



“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

Spring 2007

The Double Bind in Paris

Among the international events following from the Bateson centennial was a conference in Paris to discuss the current status of the concept of the “double bind,” first put forward fifty years ago by Gregory Bateson and his colleagues who were studying the etiology of schizophrenia. The conference convened on November 18-19, 2006 in the Great Hall of the Sorbonne and was sponsored jointly by the Institut Gregory Bateson (IGB) in Liege, Belgium, and the Mental Research Institute (MRI) in Palo Alto, and chaired by Jean-Jacques Wittezaele, Director-General and co-founder of IGB.

The flow of conversation and influence across the semi-permeable membranes of the human sciences has varied from decade to decade. During the 1920s and 30s, as anthropologists read Freud and other psychological theorists, anthropologists began to ask whether their writings really applied to all human beings or reflected research within specific cultural settings. Thus, Mead’s writings about adolescence (Samoa) and early childhood (New Guinea), as well as about gender, were written in the context of interdisciplinary dialogue with psychology, her undergraduate major. The direction was set by Malinowski (challenging Freud) and Benedict’s ethnographic work grew out of this tradition, which asked both how individual character was shaped to fit into a cultural pattern and how some individuals (perhaps those born with an incompatible temperament) grew up unable to fit. Gregory Bateson took this constellation of interests a step further after World War II after he himself undertook a Jungian analysis (with Elizabeth Hellersberg) and began to study the phenomena of psychotherapy into which he brought the conceptual frameworks of cybernetics and

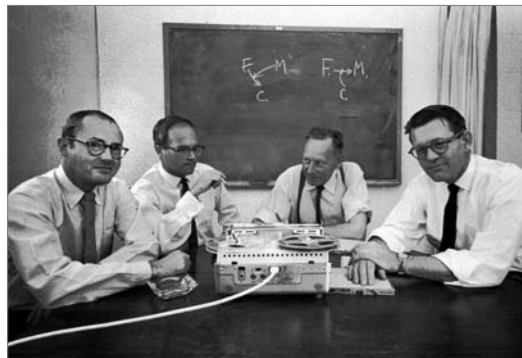
communications theory. The “Bateson Group,” which included Don Jackson, Jay Haley, John Weakland, and William Fry, theorized that schizophrenia, which manifested itself in disordered thought and communication, could have been produced by sustained and systematic distortions in communication within the family. Today, the management of schizophrenia has been almost entirely relegated to chemotherapy, but Bateson’s most significant impact has been on systemic family therapy, particularly in Europe and Latin America.

The conference included a variety of presentations, ranging from case histories to discussions of methodology and reviews of the reception and evolution of the concept in different environments, including some discussion of its implications for understanding international and political discourse. The speakers included Wendel Ray and Molly Govener, Mony Elkaïm, Giorgio Nardone, Yves Winkin, François Roustang, Dezsoe Birkas, Irène Bouaziz, Véronique Servais, Claude Duterme, Jean-Jacques Wittezaele and Teresa Garcia, and Mary Catherine Bateson. Bradford Keeney, who had been scheduled to speak, was delayed by weather conditions in Amazonia. The proceedings of the conference will eventually be published by éditions Deboeck. For more information, visit www.igb-mri.com.



Newly Available Archives on Systemic Psychotherapy

Researchers can now access a veritable treasure trove of historic documents that have been preserved from two of the most influential early research projects in the behavioral sciences: One documents Gregory Bateson’s Research Team and the early investigators at the Mental Research Institute (MRI) – the Palo Alto Group. The other documents the work of the Brief Therapy Center. These materials, the Don D. Jackson Archive, provide a Rosetta stone of the field of communication/interactional/cybernetic theory, family theory and therapy, and brief therapy. Studied in combination with the published writings of these researchers, the original materials offer



Bateson Research Team in the early 1950s: ((l to r)) William Fry, John Weakland, Gregory Bateson and Jay Haley. Photo by Jack Fields

nuance, texture and context not otherwise available.

The survival of these original materials is due principally to John H. Weakland. Weakland was the first person asked by Gregory Bateson to join him when he formed his famous Research Team at the beginning of the 1950s. He was also among the first to be asked by Don Jackson to join him when he founded the MRI in the late 1950s. Weakland had the foresight to preserve numerous reel-to-reel recordings, written documents, and films from the Bateson Team era and from the pioneering

work at the MRI. These collections constitute two of the most important sets of materials housed in the archive.

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What's On My Mind - Mary Catherine Bateson

In Search of Active Wisdom

People often spoke of Margaret Mead as a "wise woman" or a "sybil," seeing her in terms of the wise woman archetype, yet if they ask and I tell them she was 77 when she died, they say "so young!" The association of age and wisdom is still part of the culture, but there have been shifts in the meaning of both. Three score and ten has changed from an aspiration to a probability and we don't know what to make of it. Most Americans are aware that the Baby Boomers are beginning to reach "retirement age." What is less widely understood is that "retirement" has already changed its meaning. The aging – or graying – of America portends changes as profound as those brought about by feminism and the possibility of family planning.

My mother's last book project, never completed, was to have been a joint project with Ken Heyman on aging around the world. The photographs for that project, taken by Ken in the 1970s, capture the wisdom and grace of elders in traditional societies – her reason for wanting a photographic book on this topic – but were taken too early to capture the new roles now emerging in the developed world. Today's 65 year olds are starting new careers or continuing old ones, traveling around the world, and eloping with new loves. They adore their grandchildren but they are not sitting still. They will not behave like the stereotype of grandparents – long memories and short walks – until they are great grandparents. From a society of children, parents, and grandparents, we are shifting into a four generation society of children, parents, grandparents, and great grandparents.



Photo courtesy of George Mason University

For most of human history, average life expectancy has been around 40, but the presence of older adults has been critical to human cultural evolution. Today there is a tendency to see longevity as a liability. In effect, there has been a glaring failure of imagination, a failure to see that because today's older adults have health and energy and means, they represent a new resource. This failure of imagination has affected the individuals coming up on retirement themselves, both in overemphasizing their future deficits and in failing to appreciate resources and positive challenges. It also affects the way they look at others of the same age and makes them hesitant to join with other older adults to influence society's future in ways that are often not open to younger adults. We must discover or

invent brand new ways of living for the years beyond retirement, often as much as three decades, far too many years to spend on golf, television, and bridge.

Forty years ago, looking at their lives with the newly developed possibility of planning their child bearing, young women discovered the need to break out of inherited assumptions about who they were, what they could do, and what they wanted in their lives. They had imagined their futures in terms of a set of culturally imposed stereotypes and had been trained to desire what society was ready to give them. The process required conversation and active engagement. Today, men and women approaching retirement (and the cohorts that will follow them), with newly granted health and longevity, face the same challenge: to achieve a new kind of consciousness and to free their imaginations for the future.

Wisdom is the most positively regarded trait of people that live long lives. The challenge is to make that wisdom active and effective.

New Papers on the Gang of Four

Following a first conference organized by Sharon Tiffany in 2001, at the beginning of the Mead centennial, she and Gerald Sullivan convened a series of symposia titled, "The Gang of Four: Gregory Bateson, Ruth Benedict, Reo Fortune, and Margaret Mead in Multiple Contexts," under the auspices of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO). The series culminated in the February 2005 session, held in Kaua'i, Hawai'i, which included contributors who had participated in multiple events during the Mead and Bateson centenaries, creating an interwoven conversation not unlike that shared by the early anthropologists.

The "Gang of Four" (the editors' affectionate term for this quartet) are frequently categorized as members of the so-called school of "Culture and Personality," as if their work were completely understood thereby. They all knew each other personally and intellectually, and they all worked with or wrote about the peoples of Oceania and beyond at a time when the anthropological endeavor had come to be

Special Issue of *Pacific Studies* *Gang of Four: Bateson, Benedict, Fortune, and Mead*

Gerald Sullivan and Sharon W. Tiffany,
"Editors' Note"

Virginia Yans, "Introduction"

Sharon W. Tiffany, "Narrative, Voice,
and Genre in Margaret Mead's
Coming of Age in Samoa"

Paul Shankman, "Margaret Mead and
Derek Freeman: What Did He Know
and When Did He Know It?"

Gerald Sullivan, "External Habits and
Maternal Attitudes: Margaret Mead,
Gestalt Psychology, and the
Reproduction of Character"

John S. Gilkeson, "Clyde Kluckhohn
and the New Anthropology: From
Culture and Personality to the
Scientific Study of Values"

Roger Ivar Lohmann, "Dreams of
Fortune: Reo Fortune's Psychological
Theory of Cultural Ambivalence"

Caroline Thomas, "Rediscovering Reo:
Reflections on the Life and Anthropo-
logical Career of Reo Franklin Fortune"

seen as an important social and intellectual contribution to the understanding of human cultures. This unique group of scholars and their mutual encounters produced a wealth of books and essays, including, within a three year period, Bateson's *Naven* (1936), Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* (1934), Fortune's *Sorcerers of Dobu* (1932), and Mead's *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935).

The purpose of the 2005 symposium was two-fold: to examine the significance of the work of these four scholars, both individually and collectively; and to consider elements of their respective work that are often glossed over or forgotten, such as Benedict's work on Thailand and Fortune's theory of dreams. This latter element of our project is far from exhausted. We have also included at least two essays which examine, in part or wholly, the influence of these four upon other scholars. Essays by ten contributors, including an introduction by historian Virginia Yans, will appear as a special issue of the journal, *Pacific Studies*, in spring 2007.

Contributed by Sharon W. Tiffany

A Meeting in the Meta-Forest

For half a century the International Society for the Systems Sciences (ISSS) has been devoted to interdisciplinary inquiry into the nature of complex systems. Both Mead and Bateson were affiliated with this organization, and Mead served as its president in the early 1970s when it was known as Society for General Systems Research (SGSR).

The group held its 50th annual meeting on July 9-14, 2006 at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California. This year's gathering was a dynamic combination of formal and interactive conversations thematically connected by the title, "Complexity, Democracy, and Sustainability". Debora Hammond, ISSS president, set a course "to celebrate and reinvigorate a half-century of interdisciplinary collaboration and synthesis." Against the current backdrop of looming dysfunction in our political, environmental, medical, agricultural, and educational systems, (to name a few), the meetings were charged with a sense of urgency coupled with intense creativity toward social change.

The goal of the ISSS is to "explore common patterns of organization in different kinds of complex systems and to facilitate collaborative inquiry between scholars and practitioners from across the disciplinary spectrum." The interdisciplinary focus of the systems sciences offers diversity of perspective and a place for a kind of dialogue with the potential to articulate the relationships between different disciplines. The conference was attended by a record number of participants and plenary speakers. Talks were organized around the topics of "Complex Systems and the Roots of Systems Thinking"; "Self-Organization and Living Systems"; "Ecological Systems and Sustainability", and "Social Systems Design and Practice."

In conjunction with a discussion of Blake's "Tiger", Bateson's "Allegory", and the subject of Beauty, Nora Bateson and Alfonso Montuori presented clips from the Bateson biographic film-in-progress, "That Reminds Me of a Story." In addition to the plenary sessions, there were several breakout sessions, or "streams" of presentations and dialogues, one of which was entitled, "The Bateson Forum." Scholars who presented papers in this forum, applying Bateson's ideas to myriad topics, included John Broadbent, Allan Combs, Thomas Malloy, Gary Jensen, Ayten Aydin and Phillip Guddemi. Within this broad exploration of connectivity, the conference evoked a tangible collective sense of responsibility and call to action.

A few days before the actual meeting, a pre-conference workshop on "Gregory Bateson and the Ecology of Experience" was held in the beautiful and remote Rata Ling Retreat Center, a Tibetan center high up on the hills above Jenner, California. Hosted by



Nora Bateson, pictured above in 1970s with her father Gregory, continues work on the biopic, "That Reminds Me of a Story." Photo by Lois Bateson

the Center for Creative Inquiry, the workshop was led by Jack Petrunker and Allan Combs. Gathered in a redwood grove, the group embarked on a series of conversations and exercises evocative of the themes of *Mind and Nature*. The workshop's structure was designed on Bateson's premise that: "A metalogue is a conversation about some problematic subject. The conversation should be such that not only do the participants discuss the problem but the structure of the conversation as a whole is also relevant to the same subject." (Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*) The redwood grove was therefore an appropriate setting for the discussion, and came to be affectionately dubbed the Meta-Forest (or metaphor-est).

Contributed by Nora Bateson

New Books and Resources

A Russian edition of Gregory Bateson's *Mind and Nature* was published in November 2006, with a foreword by Dmitry Fedotov.

Fedotov's interest in translating and publishing Bateson's work stems from a meeting with Michael Murphy during his visit to Moscow in

the early 1980s. He elaborates on this Russian project in an article, "Struggling for Russian Bateson" in the upcoming Bateson memorial issue of *Kybernetes*, to be issued in late 2007.

Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry, the landmark study of the phenomena of psychotherapy by Gregory Bateson and Jurgen Ruesch, will be re-issued in 2007 by Transaction Publishers, edited by Eve Pinsker and Gene Combs.

Proceedings from the 2005 Bateson Conference in Copenhagen will be published later this year by Springer Verlag. The volume will be edited by Jesper Hofmeyer and Marcelo Pakman.

The last of Berghahn Book's seven-volume series, **Margaret Mead: Study of Contemporary Western Cultures**, is expected to be released in 2007. *The Study of Visual Culture* collects many of Mead's writings on visual culture together in one volume for the first time. The book, with an introduction by Ray McDermott, includes the full text and pictures of her remarkable collaboration with Paul Byers, published as *The Small Conference*, articles from the architectural journal *Ekistics*, and commentary on her own films. Also of note from Berghahn is the release of *The World Ahead*, the sixth of this series, as an e-book, available for download from their website, www.berghahnbooks.com.

For more Bateson and Mead resources, visit www.interculturalstudies.org

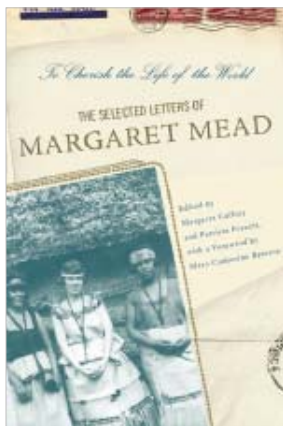
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Websites referenced in this edition:

Mental Research Institute ♦ www.mri.org
Institut Gregory Bateson ♦ www.igb-mri.com
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Transaction Publishers ♦ www.transactionpub.com
Berghahn Books ♦ www.berghahnbooks.com
Hampton Press ♦ www.hamptonpress.com
Perseus Books ♦ www.perseusbooks.com
City at Peace ♦ www.cpnational.org
MCB ♦ www.marycatherinebateson.com



A Lifetime of Letters



Margaret Mead was a prolific letter writer, as is evidenced by the quantity in the Library of Congress's collection of her papers. Written to an interwoven network of family, friends and colleagues, her letters shed light on a changing world, evolving relationships, and her own inquisitive nature. Selecting the letters that best reflect the essence of Mead, her relationships and her work was a daunting project.

Margaret Caffrey and Patricia Francis took on that task in putting together the recently released *To Cherish the Life of the*

World: Selected Letters of Margaret Mead (Perseus Books, 2006). This collection of hundreds of Mead's letters is organized by relationships: it begins with Family (of origin), and proceeds to Husbands, Lovers, Friends, and Colleagues, rounding off with Growing Family: Kith and Kin.

The richness of the letters is both individual and collective. Mary Catherine Bateson says in the book's foreword: "This collection reveals how much my mother shared her friends with each other, constantly elaborating them into networks, providing introductions, and bringing people into contact. It is because these letters reflect a relationship between the professional and the personal and between emotion and analysis that was fundamental to my mother's lifework that I feel it is appropriate to share them."

Mead's correspondence documents the golden years of anthropology. Evident throughout these letters, regardless of date or to whom addressed, are Mead's independence, curiosity and receptivity. She was deeply fascinated with relationships, and these letters reflect her profound insights into the variability of human nature, the foundation of her life work.

During her lifetime, Mead became an icon. This book shows, through Mead's own words, how rich her life was, with all its joys, frustrations, love and hopes. These letters, and the accompanying photos, reveal the intense, complex woman behind the icon.

Archives Available (continued from page 1)

Background

In 1987 Wendel Ray first began visiting MRI to train in Brief Therapy and to study the work of Don D. Jackson. Jackson's work was the subject of Ray's doctoral dissertation. "John Weakland gave me a key to the basement, the use of an ancient portable reel-to-reel tape player, and allowed me to spend countless hours in the dank MRI basement organizing and studying the audio and film recordings, published and unpublished materials. We also conducted multiple interviews with all living associates of Dr. Jackson. Soon Weakland encouraged me to formally create an Archive to assure adequate preservation of the surviving materials from the Bateson Research Team and the early research at MRI."

Over the course of the last twenty years the numerous unorganized and unlabelled boxes of materials stored in the basement at MRI have been moved to a facility with better climate control at the Marriage and Family Therapy Program facility at the University of Louisiana – Monroe (ULM), where Ray is now based. As materials are preserved and placed in modern digital format, a master copy of each of the preserved documents is returned to MRI where they are housed in a collection. A duplicate master of the entire collection of the preserved materials is retained at the Archive at ULM. All of the film, audio recordings, written materials (both published and unpublished), photographs and other materials housed in the collections are in the process of being permanently archived in digital form. The long-term goal is to have the entire archive available to researchers, scholars, and practitioners. Efforts are also underway to make these materials more widely available in published form; this endeavor is complex due to confidentiality issues.

Controlled access for scholarly and research purposes to master copies of MRI materials may be obtained by contacting the Mental Research Institute, 555 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, CA 94301, (650) 321-3055, www.mri.org. For information and controlled access to the Jackson Archive Project, contact Wendel A. Ray, PhD, at the ULM Marriage and Family Therapy Program, waray@bellsouth.net, (318) 547-4539.

Contributed by Wendel A. Ray

City at Peace CD - Volume 1

City at Peace, an intercultural arts organization that empowers teenagers to create safe, healthy, peaceful lives and communities, has released its first CD of songs, *City at Peace, Volume 1*. Each song on the CD comes from one of the original musicals created and performed by City at Peace teenagers over the last four years. All of the lyrics were written by the youth cast members themselves or come from their writings or ideas. Like all the shows that CAP creates, these songs represent the voices of youth. They express the serious reality teenagers face as well as their aspirations for the future.



City at Peace has programs in eight locations, including six U.S. cities and two overseas sites. The DC branch received a Mead2001 Award. Teenagers from the NYC group participated in "Growing Up Multicultural: Rethinking Adolescence as a Time of Commitment and Identity Formation," an IIS conference co-sponsored with the New York Interfaith Center in 2002.

For more information and to order CDs, visit www.cpnational.org.

Notes from the Field was published semi-annually from 1999 through 2002 during Mead Centennial activities. It continues as an annual publication of the Institute for Intercultural Studies. Send inquiries to institute@interculturalstudies.org.

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We welcome your comments and suggestions. Send your thoughts to the above address, or e-mail us at institute@interculturalstudies.org.

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