ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
IN OCEANIA

NEWSLETTER XLVII   SUMMER 1983

I. IN THIS ISSUE

Updates on session plans for the Molokai meetings; Freeman-Mead controversy continues; general notes and bibliographic news.

II. FROM THE EDITOR

After only two issues I must resign as Newsletter Editor so that I may return to PNG for a year's fieldwork. My successor is Terry Hays. Please send Newsletter contributions to him at this address:

Terry Hays, ASAO Newsletter Editor
Dept. of Anthropology and Geography
Rhode Island College
Providence, RI
USA 02912

Note that contributions for the next issue should be in his hands by 15 October; submissions for the subsequent issue should be made by 15 January.

Send change of address information and inquiries concerning ASAO membership and Newsletter subscription to: Donald Mitchell, ASAO Secretary, Dept. of Anthropology, SUNY-C, Buffalo, NY 14222.

III. UPDATES ON SESSIONS FOR THE MOLOKAI MEETINGS

The following items update plans for sessions at the Molokai meetings as announced in previous Newsletter, which should be consulted for details.

A. Working session: "Emerging Legal Systems in Pacific Societies: Blending of Indigenous and Introduced Elements" (Dan Hughes, organizer). As mentioned in the previous issue, ASAO guidelines require participants in a working session to submit a two to three page statement of interest prior to the meetings. This should explain how you intend to develop your topic and should also include a brief summary of relevant ethnography. In
order to prepare effectively, we have decided to set a deadline of **September 20** for the submission of these statements to Dan Hughes, Department of Anthropology, OSU, Columbus, Ohio 43210. We would also second Vern Carroll’s plea (see previous Newsletter) to send in the Molokai reservation forms now. The roster of participants as shown in the previous Newsletter should now include:

Paul W. Brennan  
East-West Cultural Learning Institute  
East-West Center  
1777 East-West Rd.  
Honolulu, HI  
USA 96848

B. The organization of the proposed informal session on “The World System and Pacific Peoples” will be taken over by Matthew Cooper in Dan Jorgensen’s absence. Potential participants now number roughly a half dozen or so; others who are interested should send a sketch of topics and suggestions to:

Matthew Cooper  
Department of Anthropology  
McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario  
Canada L8S 4L9

C. Paul Dahlquist proposes an informal session entitled: “East and West—Viewpoints on Oceania (and Anthropology).” The intention is to compare the perspectives of eastern and western scholars on Oceania, and would be facilitated if a significant number (three or more) of Japanese or other Asian scholars agree to participate. Some of the major questions to raise might include: (1) what research problems are currently being looked at; (2) how field studies are conducted; (3) how field data are analyzed; (4) what basic theories inform data collection and analysis; (5) how research results are disseminated; (6) ways to increase interchange between all of us. Interested people should send their names and addresses, plus any suggestions for the discussion’s agenda, to:

Paul A. Dahlquist  
Department of Sociology/Anthropology  
Ohio Wesleyan University  
Delaware, Ohio  
USA 43015

IV. FREEMAN-MEAD CONTROVERSY CONTINUES...

The following is Derek Freeman’s reply to Mike Lieber’s comments on *Margaret Mead in Samoa* (see previous Newsletter):

*Magna est veritas*

A senior American anthropologist has recently observed that the case I present in my book *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an
Anthropological Myth "suffers' from being lucid as well as extremely powerful so that the only responses to this are to accept it or to confuse the issues in one way or another." Professor Lieber's enraged outburst in the Chicago Sun-Times of April 4, 1983, excerpts from which appeared in the ASAO Spring Newsletter, is a choice example of this agitated confusing of issues.

In his original article, Lieber makes the quite unfactual assertion that "the essence of the Mead-Freeman controversy" is that Mead's conclusions were "based on her observations of adolescent girls," whereas Freeman's are based on "his close association with the Samoan male power hierarchy." While it is true that I have held a matai title since 1942, I have also, over many years, associated with and closely observed Samoans of all ages and both sexes. Further, during our researches in 1966-67, my wife and I had with us our two daughters, one adolescent and the other pre-adolescent. As a result our spacious Samoan fale, which was in the center of a populous village, was regularly visited by numerous Samoan girls and boys, in addition to those of the large extended family of which we were a part. I was thus able to conduct extensive enquiries at depth, and in the Samoan language, into the feelings, beliefs, and behavior of young Samoans from infancy to adulthood, enquiries the results of which I took fully into account in the writing of my refutation of the depiction of Samoa on which Mead based her extreme conclusion of 1928. I would add that Mead, during her researches in Samoa (as she informed me in December, 1964), "did not study infancy or early childhood."

Lieber's principal argument, in which Tweedledee would rejoice, is that this whole troublesome affair can be subsumed by what he calls "cultural complexity," which, he claims, "captures the truth," so that Mead's depiction of Samoa and my refutation of it become "equally accurate but partial accounts." This, in the torpid spirit of the currently fashionable preoccupation with the so-called "Rashomon Effect," is pusillanimously to retreat from the foremost responsibility of all scholars and scientists which is, in respect of whatever problem is being investigated, to seek to ascertain the truth. As Sperry has recently put it, "the all-important ground rule" for a scientific or scholarly approach is "the demand for concordance with verified evidence."

In my preface to my book I specifically note that the evidence it contains about Samoa is not "an alternative ethnography," but is adduced with "the specific purpose" of testing Mead's classing of Samoa as a "negative instance." Thus, when Mead, in support of her depiction of the "unaggressiveness" of the Samoans, states, without qualification, that in warfare in former times in Manu'a, the "casualties were low" (with "only one or two individuals" being killed), I refute this by showing that, on the contrary, warfare in Manu'a, as elsewhere in Samoa, commonly resulted in heavy loss of life. For example, in a war in Manu'a in the second half of the nineteenth century, for which verified evidence is available, 55 men were killed, this being, in comparative terms, a very severe rate of loss, representing 11.7 percent of the adult male population of Manu'a at this period. (Mead's error in this matter is, I would add, understandable, for she at no time made a study of the primary sources on Samoan history.) It is in these terms then that my refutation of Mead's account of Samoa proceeds.
To assert, in this situation, as has Lieber, that Mead's demonstrably erroneous statements and my decisive refutation of them are "equally accurate" is, I submit, to reduce anthropology to a cognitive morass, and make it an object of outright ridicule among rational men and women. What more can one say? Only that rage is a wind that blows out the lamp of the mind.

In November, 1964, after I had had a long private conversation with Dr. Mead, in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, about the conclusions she reached in Samoa, I wrote to her as follows:

"It is plain to me that our conclusions about the realities of adolescent and sexual behavior in Samoa are fundamentally at variance. For my part I propose (as in the past) to proceed with my researches with as meticulous an objectivity as I can muster. This, I would suppose, is going to lead to the publication of conclusions different from those reached by you, but I would very much hope that, however we may disagree, there should be no bad feeling between us. You have my assurance that I shall strive towards this end."

Dr. Mead replied, in a letter dated New York, December 2, 1964, that ended with the exemplary words "...what is important is the work." In our subsequent correspondence, which extended from 1964 to 1978, Dr. Mead continued to behave in this exemplary manner. In a letter in the New York Times of February 13, 1983, Mary Catherine Bateson has observed that although her mother "was vehement in defense of her views, she did not descend to 'the clangorous exchange of insult' precisely because she believed that anthropology was evolving in her lifetime toward an increasingly exact science and that science is everywhere the cumulative work of many minds."

In my judgment it is precisely because Margaret Mead held these views, and because she grappled, throughout her life, with anthropological problems of fundamental importance that she is assured an honored and secure place in the history of anthropology. I would add that during my recent visit to the U.S.A. (contrary to Lieber’s aspersions), I sought, at every available opportunity, to convey this estimate of Dr. Mead’s significance to the audiences to whom I spoke.

The making of mistakes is a commonplace in science, as, for example, Darwin’s "blunder" (as he called it) over the Parallel Roads of Glen Roy, Freud’s egregious error over sexual seduction in early childhood, and Einstein’s "blunder" (as he also called it) over his "cosmological constant." It is surely beyond question, however, that if science and scholarship are, in Francis Bacon’s words, to "turn upon the poles of truth," there can, within them, be no toleration of demonstrated error. And, this being so, I am in whole-hearted agreement with the stirring words Franz Boas (who I greatly admire) wrote in his diary on December 23, 1883, while exploring Baffin Land: "All that man can do for humanity is to further the truth, whether it be sweet or bitter."

Derek Freeman
Emeritus Professor of Anthropology
Research School of Pacific Studies
The Australian National University
Editor's Note: The following is a bibliography of the discussion of the Freeman-Mead controversy to date.


Cressman, Luther S.: How fragile the thin veneer of tolerance... *The Sunday Oregonian* May 8, 1983.


Feinberg, Richard: Despite errors, Margaret Mead's was a better message. *Akron Beacon Journal* March 15, 1983.


Freeman, Derek: The case against Margaret Mead. (Extract of Freeman's book, printed in April 1983 issue of *Discover*).


Freeman, Derek: Letter to the science section, *New York Times* (date missing)


Howard, Jane: Angry storm over the South Seas of Margaret Mead. Smithsonian, April 1983.


Leo, John: Bursting the South Sea bubble: an anthropologist attacks Margaret Mead's research in Samoa. Time, February 14, 1983.


Lieber, Michael D.: Margaret Mead is the victim of media hype. Chicago Sun-Times April 4, 1983.


Nader, Laura: Review of: Margaret Mead and Samoa, Los Angeles Times, April 10, 1983.


Owen, Elizabeth: Samoa--an uproar over sex and violence in Margaret Mead's idyllic isles. LIFE, May 1983.


Storck, Dorothy: Coming of age with Mead. *Philadelphia Inquirer* (date missing)


Winch, Peter: Other points of view. (Makes passing reference to the Freeman-Mead controversy on allied topics.) *Times Literary Supplement* June 17, 1983.


V. BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES and RESEARCH NEWS

A. Recent Pacific dissertations--Australia:

The following is a listing of Australian National University dissertations (recently completed or in progress) dealing with Pacific material (submitted by Bob Tonkinson):

Wojciech Dabrowski: "The Impact of Missionary Activity in the Ruina Area, WHP" (in progress; Prehist & Anth, GS)

Don Gardner: "Cult Ritual and Social Organisation among the Mianmin" (1981; Prehist & Anth, GS)
Simon Harrison: "Stealing People's Names: Social Structure, Cosmology and Politics in a Sepik River Village" (1982; Prehist & Anth, GS)

Martha Macintyre: "Changing Paths: an Historical Ethnography of the Traders of Tubetube" (submitted 1983; RSPS)

Jadran Mimica: "Oinalyce: an Ethnography of the Ikwaye View of the Cosmos" (1981; Prehist & Anth, GS)

Jacob Simet: "Social Change among the Tolai with Particular Reference to Tabu" (in progress; Prehist & Anth, GS)

Wayne Warry: "Chuave Politics: Changing Patterns of Leadership in the New Guinea Highlands" (submitted 1983; RSPS)

James Weiner: "The Heart of the Pearlshell: the Mythological Dimensions of Foi Sociality" (submitted 1983; RSPS)

B. Recent Pacific dissertations--Canada:
The following are Canadian dissertations (recent or in progress) on Pacific materials (submitted by Dan Jorgensen); dissertations not listed in University Microfilms may be ordered from:

Canadian Theses Division
National Library of Canada
395 Wellington St.
Ottawa, Ontario
CANADA K1A 0N4

John Barker: "Mission and Church among the Maisin (Oro Province)" (in progress; University of British Columbia)

Rick Goulden: "Sources of Diversification among the Siasi Languages of Northwest New Britain" (in progress; University of Toronto)

Dan Jorgensen: "Taro and Arrows: Order, Entropy and Religion among the Telefolmin" (1981; University of British Columbia)

Violeta Lopez: "Peasants in the Hills: a Study of the Dynamics of Social Change among the Buhid Swidden Agriculturalists in the Philippines" (1981; University of Toronto)

Peter Lovell: "Children of Blood, Children of Shame: Creation and Procreation in Longana, Aoba, New Hebrides" (1981; McMaster)

William McKellin: "Kinship Ideology and Language Pragmatics among the Managalase of Papua New Guinea" (1980; University of Toronto)

Margaret Rodman: "Customary Illusions: Copra and Land Tenure in Longana, New Hebrides" (1981; McMaster)
Naomi Scaletta: "Life Cycle and Mortuary Rites among the Bariai of West New Britain" (in progress; McMaster)

William Thurston: "A Comparative Study of Anem and Lusi (Languages of West New Britain)" (1980; University of Toronto)

Dan Vachon: "Ideology and Social Structure of the Pitjantjara" (in progress; University of Toronto)

Martin Zelenietz: "After the Despot: Changing Patterns of Leadership and Social Control in Kilenge, West New Britain" (1980; McMaster)

C. Recent Pacific dissertations--USA:
   The dissertations listed below are now in University Microfilms' latest catalogue:
   

   Diane Losche: "Male and Female in Abelam Society: Opposition and Complementarity". (1982; Columbia)

D. Dangerous Words: Language and Politics in the Pacific will be published next spring by New York University Press. The volume, edited by Don Brenneis and Fred Myers, consists primarily of papers given at the 1981 ASAO symposium on "Language and Politics in the Pacific". Contributors include: Jane Monnig Atkinson, Don Brenneis, Sandra Duranti, Deborah Gewertz, Rena Lederman, George Marcus, Bill McKellin, Fred Myers, Michelle Rosaldo, and Annette Weiner.

E. Melanesia: Beyond Diversity, edited by Ron May and Hank Nelson, is a two volume publication of the Research School of Pacific Studies at Australian National University. Australian price is A$20.00 (North American price not yet set, but will be available from Publishers Distribution Center, Box C831, Rutherford, NJ 07070). The collection of more than forty essays deals with topics including trade, prehistory, the colonial impact, development and social change from a number of disciplinary perspectives.

F. A symposium on "Dreams and Altered States: Aspects of Other Realities in Melanesia" was held by the Research Centre for South West Pacific Studies at La Trobe University, 21 to 23 May, 1983. Papers on dreams and visions were presented by a number of participants including: Ann Chowning, Wendy Flannery, Sibona Kopi, Peter Lawrence, Martha MacIntyre, Nich Modjeska, Marie Reay, Inge Riebe, Dawn Ryan, Peter Sack, Michele Stephen, Robert Tonkinson, Garry Trompf, James Weiner, and Michael Young. For further information, write:
G. An interdisciplinary symposium on "Mobility, Identity and Policy in the Island Pacific" was held at the Pacific Science Congress in Dunedin, New Zealand (February 2-8, 1983), convened by Murray Chapman of the Commission on Population Geography of the International Geographical Union. The programme consisted of commentary on and intensive discussion about 21 papers addressing three broad categories of topic and author: the conceptual and disciplinary issues of identity and mobility, considered by international scholars; reports on the meaning of some of these ideas for Pacific research by island and expatriate scholars; comments on the practical implications by island planners and local administrators. For further information, write:

Professor Murray Chapman
Convenor--Mobility, Identity, Policy
Centre ORSTOM de Nouméa
P.O. Box A5
Nouméa Cedex
New Caledonia

H. Paul Dahlquist writes that a number of Japanese anthropologists have ongoing research projects in Micronesia and other areas of Oceania, but few North American anthropologists know much about their work. There is a Japanese equivalent of ASAO--The Japanese Society for Oceanic Studies--and it publishes a newsletter in Japanese. Any ASAO member who is interested in finding out more about the JSOS could write to:

The Secretary
Masanori Yoshioka
Dept. of Sociology & Social Anthropology
Tokyo Metropolitan University
1-1-1 Yakumo Meguro-ku
Tokyo
Japan

Paul has been spreading word about ASAO in Japan and is hopeful that some Japanese scholars will attend the Molokai meetings. (See also the announcement concerning his proposal for an informal session elsewhere in this issue.)

I. On the intellectual history of ASAO:
Mac Marshall writes that "a number of us are interested in the intellectual history of ASAO. As one way of assessing the impact the organization has had on Pacific studies, a project is underway to assemble a list of all publications that had their genesis as papers presented at ASAO annual meetings. Examples of this
would be papers you have written originally for an ASAO session which you subsequently revised and published in a professional journal or book outside the ASAO Monograph Series. Please take a minute and type up a list of any of your publications that fit this description and send it to:

Mac Marshall  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Iowa  
Iowa City, IA  
USA 52242

Once the list is assembled it will be made available to interested members. In connection with this same project, we are trying to assemble a full listing of all reviews of ASAO Monographs and Special Publications. The list as we know it so far is given below. If you are aware of any reviews not included in this list, please send the pertinent information to Mac Marshall at the above address (or, better yet, send a xerox of the review with citation).

**REVIEWS OF ASAO MONOGRAPHS**

**No. 1: Adoption in Eastern Oceania, Vern Carroll, ed.**

**No. 2: Land Tenure in Oceania, Henry P. Lundsgaarde, ed.**

**No. 3: Pacific Atoll Populations, Vern Carroll, ed.**

**No. 4: Transactions in Kinship, Ivan Brady, ed.**

**No. 5: Exiles and Migrants in Oceania, Michael D. Lieber, ed.**
No. 6: Mission, Church and Sect in Oceania, James Boutilier, Daniel Hughes, and Sharon Tiffany, eds.

No. 7: The Pacification of Melanesia, Margaret Rodman and Matthew Cooper, eds.

No. 8: Siblingship in Oceania, Mac Marshall, ed.

No. 9: Middlemen and Brokers in Oceania, William Rodman and Dorothy Counts, eds.