- **The rights in publications of Gregory Bateson** will be handled by Nora Bateson, the daughter of Gregory Bateson and Lois Camack. She is in the process of forming a non-profit corporation to be called the Bateson Ideas Group, which will take over the management of Bateson's post World War II writings, both published and unpublished, now archived in California at UC Santa Cruz and elsewhere. The notes, films, and photographs from his pre-war ethnographic work remain in the Library of Congress.

Books and Publications

From the University of Wisconsin Press website

In the new book **The Trashing of Margaret Mead** (November 2009), Paul Shankman explores the many dimensions of the Mead-Freeman controversy as it developed publicly and as it played out privately, including the personal relationships, professional rivalries, and larger-than-life personalities that drove it.

Providing a critical perspective on Freeman's arguments, Shankman reviews key questions about Samoan sexuality, the alleged hoaxing of Mead, and the meaning of the controversy. Why were Freeman's arguments so readily accepted by pundits outside the field of anthropology? What did Samoans themselves think? Can Mead's reputation be salvaged from the quicksand of controversy?

Written in an engaging, clear style and based on a careful review of the evidence, *The Trashing of Margaret Mead* illuminates questions of enduring significance to the academy and beyond.

Notes from the Field was published semi-annually from 1999 through 2002 during Mead Centennial activities, and continued as an annual publication of the Institute for Intercultural Studies until this final Fall 2009 edition.

Information about publications, rights, and access to archives are available on line at www.interculturalstudies.org.

