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**JOURNAL**

**Vol. 20  
1988-1989**

The Lambda Alpha JOURNAL is published by the Lambda Alpha Anthropology Honors Society at Wichita State University. The LAMBDA ALPHA JOURNAL is partially funded by the Wichita State University Student Government Association.

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Dr. Lowell D. Holmes

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A WORD ABOUT MANUSCRIPTS

Lambda Alpha will consider manuscripts for publication in any field of Anthropology from faculty or students. Papers submitted for publication should be typed double-spaced on noncorrasable paper following the pattern established in AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST. All references to literature must be correctly documented with the author's name, date of publication, and the page number, e.g. (Smith 1969: 340). Manuscripts should be sent to:

The Editor  
LAMBDA ALPHA JOURNAL  
Department of Anthropology  
Wichita, Ks. 67208



WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY  
ALPHA CHAPTER

Lambda Alpha, the national honorary for anthropology was established by Professor Lowell D. Holmes at Wichita State University, in March of 1968. The anthropology department, newly separated from Sociology, was chaired by Holmes with a teaching staff of five. The department offered an undergraduate major in anthropology and a Master of Arts degree. Approximately half a dozen graduate degrees were awarded annually.

Alpha chapter of Kansas was founded with the following charter members, at least six of which have gone on for Ph.Ds in anthropology:

Harold N. Ottaway	Marilyn K. Moore
Lucretia D. Vickery	Howard Fries
Alice L. Brosius	Jerry Martin
Edward L. Greenamyre	Jo Ann Rosenthal
Frank V. Botteri	Jackson Carter
Charles L. Bole	Lonnie D. Halouska
Lyle R. James	Darrell L. Casteel
Sanford E. Swanson	Loring B. Smith
Mary Susan Colcher	Lowell D. Holmes
Karen J. Morse	Wayne Parris
Leland K. Blazer	Georgette Meredith
Nancy Alfonso	Karl Schlesier
Virginia A. Hawkey	Lester E. Bower
Ellen C. Rhoads	John McBride
Richard J. Ruppel	

The national constitution, logo and name, Lambda Alpha, evolved through interaction between the charter members and Professor Holmes. Darrell L. Casteel (now deceased) was elected national (and chapter) President and Mary Susan Colcher (now Professor of Anthropology at University of Oklahoma) was elected national Secretary. Professor Lowell D. Holmes functioned as Executive Secretary for several years until relieved of that position by Professor Charles R. Jenkins of Ball State University, in 1973.

While plans were made for the establishment of a journal to be titled The Lambda Alpha Journal of Man in 1968, the first issue did not appear until 1969,-, making the present volume a twenty year anniversary issue. During the period of its existence, the journal has been subsidized by and published at Wichita State University. The journal has published articles by faculty members at the various chapters, but has always reserved the majority of its space for student articles. While Holmes has remained Editor-in-

Chief since the beginning, a series of student editors at Wichita State University have been largely responsible for most of the editing and publication chores.

Lowell D. Holmes  
Faculty advisor

#### BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

The Alpha of Indiana chapter of Lambda Alpha at Ball State University was chartered July 9, 1968, less than three months after the founding of the national organization at Wichita State University and, hence, is the oldest affiliated chapter of the honorary. Charter members are undergraduates Lary Card, Nancy L. Fink, Steven Hobson, Pamela Lingemean, Charlene McCain and W. John Shrader, and anthropology faculty Elizabeth Glenn, B. K. Swartz, Jr. and Jack M. Whitehead. The first Faculty Sponsor was B. K. Swartz, Jr. and Nancy L. Fink was selected as Corresponding Secretary. Our constitution was approved by the Ball State University Student Senate and the Student Activities Committee on May 1, 1969. The first formal chapter officers, 1969-70 academic year, were Steven Fermi, President, and Colinette Walton, Secretary-treasurer.

Originally honorary activities coincided with the Anthropology Club and Lambda Alpha responsibilities were eventually taken over by Charles H. Wallace, a colleague who never became a member. Local club activities soon became dominant as both the local chapter and the national office became inactive. In September, 1973, the national administration of Lambda Alpha became detached from Wichita and Charles R. Jenkins became National Executive Secretary. with the ensuing reactivation Swartz asserted himself and an ongoing honorary program, independent of departmental social activities, was reinitiated and continues to the present.

The most notable social events in these early years, March, 1970, were (1) the Archaeology Laboratory sit-in by anthropology students that required confrontation by the Ball State University administration, and (2) the whisking away of lecture-touring Margaret Mead from Teachers College hosts for an informal late night seminar in some off-campus student house. At the Central States Anthropological Society meetings, April 22-24, 1970, a number of Lambda Alpha chapter representatives (including Alpha of Indiana) came together at Indiana University, Bloomington. I believe this is the only national meeting that has ever taken place. Protesters against academic elitism attempted to upset these proceedings.

The National Lambda Scholarship Award has been won twice by members of the Alpha of Indiana Chapter members, Kathleen Hinkle in 1979 and Sharon Dettmer in 1980. Competitors for the award from our chapter have been Pamela Quick in 1976, Michael Hipskind in 1978, Mark Rose (presently Associate Editor of Archaeology (AlA)) in 1981, Frank Burkett in 1982, Eugene Arnold in 1983, Diana Conover in 1984, Michael Lindeen in 1985 and Amy Johnson in 1987.

Articles published in the Journal of Man by members of the Alpha of Indiana chapter are "Civilization vs. Urbanism," B. K. Swartz, Jr. (1969), Vol. 1, No.1, pp. 25-29; "Human Evolution: An Alternative Model of Hominid Social Development," William M. Metz (1979), Vol. 11, No.1, pp. 78-97; "Disposal of the Dead Amongst the Naciremas," B. K. Swartz, Jr. (1979), Vol. 11, No. 2 pp. 1-12; and "The Midwestern Early Archaic and the Maumee River Archaeological Survey," James A. Mohow (1986-87), Vol. 18, pp. 63-72.

The Current total Lambda Alpha membership of the Alpha of Indiana Chapter is 71.

BOWIE STATE COLLEGE  
NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS SOCIETY FOR ANTHROPOLOGY

The Alpha Chapter of Maryland was established at Bowie State College, April 1969.

Anthropology has always been offered in a combined department with other related sciences.

From 1969 to the present, a small number of students have met the requirements and were admitted to the Lambda Alpha Honor Society for Anthropology.

The Chapter members motivate interest and high academic standards in Anthropology and related academic areas.

The Chapter participates each year in the "Honors Convocation" and encourages other students to become interested in Anthropology. The interdisciplinary nature of Anthropology appeals to the interest of students. Therefore, many students take Anthropology courses to satisfy their social sciences electives.

The student members of Lambda Alpha play a significant role in motivating interest in the study of Anthropology. The organization participates in sponsoring our academic student "Awards Day" and "Behavioral Science Day" here at the College. Likewise, the organization helps to select "speakers for various occasions here at the Campus. We also have participated in a "follow-up" program for graduates in Anthropology and related areas. The conclusion of the follow-up study has shown us that some of the graduates were in graduate schools studying for advanced degrees.

Training in Anthropology provides career opportunities, such as:

PROFESSORS, LAWYERS, DENTISTS, SOCIAL WORKERS, WELFARE AND POSTAL EMPLOYEES, RECREATION AND GOVERNMENT WORKERS, ARMY OFFICERS, COUNSELORS, PRINCIPALS OF ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS, SALESMEN, POLICE OFFICERS, MINISTERS, ASSISTANT MANAGERS OF COMPANIES, TEACHERS, PAROLE OFFICERS, PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATORS SOCIAL SCIENCE ANALYSTS, BANK AND NASA EMPLOYEES, RESEARCH ANALYSTS, PARAMEDICS, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS PERSONNEL, NURSES, LIBRARY TECHNICIANS, TEACHERS AT THE U.S. ARMY BASES, HERE AND ABROAD, A MAYOR OF A LARGE CITY, REAL ESTATE BROKERS, PUBLIC RELATIONS PERSONNEL, INSURANCE AGENTS, AND VARIOUS LEVELS OF PERSONNEL WORKERS, MUSEUM CURATORS, AND HUMAN RELATIONS DIRECTORS.

The variety of training resulting from the study and interest in anthropology is almost endless. So much so that some of our faCULTy membership here at Bowie State in other closely related areas have become members of the LAMBDA ALPHA.

In summary, The Lambda Alpha Honor Society helps to:

1. Encourage and motivate excellent scholarship in Anthropology.
2. Increase understanding and acceptance of all people, regardless of their differences in physical and cultural characteristics.

Ulysses S. Young, Ph.D.  
Sponsor, Lambda Alpha

COLGATE UNIVERSITY  
HAMILTON, NEW YORK 13346-1398

Since our chapter of Lambda Alpha is only in its second year here at Colgate University, I'm afraid we don't have much "history" to tell. The chapter, Beta of New York, received its charter in October of 1986, with thirteen charter members inducted. The first group of officers took responsibility for forming a general Sociology/Anthropology Club for all majors and minors in our department. They were successful in getting this organization recognized and funded by the Colgate Student Senate. This spring we are planning to hold our second annual pot-luck dinner and induction ceremony.

In recognition of the twentieth anniversary of the organization and its journal, might we make a suggestion? This would be to change the title of Lambda Alpha's journal to reflect the more inclusive language which is now-generally in use in our discipline. Many of our students have commented that the "Journal of Man" seems strangely old-fashioned and even mildly offensive to those who believe that the masculine form of the word does not represent universal human experience. Some suggestions made by our chapter members were, The Journal of Human Culture, The Journal of Society and Culture, or Lambda Alpha Journal. We hope that these suggestions or other possible titles will be seriously considered.

Mary H. Moran  
Assistant Professor  
and Faculty Advisor,  
Lambda Alpha

LAMBDA ALPHA  
BETA CHAPTER OF NORTH CAROLINA  
EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

The history of Beta Chapter of North Carolina at East Carolina University begins in the spring of 1975, when Dr. Blanche Watrous, the founder of anthropology at ECU, began contacts with Dr. Charles Jenkins, then National Executive

Secretary of Lambda Alpha. The first faculty advisor to the chapter, Dr. Ronald Haak, completed the application process in the summer of 1975, and, in August, 1975, Beta Chapter was approved for national affiliation. The original chapter members in March 1976 included five faculty members, five graduate students, four undergraduates, and three recent alumni. Successive faculty advisors have been Ronald Haak, Milton Altshuler, Greysolynne Fox, Holly Mathews, and Robert Bunger.

The activities which have become traditions for Beta Chapter include sponsoring campus visits and lectures of anthropologists; the annual ethnic foods dinner is held at the end of the fall semester at faculty member's home. "Ethnic" foods in the widest sense of the term have resulted in some strange dishes over the years, but somehow it always comes together as a memorable meal. This is also the occasion to introduce Lambda Alpha to a wide range of new majors and other prospective members.

The annual retreat is normally held in April at the University of North Carolina Estuarine Laboratory, a fisheries research station near Aurora, North Carolina. This is an opportunity over a two-day period for continuous interaction between students and faculty in both planned and spontaneous activities. Graduate school, field research, and other career decisions are always major topics of discussion. A special tradition at this time is the "secret initiation," actually a parody of the more serious initiations of fraternities and other campus organizations, which provides an opportunity for our anthropologists to reinforce their own identities.

In spite of the normal turnover of students, and many changes in the faculty as well over the years, Beta Chapter has achieved a strong identity within the department and the University as well as a definite tradition of continuity in outlook and activities.

Robert L. Bunger, Ph.D.  
Faculty Advisor

LAMBDA ALPHA HONORARY SOCIETY  
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
NOTRE DAME, IN 46556

Beta Chapter of Indiana was chartered by the National Office of Lambda Alpha in Spring, 1981. Seven students were inducted into the society as charter members that spring. Since its beginning, Beta Chapter has inducted fifty-seven undergraduate majors into the Society. Plans are now under way to induct seven new members in April, bringing our total to sixty-four by the May commencement date.

Of seven initial members, two of them went on to do graduate work in Anthropology. One of these, Patricia Clay, the first secretary-treasurer of the chapter, enrolled in the program at Indiana University in Bloomington. Currently she is putting final touches for her dissertation research in Venezuela. Patricia plans to be on the Notre Dame campus in April to present a talk on her research. At that time she will induct new members into the Society. Eric Vanek, currently engaged in graduate study in anthropology at Iowa State University, was also among the charter group. Several other members of Beta Chapter over the years have also added to the ranks of those going on for graduate study in anthropology. This year alone, three members have indicated their intentions to pursue anthropology as their chosen careers.

Although Beta is a relatively young chapter, it has developed a custom which has persisted from its beginning to the present. That custom expresses itself by inducting new members after a dinner meeting in any of the several ethnic restaurants in the immediate area. The point is to seek for a new food taste and a different setting each year. This practice is enjoyed not only by members, but by majors other than inductees and departmental faculty members as well.

The pattern has been for most new members to be inducted as seniors only a month or two prior to graduation. This pattern gives evidence of undergoing change, however, since for the first time ever new members were inducted in fall semester, 1988. With earlier membership possible, it is hoped that the chapter will serve as a complement to the Anthropology Club, open to all students of anthropology, by sponsoring speakers, field excursions and events of social nature of interest to university age students.

Professor Carl W. O'Neil  
Faculty sponsor

NEW YORK ALPHA OF LAMBDA ALPHA  
STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
POTSDAM, NEW YORK

The charter of this chapter, the first in New York state, was granted on May 20, 1974. The on-campus installation of the chapter and the initiation of the first members took place on April 4, 1975. The president of the college and the dean of liberal studies were in attendance at this meeting. Thirteen original members were initiated including two faculty members, Dr. William Chmurny, Chairman of the Anthropology Department, and Dr. Charles Weaver, Associate Professor of Anthropology.

Dr. Chmurny served as faculty sponsor for the chapter until he left potsdam State at the end of the 1977-78 academic year. Then Dr. Weaver became faculty sponsor, and served as such until 1987-88, when Dr. John Omohundro became faculty sponsor. Dr. Omohundro and Dr. Thomas Stone were inducted as members in 1979, and Dr. Stone served as acting sponsor in 1982.

There has been a group of new members ranging in size from five to nineteen inducted every year since the chapter was installed. In the early years, the induction tended to be a small gathering, comprising continuing members, faculty and inductees. More recently we have had a speaker for each induction, including: friends and family of the inductees, other anthropology students, and others interested in anthropology and/or the speaker's subject. We believe this gradual development has given Lambda Alpha more and more positive visibility on campus.

THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
BURLINGTON, VT 05405-0168

We are one of those chapters with very little history, since we just joined the organization last year. Nevertheless, I will pass along what little there is, both for your information and to acknowledge that we are still interested in Lambda Alpha and plan to continue our association with it.

Last spring, our two outstanding juniors were nominated - Lori Boulanger and Andrea Hirniak. Lori was just selected

as the Outstanding Anthropology Senior for 1988, and is currently making plans to pursue a professional career in graduate school in the Fall. Andrea, who is also graduating, is less sure of her future goals, but hopes to attend grad school at some point, perhaps after a couple of years of exploring options. Unfortunately, we did not have any students this spring whose accomplishments clearly merited nomination to Lambda Alpha, although, some of the younger students appear to have potential and may develop into solid scholars. Thus, I have great hope for next year.

Marjory W. Power  
Associate Professor  
and Chairperson

## CULTURE SHOCK IN PARADISE

Ellen Rhoads Holmes  
Wichita State University

When I became a charter member of Alpha chapter of Lambda Alpha in 1968, I was nearing the completion of my undergraduate degree in anthropology. Fieldwork was something I knew about only through reading and from hearing about the experiences of my professors; personal participation in such an adventure seemed an unlikely possibility. As a 32-year old widow with two young children, I had given little serious thought to becoming a "real" anthropologist. With a little encouragement from some of my professors, I made the decision to enter graduate school to work toward a Masters of Arts degree. By the time I accomplished this goal, I was clearly committed to anthropology as the only profession for me. And so at the age of 36 I entered a Ph.D. program.

I negotiated the course work easily enough, but there remained the question of fieldwork. My interests were in Polynesia, but my children had now turned into teenagers and the prospect of venturing to the South Seas seemed complex, if not impossible. A non-anthropological but academic job opportunity presented itself, so I began working and waited as the teenagers grew older and somewhat more responsible. And then a colleague/friend (who was not then but is now my husband) received a grant to return to Samoa to assess the

impact of modernization on the aged in that society, and there was money to take a research associate along-me.

By this time my children were old enough so they could be left at home and this did not make them unhappy. Since I had a faculty position in a gerontology program, the research topic pleased the director, and the fieldwork opportunity would allow me to complete my degree and thereby improve my job security. So here I was: going to American Samoa, a territory of the United States for many years, where most people speak English, where the total culture has been well-documented, where health risks are few and the climate pleasant, and in the company of a seasoned fieldworker, well-acquainted with Samoans and their culture. What could be more ideal?

In retrospect, it really was ideal. I, however, did not respond ideally. Culture shock set in soon and continued or recurred throughout much of the research period. It was not that I did not expect culture shock; like all students of anthropology I had read and heard much about this phenomenon. Perhaps it is a bit like having a child: the impending arrival is known well in advance and occupies much of the prospective parents' thoughts, but they may not think about what their life will be like after the birth of the child. Anticipating culture shock may not include the realistic consideration of a long-term adjustment process.

I was aware of a variety of "primitive" field conditions, but my field setting was hardly in that category. Upon arrival I found the islands of American Samoa in the process of modernizing American-style, and this included electricity, paved roads (at least on the main island), telephones, an air-conditioned hotel, restaurants, a bank, supermarkets, busses for local travel, regular air service to nearby islands and major South Sea ports, and a hospital staffed by U.S. public health doctors. How much adjustment could be required in such a place? This was my naive view upon entering the field, and therein lay a major problem.

The tropical paradise I expected was in many ways just that spectacular scenery, lush vegetation, colorful flowers and houses. On the other hand, in the government center in the areas away from the main road there was a dense jumble of houses, some quite dilapidated, rocky streets and paths, water pipes running above ground, perennial mud puddles -- in all, a depressing site in comparison with the outlying villages.

My more traumatic experiences started at the bank, which was a branch of the Bank of Hawaii. We thought it wise to establish accounts for the time we were to be there. It was a very modern-looking bank and the personnel were very pleasant. After a lengthy wait, someone helped us with the necessary paperwork. We needed cash immediately, but it was bank policy to allow no withdrawals until checks deposited into the account initially had cleared, a process that would take about two weeks since we were 6,000 miles from home.

After talking with a series of bank officials and explaining our problem, we finally succeeded in getting the necessary money. As we walked out of the bank two hours after entering, we resolved that on future research trips to this country, we would use a cashier's check to establish an account.

An even more disconcerting event for me occurred the day we picked up our personalized checks. Imprinted on the checks with the lovely South Sea background design was my name with the wrong middle initial. When I expressed concern about the inaccuracy to the young Samoan woman she simply responded, "You can just sign them that way!" It now seems very funny to me, but at the time I was overwhelmed. What kind of system was this? My solution was to make the correction on each check and to use the checks only for withdrawing cash from the bank.

This incident was soon followed by a surprise of a different sort. Because our research plan involved moving to several different locales within the islands, we spent our time on the main island (Tutuila) in the hotel, which proved to be a very nice facility. In addition to several large two-story structures, there were also some small two-unit buildings located along the waterfront and designed like traditional Samoan fale (houses) but more enclosed. We rented one of these, and all went well for the first few weeks. Then one night I went into the bathroom and confronted a rat peeking from behind the toilet. Neither the rat nor I knew which way to go, but I made a strange

sound of fright and the rat decided to run out of the bathroom, across the bedroom, up the drapes, and then disappeared. I slept very little the rest of that night. Then within a day or so one of the resident geckos (small lizards that help control the mosquito population) lost its footing and fell off the ceiling onto my bed. Things were definitely closing in on me and an entry in my notebook reflected my feelings:

There is this problem that might seem ridiculous to those who have done fieldwork under real primitive (in the sense of undeveloped) conditions. One would expect things to be easy -- even soft -- in a somewhat Americanized society, living in a hotel, and with access to a number of modern conveniences. What is true is that while there is all this stuff, nothing works very well. The phone book is two years old and half the pages are missing, and the phone system itself is incredible. It is a rare to make contact with the person you wish to reach by phone. The hotel is o.k. if you don't mind rats and lizards that persist in coming inside. The ground transportation is o.k. considering there's no place we need to go. You try to send a cable thinking it will be easier than calling overseas and the message is mis-typed. Perhaps it's easier to adjust to a field situation where there is no expectation of real modernization as we understand it. Then anything you find is a bonus. When you know the conveniences are there, there's a tendency to expect things to work. And when they don't it is doubly frustrating -- especially when the humidity is about 90%.

It was about this time that my co-worker remarked that just possibly I was too old to be doing fieldwork in a foreign setting for the first time. Was he right? Was this my midlife crisis? I was 41 at the time, and perhaps I was less flexible than a younger person might have been. Perhaps I felt that it was more important to be successful -- to

prove that I could succeed as well as a younger student. In any case, it was obvious that I was suffering from culture shock complete with depression, anger and periodic tears.

Interisland transportation was another source of trauma. The local airline provided service to the Manu'a island group which was about 60 miles east of Tutuila, and also to Western Samoa. The difference was that service to Western Samoa was much more predictable since it was classified as international travel. Within the American territory, however, there was no requirement for adherence to a strict schedule. Part of our research was to be done on Ta'u island in Manu'a, and while we could go by either boat or plane, we had decided to fly. Getting information about when and where one purchased tickets was somewhat difficult, but we eventually asked enough questions of enough people to solve the problem.

The day of our planned departure for Ta'u the flight was cancelled because of bad weather, and the next day the weather was equally dismal rainy and completely overcast. Since there was no weather station on Ta'u, the pilot had to guess about actual conditions. In midafternoon the decision was made to make a flight. He would land if possible, and return to Tutuila if not. The plane was a twin-engine, fixed landing-gear craft and weight was a critical issue. Passengers and baggage are weighed and adjustments made in either passenger load or baggage as needed. On this day the cargo included a large quantity of melting ice cream destined for the upcoming White Sunday celebration a few

days later. As the skinniest passenger, I was directed to the seat in the tail section of the plane, behind several obese Samoan women and children. My colleague, as you might have guessed, was given the co-pilot's seat. From my vantage point, I had a clear view of all the rusting rivets on the plane's wings, which, along with the weather was not reassuring.

The flight was not such a long one, although it seemed so to me. We were able to make a scheduled stop on the Manu'an island of Ofu, which had a gravel landing strip. The remainder of the flight to Ta'u took only a few minutes. After a pass over the grass landing strip, with coconut trees at one end and a cliff dropping off to the ocean at the other, the pilot decided to land. Regardless of wind direction the landing at this field always had to be made toward the trees. I could hardly believe my reaction as we approached the ground; I had found the trip so unnerving that the prospect of being back on land again outweighed any other consideration, and I found myself thinking, "So we hit the trees, how bad can that be?" Several weeks later as we watched the plane land on the day we planned to return to Tutuila, it really did lose brake power and run into the bush. No one was injured, but the damage to the plane effectively cancelled air service between Manu'a and Tutuila for a time. For us this meant remaining a few days longer and returning by boat, giving me the opportunity to

experience yet another form of transportation available to the natives of American Samoa.

There was no dock on Talu so passengers had to be ferried out through the reef in a surf boat to the vessel which would transport us to Tutuila. This process requires that one wade out into the water to a depth of two feet or so carrying shoes and other belongings and somehow hoist oneself into the surf boat. Fortunately I was unceremoniously but securely carried and lifted into the boat with little effort by a Samoan man. The islanders rowed out to the larger boat, where the wave action and lack of a long enough boarding ladder presented another real challenge. One of our traveling companions was an American biologist who had also been conducting research on the island. With him was a live snake he had found a few days earlier; it was in a cloth bag which he placed on the deck for the trip. Quite literally the very thought of snakes has always given me a creepy feeling, and here I was sitting on a box with a snake about a foot away for the entire six hour trip. I knew I had reached a new phase of adjustment to fieldwork.

A critical event had occurred during our work in Ta'u, which probably served in some sense as a turning point in my experiences with culture shock. We were living right next door to the dispensary, a nice-looking relatively new building. It was normally staffed by a local Samoan licensed practical nurse, but a doctor completing a residency in Samoa accompanied the regular doctor on his

trip to Ta'u during our stay here, and we had an opportunity to visit with him at length. We had already learned from the palagi (white) school teachers that medical care was very limited on Ta'u and the doctor further confirmed that. He told us that the radio at the dispensary did not work -- this was the means by which they would normally contact Ofu if the interisland boat needed to be recalled after leaving Talu. He also indicated that the lab equipment was insufficient for any diagnostic tests -- there was a microscope, covered with cobwebs and with no slides to use with it. Some of the instruments appeared not to have been unwrapped in a long time, if ever. Our friends had told us that although a doctor is supposed to be there part of each month, that had not been the case during the past year. Seriously ill people are also supposed to be flown to the hospital on Tutuila at government expense, but this assumes that the plane is operational, the weather is good, etc. I was quite distressed about this situation and got very angry.

After writing my reactions into my notebook, I discussed them (complete with tearful outbursts) with my colleague. He suggested that perhaps it was not as bad in the local people's view as it appeared to me. He also expressed a feeling that I was fighting the system that I was coming face to face with the force of culture and that the sooner I could come to terms with the variance in my view and theirs, the sooner I would be on my way. He reminded me of the fatalistic world view of Samoans, of which I had already seen some evidence.

As I thought about this, I began to see that my reaction was based on an assumption that, because the American government had been in control of these islands for so long and had deliberately introduced most of the changes that had occurred, that the people had obviously been misled about the quality of services available to them. Presumably the changes were to improve the conditions in the country and yet nothing worked quite as it should, if at all. I was upset and I thought the Samoan people had every reason to be upset also. Quite clearly I was also assuming that the Samoan people had the same expectations of the system that I did. And somewhere in the back of my mind was a conflict about saying, "These people just don't care," which suggested to me that I was being ethnocentric.

I had to admit that I had never seen people for whom "God's will" was a prevailing explanation for almost anything that occurred. It was certainly borne out in some of their actions, e.g., a woman who had an eye infection but would not walk the short distance to the dispensary to see the doctor, and therefore lost the sight in her eye. Or there was the young man who stepped on a nail and was told he should go to the hospital in Tutuila for further treatment, but who refused to board the plane when it arrived. When he did decide to go, it was too late and he died in the hospital shortly thereafter. Such occurrences may well attest to lack of faith in a foreign medical system, and in the boy's case, may seem to provide evidence

that it does not work anyway. I was having a struggle with being relativistic, and yet that was what was required.

As for the banking system lots of Samoans patronize the bank, but many used it primarily for cashing paychecks or remittance checks from relatives overseas. Savings accounts have not traditionally been popular in that society because the support patterns of the Samoan extended family almost guarantee that anyone with a nest egg will be expected to share it with relatives. This monetary institution probably did not play the part in their lives that it normally did in mine.

It would not be fair to suggest that Samoans had no expectations of foreign technological developments in their country, but that they no doubt had very different expectations than I did at that time. And given the way things worked, they were at an advantage. Once I began to accept unpredictability in certain situations as given, I was less anguished about life in the islands and consequently happier for the remainder of our fieldwork.

Most of the last six weeks of the research project were spent in Western Samoa, an independent country but culturally very similar to American Samoa. In spite of its larger population and greater land mass, this country is much poorer economically than the American territory and in the late 1970's, remained much more traditional in many respects. There were adjustments to be made in moving there, but I found it easier making the transition. I approached it more as a foreign country and had fewer expectations -- I was more

pen-minded, so to speak -- than when I arrived in American Samoa. Whether it was the open-minded stance or the fact that I had finally overcome my culture shock that explained the difference, I do not know. And I still do not know if, or how much, my being an older novice at fieldwork affected my response. But I have two conclusions about my own experience with culture shock: (1) I doubt that anyone of us can convey adequately to an inexperienced fieldworker the formula for preventing culture shock; and (2) that, at least in my case, the remedy for this malady was learning to "go with the flow" of the culture, and perhaps that's one of the purposes of fieldwork after all.

By the time I returned home I was convinced that my field experiences had taught me so much about adaptation to change and about differences in what is considered important vs. trivial that nothing would perturb me in the future. But of course, one gets over that and has to readjust to one's own culture again, a process that not infrequently involves reverse culture shock!



ATTAINMENT OF HIGHER STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS  
BY NATURAL MEANS:  
NORTH AMERICA: THE VISION QUEST OF THE SIOUX  
INDIAN: TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION OF THE VEDIC TRADITION

Robert S. Milota  
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That solitary communion with the Unseen which was the highest expression of our religious life is partly described in the word hambeday, literally "mysterious feeling," which has been variously translated "fasting" and "dreaming." It may better be interpreted as "consciousness of the divine. (Eastman 1911:6).

This quote by a "civilized" Indian in the early twentieth century is a perfect expression of the vision quest, a practice, in its various forms used by the Indians of North America throughout their history. This "mysterious feeling" was often obtained by natural means. This was unlike the method used by their cousins in Central and South America, where hallucinogenic substances were often the medium to achieve this state of ecstasy, inner communion, altered awareness or whatever one may call this inner experience.

Throughout the world there exist numerous so-called shamanistic techniques and practices to achieve a glimpse into the "other world", or of an alternate reality or consciousness. The shaman would use this for healing; the individual for some insight, healing, or help in his life. The means to achieve this are either natural or drug-induced.

Modern science has now shown what effects the various plants and herbs produced in one's nervous system to help

explain this unique experience called "ecstasy." The various Indian tribes in North America, however, have described incredible visions and miraculous healings without ingesting any substances, but through fasting, dancing, singing, bodily purification, and vision quests. Let us use Charles Eastman's description once again for a clear example:

Having first prepared himself by means of the purifying vapor-bath, and cast off as far as possible all human or fleshy influences, the young man sought out the noblest height, the most commanding summit in all the surrounding region. At the solemn hour of sunrise or sunset he took up his position . . . Sometimes he would chant a hymn without words, or offer the ceremonial "filled pipe." In this holy trance or ecstasy the Indian mystic found his highest happiness and the motive power of his existence. (Ibid: 7-8).

What is happening to produce such visions and profound changes? The Western mind often dismisses such experiences as illusions, hypnosis, or hallucination. In the last twenty years however, scientific research has clearly demonstrated that unique physiological changes occur when one is in a state of meditation. The most thoroughly investigated form of meditation is the Transcendental Meditation Program, introduced to the West by the Indian monk, His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Despite the stigma attached by Hollywood, the Beatles, and the sensationalist press, the experience and the results produced by the practice of Maharishi's meditation (commonly called "TM") are known to be valid and a valuable tool to help an individual gain clear insights into his or her "self". And most impressive is the research showing how regular practice of TM reduces stress and actually fine-

tunes one's nervous system.

Yet one may ask, how does this relate to the North American Indians and their ways of gaining inner experience? Both are natural means to alter one's perception or consciousness. By describing the vision quest of the Sioux Indians--the methods and the results--one will see how it has changed the seeker's life, whether for the medicine man, or individual Indian desiring to help himself and his people. Then by analyzing Maharishi's philosophy and techniques (as handed down from the ancient Vedic tradition of India) it will be shown that the mind has the means to turn within.

In other words, the mind is able to transcend so-called ordinary or gross perception to come to the Sacred or inner perception by natural means, and furthermore, this experience is an actual change in one's consciousness--hence the real, lasting results. These results are those revealed by American Indians such as Black Elk and Lamé Deer, or, by the thousands of people today who enjoy increased "ecstasy" in their lives' by the regular practice of meditation.

The shaman, whether in Asia, America, Australia or anywhere he is found, is usually described as a unique individual who has obtained, through severe illness, initiation, or vision, a means to transcend to another reality. In that reality the shaman often gains healing powers, abilities to find lost objects and souls, or insights into the future. His vehicle to reach this other reality is usually drugs (accompanied with various rituals).

In contrast, the Sioux vision quest can be undertaken by any member of the tribe (usually males only); however, it is a given for the Sioux shaman or medicine man. It is not a drug-induced vision, but a result of fasting, purification, and the solitary "wait" alongside nature with the sacred pipe.

TM comes from the Vedic tradition that is being revived by Maharishi, and this tradition has shamanistic overtones of ecstasy, transformation, etc., but it is available for anyone who is willing to learn the technique. The Sioux vision quest and TM technique are not exclusive and perhaps show the way for the "shaman" within every person to be revealed, so that one may heal oneself--the ultimate cure.

It has been said that through time the Vedic tradition was distorted and lost (Maharishi 1967: 3). Drug-induced states were used to attempt to mimic the natural ability to transcend. Likewise, this loss may have extended to the American Indian whose roots are in Asia. Yet for some reason the numerous Plains tribes employed a natural way to gain inner experiences, unlike their cousins in the south.

Before describing in more detail the Sioux vision quest, perhaps it would be useful to list nine categories of "mystical" experiences that have been obtained from a survey of literature on the subject. These were used originally to help understand drug-induced experiences:

- (1) Unity. This can occur in either of two forms, internal or external.
- (2) Objectivity and Reality. Insights gained are intuitively felt to be of a more fundamental form of reality than either the

- phenomena of everyday consciousness or the most vivid of dreams or hallucinations.
- (3) Transcendence of Space and Time.
  - (4) Sense of Sacredness.
  - (5) Deeply-felt positive Mood. This refers to feelings of joy, blessedness, and peace.
  - (6) Paradoxicality. This reflects the manner in which significant aspects of the experience are felt by the experiencer to be true in spite of the fact that they violate the laws of Aristotelian logic.
  - (7) Alleged Ineffability. Often suggested due to the inadequacy of language which in turn arises out of the paradoxicality and uniqueness of the experience.
  - (8) Transiency.
  - (9) positive Changes in Attitude and/or Behavior. (Campbell 1974: 122-125).

Most of these categories can be recognized in the vision quest experience. With TM, the findings are the same, but with one significant difference; all of the experiences have been supported by intensive scientific research with one "exception"--the transient quality. These states become progressively more permanent (such as feelings of unity and sacredness) with regular practice of TM.

According to the Sioux, the purpose of the vision quest is not only to find a vision, but also to find in this vision help for yourself to lead a better life and help for other people also. (Brown 1974: 45). Usually with help and guidance from a holy man, the seeker goes to a hill, then remains alone to seek his vision in the silence of nature. The Sioux stress humility when going on a quest.

His body was naked, clothed only in a breechcloth, and he wore a furred buffalo robe around his shoulders; his hair was unbraided; and he cried for the vision, tears streaming down his face. All these outward signs. . . were symbols of humility. The vision seeker made himself

pitiable so that the wakan beings would be moved to hear his prayers. (DeMallie & Parks 1987: 35).

The preparation for the vision quest is probably an important factor in the vision seeker's success: his ability to be alone, to withstand the hardships on the hill, and to gain the vision. Mental and emotional conditioning were necessary prerequisites and thus a holy man aided the seeker, especially if it was one's first quest. For the Sioux, this often occurred between ages 11 and 13. (Mails 1978: 61) • The sweat lodge ceremony, usually preceded by fasting, was a purification rite. This enabled the seeker to have a clearer perception and stronger prayers when later alone on the hill. The ceremony is very sacred:

Everything about it has deep meaning, and it is up to the young man who attends this ceremony to purify himself . . . and to be extraordinarily alert and soak in all these meanings. Only thus can he clear his mind and heart of all earthly desires and thoughts, so his own being becomes a clear channel through which the breath of the spirit may blow (Brown 1974: 111).

The heat of the sweat lodge is very intense and very healing. The seeker is purified of physical impurities (this is a scientific fact) and thus mentally and emotionally; he also is freed of impurities. The mind and body are intimately connected, and in the sweat lodge we can see how this principle applies. The continuous singing in the sweat lodge contributes to the healing effect by producing a meditative state. The seeker, after the sweat lodge, can approach the hill and his quest in a clear and steady state of being: "All the vision quester's senses

were alert, waiting for the wakan beings to communicate with him" (DeMaillie & Parks 1987: 36) • In this state of awareness and with a complete feeling of humility one awaited the vision.

Lame Deer's biography begins with his vision quest at the age of 16. Left alone on a sacred hill by the medicine man for four days, he awaited a vision. The peace pipe is his special companion and a medium for meditation:

That smoke from the peace pipe, it goes straight up to the spirit world. But this is a two way thing. Power flows down to us through that smoke, through the pipe stem. You feel that power as you hold your pipe; it moves right into your body. (Deer & Erdoes 1972:2).

This pipe has a special history and abounds with symbols unique to the American Indian, - especially the Sioux. Lame Deer calls it their most sacred possession. It is the heart of all their ceremonies:

I knew that within this pipe were all the powers of nature, that within this pipe was me . . . when I smoked the pipe I was at the center of all things, giving myself to the Great Spirit . . . If I mingled my breath with the sacred smoke, I would also mingle it with the breath of every living creature on this earth (Ibid: 252).

On the hill he lost all sense of time and was asleep, yet wide awake (this is identical to the TM experience, verified as restful alertness, a fourth state of consciousness). Lame Deer describes a feeling within called a nagi which he explains as an essence, soul, or spirit, that one cannot see, feel, or taste (this is similar to what Maharishi calls "Being"). This he felt inside him: "Then I felt the power surge through me like a flood." (Ibid: 6) •

From that time on he knew he would become a medicine man and he wept with happiness.

Black Elk, in his narrative has similar experiences. He calls the vision quest crying for a vision:

Some people lament in order to ask some favor of the great spirit. .• But perhaps the most important reason for "lamenting" is that it helps us to realize our oneness with all things, to know that all things are our relatives; and then in behalf of all things we pray to Wakan-Tanka that He may give us knowledge of Him who is the source of all things, yet greater than all things (Brown 1971: 46).

Unity is a theme here, and throughout Sioux ritual it is experienced by the seeker. Lame Deer and Black Elk go on to describe their experience and how it affected their lives as medicine men. Most important is the continuous prayer for the people, "that they may live". This is the real goal of the seeker despite any personal needs he may have, for among the Sioux the community comes first and the community extends to all of God's creatures.

The vision received, especially in Black Elk's experience, was not only remembered for life, but often re-experienced. Black Elk's vision also gave him the power to heal sickness among his people. For others a vision did not come, but one only tried again until rewarded with the vision. Some visions were kept secret or shared with a holy man. If the vision was to help the people it was shared with everyone, usually by a special ceremony. Black Elk shared his vision (called the dog vision) to bring relief to his impoverished people. (Neihardt 1972: 157). Also,

individuals who had visions of the same power united together in societies. Therefore, the vision is valuable for the individual and the community. (DeMallie & Parks 1987: 42) •

The vision has a long term effect for one's whole life. Whether the vision occurred only once, or it was repeated, the seeker was changed. And, the seeker could go on a vision quest a number of times to help oneself or to help his people, as Black Elk did. A holy man sums this up best in Vison Brown's book:

But remember that you must constantly strengthen these powers and your humbleness and purity by daily being alert to watch and learn from everything you can observe about you- Whenever you feel yourself weakening go soon to a hilltop again and send your voices out with the Sacred Pipe to Wakan-Tanka • • if your heart is good and sincere as it has been on this vision search, the Great Ones will help you (Brown 1974: 131).

Lame Deer neatly sums up his peoples' feelings about the vision quest as opposed to the use of drugs (such as peyote), with these words:

But as I see it now, as I feel it, I want my visions to come out of my own juices, by my own effort - the hard, ancient way. I mistrust visions come by. swallowing something. The real insight, the great ecstasy does not come from this (Deer & Erdoes 1972: 206).

Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation also is an "ancient way". The purpose of this meditation is for individual fulfillment or "Cosmic Consciousness", but it too serves humanity:

Cosmic Consciousness is the state where a man lives in the service of the Divine. His thought, speech and action are guided by the divine will. He is an individual but he is a living instrument of God. Whatever he does serves the

cosmic life. He is by nature the most obedient servant of the Divine (Maharishi 1966: 99-100).

He then continues to show how to achieve this state through the regular practice of meditation. Pure Consciousness, Being, or the Unified Field (a term used by physicists) must be contacted, and he describes how this is accomplished through meditation. Our senses are limited in that they experience only the gross levels of the objects they perceive:

If we could develop our faculty of experience through any of the senses, or develop our ability to experience thought before it reaches the conscious level of the mind, and if this ability to experience thought could be so developed that it reached the source of thought, then having transcended the source, it would be possible to reach the transcendental state of pure Being. (Ibid: 51).

Sensory perceptions must come to an end before one reaches Being since the senses belong to the relative field of life. Therefore, whichever sense is used, one must reach the ultimate limit of that sense until one transcends and the experiencer is left alone, the sUbject with no object of experience. This is somewhat ineffable, yet research seems to show that the mind and body attain a state unlike the common states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping.

Unlike the sacred pipe or singing used by the Sioux, TM uses the medium of thought, starting with the sound quality of a particular sound called a mantra. Thousands are known. Mantras are derived from Sanskrit and mean a sound whose effects are known. Also, each is said to be a name of God. By using the right mantra and the technique properly, one

attains a unique experience of inner peace, positive feelings, oneness, and indescribable joy, often with a special sense of timelessness.

It is usually not as dramatic as the vision quest, but a gradual change occurs to bring the individual to a newer, more fulfilling state of consciousness. The hundreds of scientific experiments performed on meditators verify these inner and outer changes--all from a simple, natural process.

Before giving examples from research, let us look more deeply into the spiritual philosophy and goals of this technique. TM comes from the ancient tradition of the Vedas; the Bhagavad-Gita is a scripture containing the essence of that tradition. In his commentary on the Gita, instead of using terms such as transcending the senses to come to Being, Maharishi describes how TM works, using more traditional, spiritual terms. During meditation one is in a state called "savikalpa samadhi". Increased practice of meditation infuses this state into all aspects of one's existence. Eventually, by regular practice and activity, one achieves union with Brahman or cosmic consciousness:

He whose self is untouched by external contacts knows that happiness which is in the Self. His self joined in Union with Brahman, he enjoys eternal happiness. (chapter five, verse 21).

"Joined in Union with Brahman": this expression, together with "self is untouched by external contacts", presents a criterion whereby a seeker can know he has gained • the state of Brahman - cosmic consciousness. While the mind is experiencing objects through the senses, he is awake in the awareness of his self as separate from the field of experience and action. This is in the world and awake in himself. (Maharishi 1967: 267-268) •

As already mentioned, the proper technique and use of mantra is the vehicle for this meditation. The Sioux focused on the Sacred Pipe and its sacred meaning. Also, purification, a sincere desire for power and communication with the Sacred, is somewhat analogous to the use of the mantra. Using the spiritual language of the Gita, Maharishi explains how one transcends the ordinary world through worship:

Some yogis perform yagya merely by worshipping the gods, others by offering the yagya itself into the fire that is Brahman. (Chapter four, verse 25). "Worshipping the Gods" is said to be the performance of yagya • in order to achieve cosmic consciousness through worshipping, one has to transcend through worshipping. This necessitates entering into the subtle phases of the act of worship. And this is most successfully done in a systematic manner by taking the name or form of the god and experiencing it in its subtler states until the mind transcends the subtlest state and attains transcendental consciousness. Those who are highly emotional, however, may even transcend through an increasing feeling of love for the god during the process of making offerings. Transcending the act of worship is said to be the offering of the worship to Brahman. It has the advantage of receiving the blessings of the god and at the same time of helping to develop cosmic consciousness. (Ibid: 213-214).

Maharishi further defines "yagya" as an action which helps evolution. The gods are the deities presiding over the innumerable laws of nature, present everywhere throughout relative life. (Ibid: 144). The Sioux call their gods the Thunder Beings and other terms. Wakan, as mentioned earlier, can be called the supreme god, or God. Likewise, Maharishi, would describe the supreme God or Ishwara, as the Lord of the gods. This is very similar to

the Judeo-Christian tradition of His angels.

Here we see how TM, as a spiritual technique, brings one to a state of transcendental consciousness or ecstasy; describing a state of bliss, timelessness, and other feelings as outlined earlier. A key phrase used by Maharishi--Those who are highly emotional--perhaps shows how the Sioux succeed in reaching an ecstatic state during the vision quest. The Sioux, from the earliest age, is taught reverence for the Sacred, and the vision quest is a highly emotional event (recall, crying for a vision) which brings one to a spiritual state.

TM is easily taught and learned by people of all faiths and beliefs. It produces the same measurable results--subjective and objective--regardless if one believes one's mantra is a name of God or a meaningless syllable. To take an ordinary American on a Sioux vision quest would probably result in little or no spiritual experience. This is a major difference with TM, for the vision quest involves long preparation and a deep desire for a vision, perhaps so emotionally powerful that it transcends the ordinary and produces the ecstasy and vision. The subjective experiences that have been recorded imply this, along with objective results of healing, by men such as Lame Deer and Black Elk, who claim their skill from their visions.

No scientific research has been done on vision quests to measure any changes in one's consciousness. The TM technique, however, is the most thoroughly researched meditation known today. Why bother, one may ask? The answer

is that research shows, without any doubt, that TM produces a unique state of consciousness, unlike the common states known to humankind of waking, dreaming, and sleeping. This could shed some light and understanding on other ways of altering consciousness, like the vision quest, and give more validity to them. In other words, they aren't some form of quackery or superstitious practices. To the American Indians this has been a serious matter, as the white culture, at one time, tried to suppress most of their spiritual practices.

Through modern science the validity of the ecstatic state is being established. Of course, the TM research does not necessarily prove that all shamanistic practices produce profound changes (both subjective and objective). It is a good start in that direction. However, what makes TM unique, is that it is easily learned by anyone and doesn't involve any belief system, dogma, or purification rites.

Seated there on the seat, having made the mind one-pointed, with the activity of the senses and throughout subdued, let him practice Yoga for self-purification. (Chapter six, verse 12).

.When the mind experiences subtle states of the object of meditation (mantra), it becomes very sharp and refined. . the breath becomes correspondingly refined, and this soft fine breathing tends to return the nervous system to its normal functioning order . . . the mind gains transcendental consciousness, it reaches its most purified state . . . the whole nervous system gains a state of restful alertness. In this state of body becomes a living instrument tuned to the divine nature. This is the most purified state of the body. When through the practice of the individual spirit finds its unbounded cosmic nature. This is how the practice of .

transcendental meditation - results in self-purification (Ibid: 300-301).

Maharishi described this state of restful alertness before any research demonstrated its truth. TM is a form of purification. There is no initial preparation. One just sits comfortably, closes the eyes and meditates, usually for about twenty minutes. The mind and body are purified (freed of stress) during the practice of this meditation. "TO support contact with Brahman the nervous system must be in a state of extreme refinement and flexibility." (Ibid: 324) • This is possible only when the nervous system is entirely pure. The same theme occurs among the Sioux - purification - alertness - ecstasy.

The research of the last 15 years shows that purification of the nervous system occurs during TM. The mind exhibits an extraordinary alertness, as measured by EEG monitors. Ecstasy? Meditator's descriptions of their experiences can confirm such a deeply personal event.

In 1970, Dr. Robert Keith Wallace studied the physiological effects of the TM technique for his doctoral thesis at UCLA. Since then, hundreds of experiments have shown that TM produces a unique state of restful alertness, indicative of a fourth major state of consciousness. The initial findings have been summarized as follows:

- a) Deep rest as indicated by a marked and significant decrease in oxygen consumption and carbon dioxide elimination.
- (b) Significant decrease in respiration rate, minute ventilation, and heart rate.
- (c) deep relaxation as indicated by a significant and sharp increase in skin resistance.
- (d) normal maintenance of critical physiological

functions as indicated by stable arterial levels of partial pressure of oxygen and carbon dioxide, pH and blood pressure.

- e) significant decrease in arterial blood lactate.
- f) restful alertness as indicated by EEG changes, showing an increase and spreading of alpha and theta wave activity to the central and frontal areas of the brain (Wallace 1986: 58).

What this indicates is that during the 20 to 30 minute practice of TM one is in this unique state of consciousness. The nervous system receives a rest deeper than the deepest sleep whereby impurities (stress) are dissolved. The mind remains awake, but in a unique creative and subtle state of awareness--not a trance. During meditation one is completely aware of inner and outer stimuli (from sounds and odors to thought and feelings). Research supports this, showing increased brain wave coherence, complete synchrony of brain functioning, and heightened awareness. (Ibid: 90-93). Significantly the results are accumulative and evident in one's activity. Meditators display improved memories, reaction times, rapid recovery from illness, decreased use of drugs and alcohol, improved social behavior, and a host of other changes all pointing towards a more balanced, stable, and healthier individual. (Farrow & Orme-Johnson 1977: 230-639) .

One can see a blending of science and spirituality, as the researchers prove that something is happening when a person sits quietly with eyes closed and practices this simple mental technique. At this point let us look at selected subjective experiences of meditators while on an

advanced program of meditation and study.

- a) In meditation I had the experience of energy and strength flowing into my body. It was like my mind was a clear channel for energy to flow from an infinite pool into my physical body. Afterwards, my body exhibited increased strength and improved muscle tone.
- b) During meditation I experienced the finest level of creation where the awareness seemed to support and encompass all the aspects of intelligence simultaneously.
- c) During meditation I have experienced the flow of pure consciousness as having a heavenly, sublime sweetness which is usually experienced by all of my senses simultaneously.
- d) I had a moment during meditation when I felt I could know anything, that all knowledge was contained within the wholeness of my own unbounded awareness, and that the knowledge of anything would come to me merely by my thinking about it.
- e) I have often experienced • . inner wakefulness continuing all throughout a night's sleep, so that even though I was sleeping, inside I felt awake (Ibid: 687).

Many of these experiences are very similar to those of the vision questers. What is significant, however, is that the meditators were being tested for physiological changes during their meditation. The results, as already mentioned, presented a state of consciousness unlike what is commonly experienced.

One can easily surmise that the vision quest and the TM technique are natural means to alter one's awareness and change one's life. East and West have preserved these precious paths which help us realize that special realm of Divine that resides within us and all around us. The search for ecstasy does not have to involve the use of potentially dangerous drugs. The realm of the Sacred, the Divine, our inner spiritual nature (or, as science names it, pure

consciousness or the Unified Field) can be experienced by anyone.

Each culture, religion, or race may have a different name for that same experience. To the Sioux it was attained by a sincere, lifetime search with unique ceremonies and purification rites. Maharishi has brought out an ancient Vedic tradition and made it available for all humankind. Complete transformation, the goal of shamans throughout the world, is also the goal one can attain from meditation--a complete and permanent state of consciousness--enlightenment.

The shaman's goal is usually ecstasy with a more outward expression--"the Soulls ecstatic journey through the various cosmic regions" (Eliad 1951: 417). Regular meditation produces a wholeness in onels inner and outer expression, or total integration. One may attain that state temporarily in meditation, or on the hill of the vision quest, but the goal is permanence. Perhaps it is fitting to conclude with a quote from Maharishi, describing the goal. He gives all credit to his Master--Guru Dev--for reviving this ancient Vedic tradition:

The priceless Transcendental nectar in which saints and seekers lose themselves and forget everything during their deep meditations j.n silent and barren places - when that same nectar, that very same experience is had in the nearness to the lotus feet of Guru Dev, in an unmoving and stable manner, with the eyes open and in a completely wakeful state, the incmparably blissful Transcendental torrent floods the inside and outside, the mind is drowned in ecstasy. In that state, wave upon wave of the bliss of samadhi rises in myriads of forms and channels in complete wakefulness. This is the experience of

jivan mukti, by the grace of the lotus feet of Guru Dev. The experience of the unshakable bliss of samadhi, when we are completely awake, is the jivan mukti, drowned in which the great Mahatmas become Brahman (Maharishi **n.d.** Lecture Quote).

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SMILES ON FACES AND THUMBS IN THE BREAD:  
SELF-ESTEEM MAINTENANCE IN A SERVICE OCCUPATION

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"Dr. Jekeyll and Mr. Hyde" was a term used by an informant, a grocery store cashier, to assess accurately how a cashier's attitudes, actions, and self-esteem change with each customer. Every day a cashier will have to deal with many customers. Each customer is categorized, defined, and serviced differently; most importantly, each customer has a different effect on the cashier's self-esteem. The research explores the means by which service sector employees, cashiers in a grocery store, maintain their self-esteem when interacting with customers. As cashiers interact with customers, they categorize them emically and redefine their identity vis a vis each customer. The ethnographic research was conducted at a mid-size chain grocery store, in a college community, in the southeastern United States. The store consists of eleven aisles and seven checkout lanes, two of which are express lanes.

The grocery store has a variety of employee categories, including stocker, bagger, front-end supervisor, manager, head produce clerk, and cashier. Being an employee of the store, I knew that cashiers had the most contact with customers since they must pass through the checkout line before they leave the store. For this reason, cashiers

seemed to be ideal candidates for research concerning customer relations.

The methods and techniques used for research included participant observation and (to a larger extent) ethnographic interviews. Pad and pencil were used to record all data collected from the informants. The bulk of the data were collected from three main informants, two females and one male. However, data were also collected from other employees through casual conversations, while they were working or while they were taking work breaks.

Being an employee and an ethnographer had its advantages and its disadvantages. One advantage was that good rapport had already been established with the informants and ethnographic interviews were relatively easy to obtain. However, at the same time, due to the sensitivity of the data collected, I had to be wary of management. If management had known, for example, that informants pinched holes in customers' bread, the informants' jobs could have been in jeopardy. Thus, all informants were guaranteed anonymity, and management was only generally informed about research conclusions.

The "cultural scene" (Spradley 1979: 21) of a corporate grocery store contains numerous possibilities for research. For example, job duties are decidedly segregated by gender: all deli clerks are female; all meat department employees male; and seventy-five percent of cashiers are female. Baggers are mostly male, and they frequently skip the step of being a cashier to become more highly-valued

stockers. The store employs about seven full time stockers, of which only one is female. It is interesting to note that the female stocker is assigned to stock health and beauty aids, "feminine products," candy, cookies, light bulbs, and panty hose, while remaining males stock the rest store.

From my own experience as a cashier, I knew that there were various types of customers, that each was defined by different characteristics, and that there were various services given to each type of customer. This was the point at which I started my investigation.

The most prevalent type of customer was the "regular customer" who shopped at the store on a regular basis. Informants described this type of customer as friendly and very personable towards the cashiers. One informant who characterized them as being like "family" said, "I see them as much as my own family. They come in the store every week. I know what they are going to buy and what they are going to say." This particular type of customer was also described as "middle class." An informant elaborated: "They are two income families with latch key kids which is the same environment I grew up in. I can relate to them and this makes me feel very comfortable around them." The types of services given to regular customer accurately reflects the favorable way in which the cashier viewed the regular customer. The informants said that they would get them fresh produce, cash their payroll checks, and

let them write checks for cash. As one informant stated: "We generally try to be more accommodating to them. This means bagging their groceries the way they liked, letting them know if they had a leaky gallon of milk, and making sure that they got another one."

The next category of customer was "the rich." This category was broken down into two types: the "rich/down to earth" and the "rich/housewife or not so nice." The rich/down to earth wore nice clothes but not "showy," which was described as "mink coats and top designer clothes." This type of customer would ask the cashier personal questions like "how are you doing?" One informant said he likes the rich best because, "They have lots of money. Rich old ladies smell good. They have lots of pretty jewels to look at and they are clean. They buy lots of interesting things like Caviar."

Thus, the "rich/down to earth" received special types of services. For example, the store may keep in stock specialty items for certain customers- like pink light bulbs. The informants also said that if the customer had an item that was broken, they would replace it right away. They would also talk to this type of customer more than others. This was done because, "they have influence in the community, so you want to give good service and give the store a good name." Another informant explained the "extra" service this way: "I don't mind doing extra stuff for people who treat me as a friend and not a servant."

For the "rich/housewife or not so nice," however, services declined. This category was said to wear flashy clothes, diamonds, and had manicured nails. It was said that they were "snobby." They wouldn't speak to the cashiers and were described as wanting the cashier to put groceries on the check out stand for them, and they slammed their groceries on the counter. As one informant said: "Generally they are rude to the cashiers."

The informants said that they only do what this type of customer asks of them and that they do not smile or carry on a conversation. One informant said:

I do only what she asks. I don't want her head to get any bigger than it already is. If she wants to drive her car around for her groceries to be loaded into the car, I do it. She's used to getting what she wants and will get mad if she doesn't, which in turn gets me in trouble. So I figure it's best to give her what she wants. She will at least come back and spend more money.

Another type of customer was the "food stamp customer." The food stamp customers were divided into two categories: The "food stamp/deserver" customer and the "food stamp/don't deserve" customer. The food stamp/deserver customer was described as dressing "cruddy." They wore dirty clothes, lacked personal hygiene, and had rotten teeth or no teeth at all. They were also characterized as buying "essential" items such as flour, milk and no-name brand groceries.

The informant said that they were nice and friendly with this type of customer because "I don't want them to think that I think they are trash." Another informant described it this way:

They are people too and have feelings. They are just not as fortunate as some, so I make them feel welcome and important. I bag their groceries like they were mine. If they forgot something, I always have someone to go get it for them.

In contrast, the "food stamp/don't deserve" customer was also seen as dirty with rotten teeth and lacking in bath, but further described as a "welfare fraud." Informants felt they bought expensive cuts of meat and junk food. This type of customer had "fifteen snot-nosed kids" and informants despised having to serve them. As one informant said: "Not only are you checking them out, but you are buying their groceries." Informants felt that the taxes that they were paying to the government were being used to support "welfare frauds" on the food stamp program.

For service, the informants would greet this customer but would "never invite them back." As one informant said: "It just makes me mad to think that these people could work if they wanted to and they are living off my money. I don't like these people very much."

The "winos" were another type of customer. Winos looked like they "just got out of bed." They were described as wearing "old second hand clothes from Goodwill," and reeked of alcohol. They consistently bought "Wild Irish Rose Wine in the 1.75 liter bottle for \$2.09." They were also characterized as being loud and clumsy.

"Fast" characterized the service given to winos. The informants said that they tried to get winos through the

check out line quickly so they would not be a "nuisance" to the other customers. As one informant said:

You know by the look on their face when they walk in that they are going to be a problem. They are bouncing off the walls. They are loud and shake hands with everyone they meet. Everyone is beautiful. If you tell them they are not sober and that they can't buy the wine, they say they know Governor Dalton or your manager, and that they will have your job.

The next category of customer was the "old people." The old people were described as "old, wrinkled, and wearing out-of-date clothes." They were also described as smiling, always joking, and telling stories. The informants said that they would be friendly to the old people and play along with their jokes. As one informant said: "I treat them with respect because they have probably had a job with the public and lived through it." The informants also said that they would bag their groceries lightly and make sure that they had help unloading their groceries.

The "college student" was another category of customer. This category contained two types: The "college student/regular" was seen as being "friendly." This type of college student would respond to the cashier if she said hello. They always had proper identification and if under age would not try to buy beer. The college student/regular was also money conscious in that they would buy a lot of peanut butter and "ten cent" (day old) bread.

The informants tried to answer these college students' questions as best as they could and were friendly to them. As one informant said:

I am always nice to these college students because they are usually nice with me. If they have a question about an item or services we offer, I try to go out of my way to answer their questions because I'm dealing with the future of America. If you go out of your way to help them, maybe they will do the same for you when they get into the business world.

On the other hand, the "college student/spoiled brat" was defined as "cocky." They dressed "preppy" (in the latest fads), and were loud and rude to the cashiers. As one informant said:

They get mad and cuss you out for asking for identification for their beer. They have had a smooth life and everything their heart desires. They blow money because they know Mommy and Daddy will give them some more.

The "spoiled brats" are also described as coming in the store in packs of fifteen people to buy a six pack of beer; frequently they throw their order on the checklane and demand the bill be split five ways, an irritant for the cashiers.

Service for the college student/spoiled brat differs. One informant said:

I make them **pullout** all their identification and if they don't have proper identification I say "Oh! Well!" I don't care if I have to put back \$15.00 worth of their groceries! They are on my turf! They have to do things my way." the informant said that they rarely smiled or spoke to this type of customer because they were usually very "obnoxious."

Informants preferred to ignore them as much as possible. One informant summed it up this way: "I just check them out and look at them with the expression 'where in the world did you come from'."

The "problem customer" seemed to be evident: amongst all the informants as a type of customer. The problem customer crossed all boundary lines and could be any other type of customer as well. This customer always complained to the cashiers about "everything." The informants said this type of customer would argue over a penny and blame the cashier for things over which she had no control, such as the use of the (laser) scanner system, a wrong shelf price, or the store's use of plastic bags. Informants also said that this type of customer thought that their time was more valuable than anyone else's. As one informant said:

No matter at who's expense they think that you should drop everything and cater to them. If I am on break and I have a pop, a cigarette and a moon pie half in my mouth, they think I should stop right then and go wrap their bloody chicken. It's not right! They are infringing on my time.

The informants tried to treat the problem customer with patience. They would answer the problem customer's questions as best as they could and would ignore them the rest of the time. This was done by not speaking to the customer, not even saying "hello." As one informant said:

Not speaking to the customers lets them know that you won't put up with them. If you say 'hello' it opens you up for attack. It gives them the chance to riddle you with accusations.

The "dirty old man" was another type of customer. He was described as always staring at the female cashiers or trying to touch their hands when money was exchanged. He would also try to "grab" the cashiers whenever he got the chance. Informants said that the dirty old man would always

tell the cashiers how pretty they looked, and he would ask them questions like what time they got off work and if they were married. As one informant said, "I have to stand there and check out his order and put up with unwanted attention. I feel uncomfortable and disgusted with the whole situation."

Informants tried to avoid talking to this type of customer as much as possible. This was done so that the dirty old man wouldn't get the idea that the cashier was "interested" in him. The cashiers also said that they would bag his groceries behind the counter so that he would not have the chance to grab them.

"Foreign people" were the last category defined by my informants. They were described as having a different skin color, having accents, and speaking a foreign language. Foreign-people were seen as questioning and untrusting of the cashiers. Informants said foreign people watched the cashier ring up every item and that they checked their receipt before they left the store. One informant said: "I feel like they are trying their best to find something wrong with the way I rang their order and get me in trouble." The informants said that they tried to put this type of customer at ease by smiling and explaining their receipt to them as clearly as possible.

In general, cashiers regarded customers in a variety of ways. Some, like the "rich/down to earth", drew respect because they respected the cashiers. Others, like the "regular customers," were highly regarded because they were

like "family." still others, like the "spoiled brat," were denigrated for being snobs. The common link for these varieties of customers lies in how they view the cashiers. Customers who respected the cashiers, regardless of their own status, were regarded highly, while customers who downgraded cashiers were scorned. As long as cashiers perceived that customers treated them as due their status, then cashiers regarded them well. In other words, customers who respected the self-esteem of cashiers, received, in turn, good service. One informant related how he felt customers regarded cashiers when he said:

Customers feel you should bow down and serve them. They demand your attention when you are involved with another customer. They want you to make exceptions for them, like giving them sale price for an item on sale last week, or give them credit for expired coupons.

Another informant put it this way, "Some customers are insulting. They make you feel guilty for sending someone to check the price. They say, 'Do you think I am lying, or I can't read'." Another informant related an incident that illustrated very well how she felt customers viewed cashiers. In this particular incident an informant had told a customer how tired she felt. The customer replied, "Imagine how you would feel if you had a real job."

A few types of customers seemed to threaten the informants' self esteem more than others. The dirty old man, for example, made informants feel trapped and threatened. As one informant said, "He makes a game of trying to make you feel uncomfortable. They know you can't walk off your job."

All informants who mentioned the dirty old man admitted being propositioned and/or physically touched by these customers. One informant said:

He makes you feel dirty. I ask myself if I did something to deserve that. He knocks my self esteem on the ground. I try not to dwell on it. It is very painful.

The same informant related a poignant episode she had had with such a customer. An old man befriended her when she first began working at the grocery store as a bagger. She said he would come every week with his wife on Tuesday mornings. When she would go outside to gather up the grocery carts he would make a point of talking to her and even began to bring her little gifts. She said she would always look forward to seeing him every week and that she would worry if he and his wife did not show up as usual on Tuesday mornings. This went on for about two months. One day when she was loading the old man's groceries he grabbed her between her legs. She said that she was taken totally by surprise and didn't know what to say to the old man. She related:

I hadn't been on the job long enough to be hardened to this sort of thing. He broke my heart. I went home that day and bawled. I always thought I would be one of the superwomen and would fight back when someone did something like that to me, but he took me totally by surprise.

Another type of customer that affected an informant's self-esteem was the poor. Informants felt that this customer's inadequacies only made the cashier look better. When in conflict with poor customers one informant said:

They insult you and call you stupid. They try to break you down, but they actually bring you up because they buy groceries with food stamps which I helped pay for with my tax money. They will spend all their change on a bottle of wine instead of buying a bar of soap.

College students also affected the informants' self-esteem. One informant said that the college students call the cashiers "townies", and they think lesser of the local residents. She described the students as "staring the cashiers up and down" and "cussing out" the cashiers when they were asked for identification for alcohol purchases. One informant said, "They have a 'holier than thou' attitude. If a college student doesn't have proper ID they will say, 'But-I am a (college name) student' like that is their ticket to anything they want in life."

Further damaging to one's self-esteem is the uniform worn by all female cashiers. One informant said, "The uniform brands you, it's the (company name) stamp and not of excellence." The uniform provides no individuality; everyone looks the same. In fact, if informants went somewhere else in their uniform everyone knew where they worked. They felt as if they could not escape. Informants would compensate for the impersonality of the uniform by fixing their hair and applying makeup, and by wearing "real clothes" like a shirt underneath their uniform jacket or khaki pants instead of the required uniform pants. One informant said, "I do this to draw attention away from the uniform and to my own personality."

Cashiers have many threats to their self-esteem. Because of these, they fight back when their self-esteem is threatened in several ways, direct and indirect. Direct ways involve avoiding interaction, both verbal and nonverbal, with the customers. Cashiers might fail to say "hello", "thank you", or come back. One informant said that when the customer held out his hand for change, she would lay the money down to the side and not give it to him directly in his hand. In a more dramatic example, a black cashier had a white male customer who would refuse to go through her check out line because she was black. This cashier confronted this prejudice by closing off all checkout lanes except hers so that he would have no choice but to go through her lane.

There are also indirect or "sneaky" ways of maintaining self-esteem. Being "sneaky" means, "The customer thinks they are getting one over on you, but you are really getting one over on them." Being sneaky is done to get "revenge" when a customer upsets a cashier. However, it is done discreetly so that the cashier will not be pinpointed. If the cashier was pinpointed the customer could get her in trouble with management. By being sneaky the cashier achieves revenge without losing her job.

Some examples of being "sneaky" are damaging groceries without appearing to do so. For example, a cashier might pinch a hole in the customer's bread, might bang around their potato chips, might put "groceries in their bags with

more force", might insert a thumb in the watermelon, or might bag eggs underneath some cans. Sneaky cashiers might also bag bread next to a can so that the can will roll on the bread during the trip home. Also cashiers might drop coupons on the floor and not pick them all up. As one informant said, "This is done so you won't have to give them credit, especially when they have coupons for items they don't have." Retaliation can be as extreme as over-charging the customer by ringing up items two or three times. This can easily be done because "nine chances out of ten customers do not pick up their receipt unless the cashier gives it to them."

Being sneaky helped informants maintain or enhance self-esteem, for they said that being sneaky made them feel "good." They also said that it made them feel like they were getting "revenge" and had more "power and control" over their customers. As one informant noted: "Management says that the customer is always right no matter what, so you have to play along so you won't get in trouble, but if you are sneaky you can secretly feel good."

However, retaliation against customers by employees who are supposed to provide cheerful and competent service ultimately proves destructive. Employees remain disgruntled and discouraged by customers and despise even more a job which increases that contact. Customers receiving grumbling or incompetent service may not return, ultimately jeopardizing the cashiers' jobs. A compromise needs to be found, providing competent service even to troublesome customers, while simultaneously supporting employee self-

esteem. Cashiers have agreed that to remedy this situation, management could take several steps.

First, management should support the cashiers when there is a conflict between a customer and cashier if the latter is right. One informant said that when she has a conflict and she knows that she is right and the customer is wrong, and the manager knows it too, the manager will still back up the customer because store policy is that "the customer is always right." Even though the cashier accepts this she feels that the manager should at least tell her something like, "Sorry, I knew you were right, but I had to keep their business." Also the informant said that giving customers free hams, pies, or sending flowers to their homes when a customer got angry at a cashier only makes the cashier feel "stupid." One informant explained it this way:

When I am right and the manager takes the customers'side even though he knows I'm right, it insults my intelligence. It makes the customer think 'this girl don't know what she's doing and the -manager could care less how I look as long as he looks good.

Informants also feel that management should protect them from sexual harassment by warning or barring dirty old men from the store if necessary. One informant told of a particular situation in which a dirty old man had repeatedly "stalked and pawed" the cashiers when he came in the store. In one particular instance he "grabbed" a cashier while she had bent over to stock some cigarettes. The cashier warned him never to do that again and he replied, "Oh! Honey! You're so sweet!" She immediately went to the office and

complained to the manager. The manager simply said, "He gives good business and we have to give him what he wants." Informants said that in situations such as this, "management should protect the cashiers even if they may lose a customer because a good worker is of more value."

The informants also feel that there should be better screening of cashier applicants and that only those who would be good with the public should be hired. As some informants have said, "It is the most demanding type of job because you have to associate with so many different types of people, their moods and idiosyncrasies. Better training would prepare cashiers for these problems and situations."

Comparative research on other service-sector jobs would prove to be insightful as well. For one reason, "the greatest number of openings are being created in the service sector (food, health, business services), where wages are low." (Harrington 1984: 47). Since these jobs are increasing, and since wages are low, it would seem that self-esteem would also be low. It may be possible to suggest ways to increase worker self-esteem in these jobs as well, based on the research here. Such research would benefit employees, management and customers.

During my research on customer relations, I found that a love/hate relationship existed between cashiers and their customers. From my own experience as a cashier, and from the comments of informants, there is nothing in the world that compares to a customer who comes in every week, greets you

with a smile, chats, and even sometimes brings you a jar of homemade jam or a handmade pillow. However, there is also nothing times during your five hour shift, and who stands in your check out lane an extra five minutes even though there are three lanes open. There is also nothing like the threat of the angry college student who calls you three four-letter words in front of everyone because you would not let him purchase beer without an ID. Also, there are some customers who for whatever reason are just plain irritating or simply "rubs us all the wrong way."

Hence, it is unrealistic to believe that cashiers could and would treat every customer with the same "courteous" service. It is an ideal that cannot be met in the real situation in which cashiers find themselves every day. However, because of the types of customers with which cashiers must deal, sneaky tactics must sometimes be used to maintain self-esteem in the reality of the check-out lanes. Cashiers are forced to become "Dr. Jeckylls and Mr. Hydes" in disguise in order to maintain self-esteem. It is hoped that perhaps some reasonable solutions could be found to preserve the cashiers's self-esteem while increasing the quality of the service customers receive. Cashiers, like other service employees, appreciate above all the respect and dignity they feel they deserve.

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PSYCHOLOGY AND BIOCHEMISTRY  
IN THE SHAMANIC WORLD

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Perhaps one of the most baffling and thought provoking aspects of shamanic ideology is its anchorage in the belief in a spirit world paralleling our own earthly world. This spirit world is endowed with the awesome power to heal and to maim, to bring harmony and health, and to punish. Neither world is free from the influence of the other, and the interaction between these two worlds has been the source of myth throughout shamanic history.

Shamans may be seen as conduits between these two worlds, through which the people of the earth glimpse the power and beauty of the spirit world, and experience its awesome healing power. While shamans are often considered healers themselves, it is important to note that the shaman has no real power to cure. Rather, in the words of Black Elk, the power of curing comes

from the outer world, and the visions and ceremonies had only made me like a hole through which the power could come to the two-leggeds. If I thought that I was doing it myself, the hole would close up and no power could come through (Neihardt 1932: 174).

Given just this rudimentary background, it is easy to see how shamanism can tax the aspect of the Western mind that is scientific, and surely skeptical. The idea that spirits affect us on a day-to-day basis and may be employed by us to uncover information, to heal the sick or

injured, and to punish or to maim others is something that boggles a Western mind. Perhaps even more perplexing is the fact that shamanism is the oldest known form of organized religion, and that there exists a large body of evidence that testifies to the power and reality of the spirit world, such as those accounts given in William K. Powers' Yuwipi, John G. Neihardt's Black Elk Speaks, and Mircea Eliade's Shamanism. Perhaps it is this dilemma, that so many people have practiced shamanism for so many years and have amassed definite proof of its inherent healing power, that leaves Western minds searching for a plausible explanation that satisfies their scientific curiosity.

It is not the goal of this paper, however, to support or to discredit the evidence suggesting the existence of the spirit plane. That task can only be left to individual experience. Rather, this paper will demonstrate that several aspects of the shamanic world may be explained in biochemical and psychological terms, while recognizing that there are many other aspects which cannot be, or at least not yet.

#### The Ecstatic Trance, Chemistry, and the Brain

During an ecstatic trance, the shaman journeys through a world in which he encounters many strange things, the most notable of which are spirits. These spirits tutor him, guide him, provide him with information and, if he is not careful, will try to tempt and even destroy him. This journey is, needless to say, as perilous as it is wondrous.

The shaman enters into an ecstatic trance, an altered state of consciousness, through elaborate and very ancient processes, often times characterized by the ingestion of hallucinogenic substances. According to Peter Furst, such plants and fungi as tobacco, cannabis, nutmeg, ololiuhqui (morning glory), mushrooms, fly-agaric, datura, and peyote, are just a few of the psychotropes used by shamans to achieve the ecstatic trance. Yet, as he states, there are other methods the shaman may employ to induce an ecstatic trance, such as:

fasting, thirsting, self-mutilation, torture, exposure to the elements, sleeplessness, incessant dancing and other means of total exhaustion, bleeding, plunging into ice-cold pools, near-drownings, laceration with thorns and animal teeth, and other painful ordeals, as well as a variety of nonhurtful "triggers", such as different kinds of rhythmic activity, self-hypnosis, meditation, chanting, drumming, and music (Furst 1976: 10).

Given that we know there are certain physical and chemical methods the shaman uses to achieve an altered state of consciousness, we may ask what exactly is an "altered state of consciousness", how do these methods succeed in producing this condition, and how is an altered state related to the ecstatic experience.

To begin with, an altered state of consciousness refers to being "above" the more usual levels of consciousness" (Brown 1976: 195) • Furthermore, being in an "altered" state of consciousness does not refer to being "unconscious". This is an important distinction to make because, unlike an unconscious person, a person in an

altered state of consciousness is aware of his surroundings, and is still susceptible to external, as well as internal, stimuli.

Now that we have a general idea of what an "altered" state refers to, we may focus on how the methods employed in reaching an altered state actually succeed in producing such a state. As has been mentioned previously, drug-induced means are not the only methods for altering consciousness. However, they are the most direct and will be addressed.

The origins of hallucinogenic chemical usage among shamanic peoples probably dates back many thousands of years, and involves many species of plants and fungi. Through a process that may only be assumed to be based on trial and error, these species were selected for ritual usage because of their effective mind-altering capabilities and because of the low health risk involved in using them.

The mind-altering effects of these plants and fungi are determined by the specific chemical compounds found in them. For example, the tobacco employed by South American Indians contains a high concentration of nicotine, "a pyridine alkaloid that occurs in aboriginal species in much higher concentrations (up to four times) than in modern cigarette tobacco" (Furst 1976: 25). Cannabis "contains more than 400 chemicals, of which the mind-altering component is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)" (Papalia 1985: 124). The active agents in ololiuhqui, or morning glory, are found to be "closely related to d-lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD)" (Furst 1976: 65). In mushrooms, fly-agaric, and datura,

psilocybine and psilocine, ibotenic acid and muscimole, and three agents from the tropane series are the principal hallucinogenic agents respectively.

One example of a very powerful and very famous hallucinogen is peyote. What gives peyote its mind-altering strength is a chemical compound called mescaline "which is the most active of the more than thirty different alkaloids that have so far been isolated from this remarkable plant" (Furst 1976: 111).

Understanding why drugs have specific mind-altering capabilities requires a brief explanation of "neurotransmission", a fundamental, yet complicated, process whereby sensory information is relayed to various parts of the brain, thus enabling us to perceive and to respond to our environment. During this process, a neurotransmitter, such as serotonin, norepinephrine, or dopamine, is released by neurons (brain cells) across a "synaptic gap" (the gap between two neurons) where it is picked up by receptor sites on other neurons. Depending on how much or how little of a neurotransmitter is released or received determines how we perceive our environment.

When drugs are introduced into the brain, they may enhance or inhibit the neurotransmission process and, subsequently, our "perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, making them all different from the normal waking state" (Papalia 1985: 149). Hallucinogens, in particular, seem to affect the serotonin system, which plays an important role

in the process habituation, which is the brain's way of regulating sensory input (Mandell 1978: 78). Habituation enables us to quickly get used to some stimuli so that we may be ready to perceive any new or different stimuli. An increase or decrease of the serotonin levels in the brain influences the habituation process and, hence, our perceptions of our environment. For example, the mescaline found in peyote has "the unique property of retarding the onset and development of habituation by inhibiting the brain's serotonin system, allowing the brain to respond to old stimuli as if they were new." (Mandell 1978: 80) • The hallucinogenic effects of mescaline, as Furst notes:

include not only brilliantly colored images as well as shimmering auras that appear to surround objects in the natural world, but also auditory, gustatory, olfactory, and tactile sensations, together with feelings of weightlessness, macroscopia, and alteration of space and time perception (Furst 1976: 111).

The active hallucinogenic agents in mushrooms, psilocybine and psilocine, are, interestingly enough, "chemically-structurally related to serotonin" (Furst 1976: 88) • It thus seems that, when mushrooms are ingested, an even greater concentration of serotonin is introduced into the brain, also triggering an altered state of consciousness. The reason for this may lie in what Arnold Mandell describes as the arresting of the serotonin system. When the serotonin system is repeatedly activated, a point is reached when serotonin is no longer produced (Mandell 1978: 80) • This leads, subsequently, to a loss of habituation.

This arresting of the serotonin system is more closely associated with the nondrug methods for altering consciousness previously mentioned. These techniques, along with sexuality, sensory isolation, and depression, promote serotonin synthesis and, with continued repetition, may lead to serotonin synthesis arrest, a loss of habituation and an altered state of consciousness (loc cit).

As an example of this, Mendell cites the Huichol peyote hunt:

The deprivations of the Huichol peyote hunt--reduced food, water, salt, sexual activity--and the grave, sadtearfulness as part of the ritual before reaching Wirikuta, as well as the sleep deprivation and fatigue of the entire ordeal, can be argued to potentiate the action of the peyote on physiological grounds by their "teasing" of the brain's serotonin system toward lowering the threshold for the expression of religious feelings? (loc cit).

Taken in sum, the retarding or arresting of the serotonin synthesis and the resultant effect on the process of habituation appears to sensitize the shaman to every nuance of sensory stimulation. As was noted earlier, a shaman in an altered state of consciousness is not unconscious. He is fully aware of the various stimuli present in his environment, and it would appear that it is from this stimuli, and the shaman's heightened awareness of it, that the ecstatic expression is born. As Arnold Mandell states, it is the "sudden reversal of the chemical changes of habituation and the re-emergence of fresh experience" (loc cit) that marks the genuine ecstatic experience.

Science may be able to explain the physiological aspects of achieving an ecstatic trance. However, it does "not fully explain why by these processes shamans are able to reach for and discover the deep level of knowledge they do" (Bean and Vane 1978: 126). The ecstatic experience provides, as Bean and Vane note, "a psychological metaphor of immense proportions--life, death, creation, rebirth, and transformation" (Bean and Vane 1978: 124). It can provide "the well-trained shaman with an intellectual dimension which can apparently multiply his or her capacity to understand the world and its problems" (loc cit).

Mandell contends that the sudden mental and physical awareness that the ecstatic experience generates promotes "the metaphysical wondering that such miracles stimulate" (Mandell 1978: 80). Given what Mandell says is true, however, why do people who use hallucinogens in other cultures have different experiences? Why isn't an American teenager on LSD as creative and awe-inspired as a Huichol on peyote? As Peter Furst suggests:

It is clearly society, not chemistry, that is the variable, since the same or chemically similar drugs can function so differently in different cultural situations, or be venerated over centuries as sacred, benign, and culturally integrative in some contexts but regarded in others as inherently so evil and dangerous that their very possession constitutes a serious crime (Furst 1976: 17).

It may be that one's culture can account for the different experiences among users of the same hallucinogen. Regardless of the variable, scientific data suggests that the

ecstatic trance is, indeed, a biochemically induced one, and that the fantastic visual and auditory experiences of this trance have their origins in the brain. How the shaman gains as much meaning from these experiences as he does, however, is still yet to be understood by modern science.

### Shamanic Healing

One of the chief complaints about modern medicine is that it lacks compassion. The cold professionalism of many physicians, coupled with the even colder steel of their instruments and machines, does little to offset the anxiety felt by a sick or injured person:

The practitioners of scientific medicine work with principles and facts, not beliefs. That is their strength and also their limitation because this type of healing, though often effective, is not enough. Scientific fact can never "prove" human values. It may restore the specific organ (and we are grateful for that), but it does not satisfy the individual in his quest for harmony with his surroundings and for peace of mind within (Sander 1979: 17).

In the healing process in the shamanic world, attention is focused on the state of the patient's psyche, and the diagnosis of the treatment for the patient's condition follow from an evaluation of the patient's spiritual state. The actual healing ceremony is conducted in a familiar setting, usually the patient's home, and in the presence of family, friends, and at times, the entire community. At the center of the healing ceremony is the shaman, who derives his power from a supernatural source, and who is one of the most highly regarded members of the community.

If we take an overview of the shamanic system of healing, we will note several things, each of which reflects the importance of the mind/soul in determining health or sickness. In the actual healing process itself, for example, the participation of the community in the healing ceremony and the patient's firm belief in the power of the shaman insure the effectiveness of the healing process. Among the Navajo of North America, for example,

social healing has an important place. Kaplan and Johnson (1964: 228) noted that there is a reaffirmation of community solidarity which surrounds the patient with concern and good will, and places him at the very center of the social group (Sander 1979: 24-25).

by being placed at the center of the community's attention, "concern and good will," the patient receives very positive encouragement. This undoubtedly helps him toward recovery.

The patient's belief in the shaman and his power also ensures effective healing. Indeed, as David Sander notes in his book, Navaho Symbols of Healing:

The patient must share in most of the basic beliefs of the medicine man and his culture, or symbolic healing cannot work. One of the medicine men I interviewed said exactly that in his own way: 'If the patient really has confidence in me, then he gets cured. If he has no confidence in me, then that is his problem. If a person gets bitten by a snake, for example, certain prayers and songs can be used, but if the patient doesn't have enough confidence then the cure won't work.' The patient shares the responsibility for his cure." (Sander 1979: 17-18).

Looking at sickness in the shamanic world, we see that it involves mostly the psyche/spirit rather than the body. Illness, for the most part, is symbolized by the destruction of the "natural harmony between the individual and his

surroundings.¶ (Sander 1979: 33). Not surprisingly, the cures for disease in the shamanic world are symbolic as well.

Among the Eskimos, for example, illness is presumably caused by violation of taboos, that is, disorder in the sacred, or by the theft of the patient's soul by one of the dead¶ (Eliade 1964: 298) •

Among the North American tribes, Eliade notes, ¶Two principal kinds of diseases are distinguished; those due to the introduction of pathogenic object, and those resulting from 'soul loss'.¶ (1964: 300) • These, he states have several causes:

The flight of the patient's soul may be due to many causes: dreams that frighten it away; dead persons who are reluctant to set out for the land of shades and prowl about the camp, looking for another soul to take with them. Or, finally, the patient's soul strays far from his body of itself. Injurious objects are usually projected by sorcerers. They are pebbles, small animals, insects; the magician does not introduce them in concerto, but creates them by the power of his thoughts. They may also be sent by spirits, who sometimes themselves take up residence in the patient's body. Once he has discovered the cause of the illness, the shaman extracts the magical objects by suction." (Eliade 1964: 301).

The suction method is a common form of cure among the North American Indians and, like, the causes of illness among shamanic peoples, is more symbolic than concreto:

By suction, the shaman draws out with his teeth a small object "like a bit of black or white thread, sometimes like a nail paring." An Achomawi told De Angulo: "I don't believe those things come out of the sick man's body. The shaman always has them in his mouth before he starts the treatment. But he draws the sickness into them,

he uses them to catch the poison. Otherwise how could he catch it."(Eliade 1964: 307).

The shamanic world is clearly a symbolic one, one which focuses on the individual's soul/psyche rather than on his or her own body. The extent of the patient's belief in the symbols of the shamanic world appears to determine just how effective the healing process is for him or her.

May one's recovery, then, be attributed to an individual's frame of mind? May his firm belief in his culture's healing system actually aid his recovery from illness or contribute to it? Pioneering research in a new branch of medicine called behavioral immunology, and an even newer branch called psycho-neuroimmunology, may provide the answers to these questions.

### The Mind and Health

Personal experience tells us that how we think often influences how we feel. As Steven F. Maier and Mark Laudenslager note in their article, "Stress and Health: Exploring the Links", "Disease and even death can follow in the wake of grief, unrequited love, financial losses, humiliation and other emotionally painful events." (Maier and Laudenslager 1985: 44).

Traditionally, the science field has regarded this as nothing but folklore. Now, however, more and more evidence is being uncovered which clearly suggests a link between the psychological state of an individual and his or her overall health. Research in the cancer field, for example, has

documented links between one's disposition and one's susceptibility to cancer: "Research at Johns Hopkins university in Baltimore found that subjects who were judged congenial were less likely to develop cancer." (Zevin 1987: 14) •

As Clive Wood notes in Psychology Today, furthermore, "a research group at Stanford University has found that the degree of invasiveness of pre-cancerous changes in the cervix is influenced by the woman's mental attitude, both toward her doctors and to her own future" (Wood 1985: 10) • He specifically notes that the women who took a more pessimistic view toward the world, or who were "anxious or those who saw life as threatening," were found to be more susceptible to the pre-cancerous changes than other women with less pessimistic or anxious attitudes (Wood 1985: 11) •

Of one study linking pessimism with poor health, Bruce Bower writes in Science News, "The habitual ways in which people explain the bad events that befall them may put them at risk for poor physical health by middle age" (1988: 54), and as Bower notes in another article, "Some of the same psychological factors associated with better survival among cancer patients are linked to stronger immune responses among homosexual men in the early stages of infection with the AIDS-causing virus (HIV)" (1988: 116) •

Attempts at accounting for psychologically induced illness have been made by Pirkko L. Graves of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, who says, "It's the lack of

balance between positive and negative emotions that's associated with illness. . Though the psychological side of cancer needs further probing, it seems mental and physical health may just go hand in hand." (Zevin 1987: 14) • As Clive Wood notes:

Taken together, the evidence from studies of three different types of cancer strongly suggests that negative thinking can influence cancer progression. Goodkin and some other specialists think that negative emotions may have adverse effects on the body's immune surveillance, making the spread of cancer cells more likely (p.11) •

The specific link between our thoughts and our health is being explored in a new branch of medicine called psychoneuroimmunology, "a term intended to call attention to the interaction of the central nervous system, the endocrine system, and immune system." (Cousins 1985: 39). This field seeks to answer the question, "How does the body convert thoughts and attitudes into biochemical relatives?" (loc cit) .

Fueling the search for this answer has been the discovery that the brain secretes many different substances, such as:

endorphins and enkephalins, which contain morphine-like molecules and which are natural pain killers; interferons, anti-infectious substances that not only combat hostile bacterial agents, but are believed to have antitiral and anti-malignancy capabilities; and 'gamma globulin,' a substance that fortifies the immune system (loc cit) .

Also of great interest has been the discovery that the brain has the ability to "combine these secretions in a way

that makes for a large variety of prescriptions. This function of the brain as a master apothecary is on the frontier of "medical science today." (loc cit).

Given that the mind is the complicated apothecary described in Cousin's article, how exactly can the mind translate thought into biochemical action? The answer to this is not yet known, and given the difficulty involved in studying the brain and the biochemical processes at work inside of it, this question will probably remain unanswered for many years.

#### Psychology and the Shamanic Patient

Shamanic healing is based on the principle of belief belief in the shaman's power and in his ability to heal with it. This belief is reinforced by elaborate myths, ceremonies, initiations, and rituals, all of which serve to heighten a community's belief in the credibility of the shaman. Without "this complete belief, however, the shaman could not heal, and the society would falter.

Because it is the patient's complete belief in the shaman that makes the healing process effective, it is easy to see why the "patient shares in the responsibility for his cure." How much responsibility the patient shares in effecting his recovery is not quite certain. However, given the evidence linking psychological factors to health, and the implications of the research being done in the fields of behavioral immunology and psychoneuroimmunology, it is very possible that the patient assumes a very large

responsibility for his cure.

### Conclusion

While scientific research is useful for understanding some of the complexities of shamanism, there are limitations to the applicability of scientific principles and theories to the shamanic world. Science, as has been noted, tends to oversimplify the state of being human, breaking down existence into merely an ordered series of biological processes. Shamanism, on the other hand, maintains that existence is much more meaningful and mysterious, and considerably less empirical, than science allows. Perhaps if there is any lesson to be learned from a comparison between these views, then, it is that no world view, whether it be held by a shaman or a psychologist or a biochemist, is absolute.

The brain is much too complex an organ, and the spirit much too elusive a concept, to be entirely explained by any one particular viewpoint, regardless of whether this viewpoint is based on scientific research done in a laboratory, or the dramatic experiences of an ecstatic trance. What is needed, then, is a middleground, an integrated perspective of who and what man is, and where he fits in in this universe. Only through an integrated perspective can mankind successfully pursue the answer to the question, "Who am I?"

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## FEMALE CIRCUMCISION IN TWO CONTEXTS

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Female circumcision is a practice which is appalling to many Westerners, yet in cultures where it occurs, it is often considered only a custom. Yet the failure of repeated attempts to eliminate the practice by both Westerners and non-Westerners suggests that female circumcision is intricately interwoven into the social structure of the cultures where it occurs. It would seem that the practice has symbolic meaning and is somehow functional. This research is a comparative theoretical study of the occurrence of and the importance of female circumcision within two different cultures in Africa, the Sudanese and the Maasai.

### - Definitions, Physiological Effects, and Geography

Although the definitions of female genital mutilation differ among authors, it seems that these procedures can be grouped into two types. Sunna circumcision consists of the excision of the prepuce and glans of the clitoris, and sometimes the labia minora as well. Infibulation, also known as Pharaonic or Sudanese circumcision, is the removal of these areas as well as of all of the external genitalia. Infibulation can lead to many medical complications, such as urinary incontinence, pelvic infections, hemorrhage, and obstetric complications which may damage a fetus or lead to sterility. An infibulated woman must be cut open for

intercourse and childbirth, and re-infibulated after the latter. Lilian Passmore Sanderson(1981) points out that the extent of the operation often does not depend so much on what was intended, but upon the skill of the operator, the age of the child, the sharpness of the instrument, and whether or not the child holds still.

According to Anne Cloudsley (1981), some Western medical professionals deny that the lowering of sensitivity which accompanies female circumcision diminishes sexual desire. These professionals claim that such desire is produced by the endocrine organs. However, cybernetics and biological feedback mechanisms have been used in research which suggests that a reduction in peripheral sensation may affect endocrinal secretions and ultimately, sexual desire as well. Cloudsley points out that Hite (1976) reported that 90% of women achieved orgasm if they had clitoral stimulation prior to sexual intercourse, whereas only 30% achieved orgasm without clitoral stimulation. Sanderson (1981) claims that male circumcision does not destroy sexual sensation as does female circumcision, and that the foreskin and the clitoris are not analogous.

Currently, infibulation seems to occur only in African societies, primarily the Nubians of Southern Egypt, Muslims in the Northern Sudan and Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Mali. According to Cloudsley (1981), circumcision affects 30 million women in more than 26 countries in Africa, and Sanderson (1981) adds to the list the southern

part of the Arabian peninsula, Malaysia, Iran and Khoozestan. There have been no reports of the practice in Brazil, Eastern Mexico, or Peru since 1895. Female circumcision died out in Australia over 50 years ago and was last reported among the Russian Skoptsy by missionaries in 1885.

### History

Female circumcision has had a long history, and appears to be both pre-Christian and pre-Islamic. According to Sanderson, some authors have suggested that the practice originated amongst the Hamito-Semitic inhabitants of the shores of the Red Sea. She suggests that some Kenyan peoples, such as the Maasai, might have adopted female circumcision from the Cushites, who originally came from Ethiopia. Herodotus wrote that female circumcision was practiced by Egyptians, Phoenicians, Hittites, and Ethiopians in 500 B.C.. Cloudsley claims that it had some connection with girls' dowries in 163 B.C.. Sanderson states that there are accounts of female circumcision which date back to the 16th century by explorers and researchers in West Africa, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaya, Sumatra, Java, Baluchistan, and Australia.

Interestingly enough, the practice is not a stranger to the Western world. In the second half of the 19th century, clitoridectomies were performed in England, Europe, and the United States. According to Sanderson, some doctors thought that it would cure sexual deviations and nymphomania. They

also thought that it would cure disorders which were believed to be caused by masturbation, such as hystaria, epilepsy, melancholia, and insanity. Over the years, the practice came into disfavor, and had died out for the most part by the 1930's. Even today, however, minor operations such as the removal of the hood of the clitoris are performed to "cure frigidity."

### Theoretical Background

There have been a number of different theories proposed by Western social scientists which attempt to explain female genital mutilation, as well as the menarcheal ceremonies which sometimes accompany it. According to Karen and Jeffery Paige (1981), a female in menarch is at a time when her marriage potential must be guarded against accusations of promiscuity which would decrease her value, and infibuation is considered to be a way to prove her virginity and to ensure her husband's paternity. On the other hand, Arnold Van Gennep (1960) sees no relationship between the circumcision of men and women, marriage, or procreation. Its function is to help incorporate young people into adult society; it is a mark of social rather than biological maturity. Also, the excision of the clitoris is an attempt to remove the appendage by which the female most resembles the male; therefore, it can be considered a rite of sexual differentiation, much like the assigning of sex appropriate tools and clothing.

Bruno Bettelheim (1962) suggests that the dual nature of female sexuality, consisting of an early phallic-clitoral sexuality that later becomes vaginal, is not backed up by strong physiological evidence. "Psychoanalysts have suggested that the purpose of removing the clitoris is to eliminate clitoridean sexuality."<sup>1</sup> He also contests the psychoanalytic theory that fathers impose circumcision on their daughters to curb their own incestuous desires or to control their daughter's sexuality. However, Bettelheim does say that, in general, the mutilation of women's genital region by men is destructive and motivated by fear and envy. In most groups, circumcision is forced upon girls, and if they desire the operation, it is only because it is a necessary precondition of marriage and/or because it will bring them higher status.

Bruce Lincoln (1981) sees clitoridectomy as the culminating act of female initiation, which is the means by which society confers gender identity. He claims that circumcision is an act which cultures practice in order to eliminate the androgynous state of children. Bodily mutilation implies that the body is the very locus of a person's identity. The body is treated as though it is inseparable from the inner self, and thus, by transforming the body, one is transforming the whole self. He points out, however, that in most societies, the status of a woman is a reflection of some male relative, and that women's political power usually does not extend beyond the confines of the household. Initiation ceremonies do not usually challenge

the status quo; they do not offer women new social-political power or prestige. However, such ceremonies often do stress the cosmic realm and, according to Lincoln, offer a "religious compensation for a sociopolitical deprivation" and serve as an "opiate for an oppressed class.,,2 A woman is , in initiation, placed on a pedestal and assimilated to the goddess in order to prepare her for her chores.

On a more pragmatic level, Sanderson claims that men in many cultures believe that female circumcision prevents sexual license which would lead to social instability and illegitimacy. Also, it is common belief in some societies that un mutilated women will be sterile, physically weak, unable to give birth to a son, or will have difficult childbirths. According to some Western writers, female circumcision may have been a substitute for human sacrifice. The Skoptsy, a small Russian sect, considered circumcision an offering to God which ensured for some of their women a perpetual state of virginity. They quoted St. Matthew: "There are Eunuchs, which made themselves Eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake."<sup>3</sup>

### Islamic Justifications of Infibulation

It seems that to understand something about female circumcision in the Sudan, one must also know something about the religion of Islam, in that the former is frequently justified by the latter. The practice does have a long history in the Islamic world, and there are many references to it in Islamic religious texts, as well as in

oral tradition. Ironically, according to Naila Minai (1918), female circumcision was not mentioned in the Qur'an, the religious text which is considered to be the "word of God" by most Moslems. The practice is thought by some scholars to have been adopted by Moslems and to have spread with the religion. According to Cloudsley (1981), pre-Islamic Arabs believed that one of their gods, the Moon, would partially circumcise an uncircumcised male by causing the foreskin to contract. There appears to be disagreement among scholars about whether Muhammad approved of the practice or not, and thus, circumcision is not a religious mandate for females as it is for males. However, in much Islamic literature, there is an emphasis on the desirability of female sexual submissiveness and abundant fertility. There is also what Minai refers to as a male preoccupation with female premarital virginity. Female circumcision is thought to help assure chastity, abort sexual awakening until after marriage, and preserve fidelity during marriage.

The Islamic preoccupation with women, in Fazlur Rahman's opinion (1983), has led to a number of detailed rules concerning polygamous relationships, as well as the obligations between co-wives. In a Hadith in the Hilyat, the Prophet gives orders concerning the days, times, places and manner of sexual intercourse. If a man violates these prohibitions, there will be no devastating consequences. A violating woman, on the other hand, is subject to blindness, mental retardation, leprosy, and a host of other ailments. According to one Hadith, a woman should wear perfume and her

best clothes, and offer herself to her husband every morning and night, so that if he has sexual desire, he will be enticed by her. "A woman should not intentionally lengthen her prayer in order to avoid sexual intercourse, for if her husband falls asleep due to her delaying tactics, angels will curse her until he wakes up."4

It seems that such rules about sexual relations are related to Islamic conceptions of gender and philosophy. In the world, there are thought to be two complementary forces, passion and reason, and through Islam one can learn to control passion, and live in the way that God intended. According to Dale Eickelman (1981), although women are thought to possess reason, they cannot control themselves in the way that men can, and thus, it is necessary to control them and to keep them from creating social disorder. Women are considered to be incapable of controlling their enormous sexual desires. It is said that "a woman by herself is like a Turkish bath without water; because she is always hot and without a man she has no way to slake the fire."5

### The Sudanese

Male circumcision in the Sudan may take place at anytime from the first week of birth to puberty, according to Cloudsley. Without going into a lengthy description of a male circumcision ceremony, suffice it to say that traditionally the event included a religious service and a mock raid in which the novice served as a king. The circumcision itself was witnessed by the community, and the

boy was praised for his brave endurance of the pain. Thus, the traditional circumcision ceremony was an opportunity for the initiate to display his bravery, to be assimilated to royalty, and to be celebrated by the entire village.

Female circumcision in the Sudan appears to share none of these characteristics. Infibulation has been illegal there since 1946 when the government led a massive campaign against it. Yet, in 1981, Cloudsley estimated that 99% of females were infibulated in the northern two-thirds of the Sudan. Cloudsley describes an infibulation she witnessed: The midwife sterilized the instruments, and placed the seven-year-old girl on a string angereeb, so the girl could tuck her heels through the strings. One woman held the upper body, the mother held one knee, and a third woman held the other knee. The midwife cleaned the girl's vulva with splrit-soaked cotton, and injected novacain into the clitoris and labia majora.

The girl tried her utmost to struggle free, but the women had her relentlessly in a vice from the first moment. They were experienced, in readiness, and worked as a team. There were shrieks and screams, but very quickly the novicaine took effect, and the girl became quieter.<sup>6</sup>

According to Cloudsley, the tip of the girl's clitoris was grasped with forceps and the structure was removed with a scalpel. The labia minora was pared off, and the adjacent medial parts of the labia majora were likewise removed. Stitches were inserted and penicillin powder applied. The girl was lifted into a specially-prepared string angereeb and

covered with her mother's bridal shawl. Later, the mother called in some children who sang a wedding song and danced the pigeon dance. According to Janice Boddy (1982), this dance is often performed by young, single girls at wedding parties, and is named after a bird which is thought to be pure (tahir) in Sudanese society. Later, the girl was dressed in a new, red satin dress, and wore jewelery which was meant to protect her from hemorrhage and the evil eye.

It would appear that Sudanese female circumcision is devoid of the grandiose and communal attributes which are present in male circumcision rituals. Therefore, why does the practice persist in the Sudan despite repeated attempts to eliminate it? Cloudsley witnessed a Sunna circumcision in a hospital, where the doctor also removed the girl's labia minora, for fear that the mother would otherwise take her daughter to a midwife for a complete infibulation. Sudanese women claim that it is shameful and improper to not be infibulated, and without it, they would not be able to find or keep a husband. They also say that it increases a man's sexual satisfaction by narrowing the vaginal orifice, and to make the rape of virgins impossible. In the ancient codes of practice, the demand that a girl be a virgin was comparable to the demand that cattle and other goods be without flaw; the absence of virginity was a denial of the husband's property rights. According to Cloudsley, few women see female circumcision as a form of sexual mutilation or oppression.

Boddy (1982) demonstrates how infibulation is dramatically interwoven into Sudanese social structure. In the Sudan, virginity is a social, rather than a physical category, and once a woman has been secluded and re-infibulated after childbirth, she is presented to her husband once again as a bride. Infibulation is an assertion of a woman's indispensability in the reproductive realm, and is thought to enhance her fertility. Status is derived from being the mother of sons, and the cofounder of a lineage. It is also derived from being less like men socially, physically, and sexually. Infibulation is said to make girls pure, clean, and smooth.

Boddy (1982) points out that in Sudanese culture, there is an association of heat and pain with acts of female purification, such as circumcision, and in the pre-marriage rituals of hair removal and the traditional smoke bath. There is also the belief that body orifices are dangerous places where "djinn" (malevolent spirits) may hide. Pain and illness are assumed to be caused by things coming apart, and treatment consists of fusing them back together. Boddy explains that in the hosh (house), women have their own door which leads into the women's quarters, and that this door and the house itself are a metaphor for the vagina and womb. The house is thought to protect a man's descendants, and the womb, which has been enclosed and purified by infibulation, protects a woman's fertility.

### Female Circumcision Among the Maasai

The Maasai of Kenya also practice female circumcision, yet Maasai culture is quite different than that of the Sudanese. Maasai culture discriminates age categories. Among women there are two such categories, "girlhood" and "womanhood". Among males, there are three age categories, "boyhood", "moranship", and "elderhood". According to Melissa Llewelyn Davies (1981), each group of males has certain rights and obligations to the other groups. Elders have rights to the sexuality and fertility of circumcised women. Morans are warriors who have rights to the sexuality and labor power of uncircumcised girls. Boys have rights of sexual access to no one. Married women are the property of elders, and are off-limits to morans.

A second vital element of Maasai culture is the division of property, in which the rights to livestock, inanimate objects, and human beings are owned. According to Davies, a violation of these rights, such as a lazy son or an adulterous wife, allows the owner of these rights to physically chastise the violator, who has effectively denied "ownership" through his or her disobedience. Women are inherently dependent, and their rights to cattle and children are always contingent, unlike the boys who will eventually become elders and own property. The payment of bridewealth is considered to be an act in which the husband buys the wife from the father. Therefore, Davies asserts

that the status of Maasai women is inferior to the status of men.

Both male and female circumcision mark the separation from early life, and are said to "remove the dirt of childhood." Solomon ole Saibull and Rachel Carr (1981) report that boys are recruited into youth camps for five years of intensive training before they are circumcised. Around the age of 15, the elaborate circumcision ritual begins, which includes the removal of body hair and rites of purification. He spends months in seclusion after his circumcision, his hair is braided, and he wears the clothes of warriors. H. A. Fosbrooke (1948) considers circumcision the visible sign of full admission to the tribe. It allows the boy, rather than the paternal uncle, to inherit the father's cattle, wives, and other property should the father die.

Female circumcision usually occurs shortly after the breasts have begun to develop. It involves the excision of the clitoris and the labia minora, and is performed by skilled, elderly women. Since females are thought to have less self control than males, they are not shamed even if they cry out or try to run away. Alfred Claud Hollis (1905) reports that on the day that a girl was to be circumcised, a sheep or a bullock was slaughtered, and the animal was thought to have caused her to be taken out from among the girls. An informant of Saibull and Carr describes her circumcision as having been extremely frightening and painful.

Her body was shaven, and no anesthetic was given. After the surgery, her mother applied herbs to stop the hemorrhage and prevent infection. The girl was secluded in her mother's home and branches of olive tree were hung over the door. She wore a leather skirt smeared with oil and black ash until she recovered and her seclusion ended.

According to Davies, female circumcision marks the acquisition of fertility, which is transactable as soon as it is acquired, while male circumcision transforms boys into adults and allows for the acquisition of the fullest rights in his person. However, Sanderson reports that Maasai girls used to look forward to their surgeries, for it meant that they had reached marriageable age without becoming pregnant. As stated before, it is mandatory that an uncircumcised girl have sexual relations with moran, but if she should become pregnant as a result, great shame would be brought upon her family. In past years, according to Saibull and Carr, an uncircumcised girl who was pregnant was laid at a cross road, with a goat skin covering her lower body. Pegs were driven through her palms and legs, and she was killed. In more recent years, the severity of the punishment has lessened, but she must still go through an ordeal and will not be allowed to have a marriage ceremony. The moran who fathered the child simply pays seven head of cattle to the girl's father.

Thus, it appears that it is the female who pays the most severe consequences when this norm is violated in

Maasai culture. Likewise, it seems that circumcision bestows more privileges upon males than upon females. According to Davies, Maasai women deny that circumcised or uncircumcised women are capable of achieving orgasm as men can, and therefore, circumcision does not alter capacity for sexual satisfaction. Circumcision is important in that it transforms a girl into an adult who may marry and bear children.

To the Maasai, personality traits associated with women, such as gracefulness and sexual attractiveness, are not those personality traits which are the most culturally-esteemed, such as braveness and ownership, which are associated with males. Likewise, it appears that female fertility is directly associated with female inferiority. An origin myth states that women, once equals with men, were opened up with bows by their former male hunting partners. Once they had acquired vaginas in this manner, the men married them and the women lost their vaginas to the creativity of men.

Unfortunately, what little is known about the traditional religion of the Maasai has been subject of great disagreement among scholars, although most agree that they were monotheistic. It does appear that aspects of traditional circumcision rituals were imbued with sacred meaning. According to John G. Galaty (1983), the slaughtered ox was positioned so that the head pointed southward and the tail pointed northward, in the directions from which the Maasai people were said to have migrated. The left side of the ox faced west, and the right side faced east, in the

directions of the sunrise and the sunset, which are symbolic of life and death. Thus, in this context, the ox symbolised the Maasai people iconically.

Besides conveying sacred meaning, there are several other cultural explanations of female circumcision. Davies claims that girls are thought to be unable to develop physically until "the path has been opened up" by moran through sexual intercourse. They must be further opened up by circumcision before they can legitimately bear children. Davies suggests that the denial of the naturalness of female fertility is associated with the fact that it is "ownable." It has also been said that the barren woman is pitied by the Maasai, and that her life would be "unbearable." Meritz Merker (1910) claims that the Maasai believe that female circumcision restrains passion in women, and that this has great advantages for the suckling child.

### Interpretation

The study of female circumcision is important in the development of a thorough understanding of both Sudanese and Maasai culture. This research has been an attempt to pull together and integrate many different theories about the meaning of female circumcision. A survey of these sources would suggest that the motivation for and meaning of female circumcision is multi-faceted in both Maasai and Sudanese culture. It is thought by informants to have originated with traditional religion, and is currently rationalized in this way. However, Islamic religious literature is highly

codified, while the Maasai have no such literature. Although one may hypothesize that there have been sacred aspects to the female circumcision ritual in both cultures, the cosmic realm is not explicitly emphasized. Thus, Lincoln's argument that women are elevated to the level of goddess to cosmically justify their labor is not pertinent in either context. This is not to discount the importance of symbolic constructs of genital mutilation, for there does appear to be an association between female circumcision and purity in Sudanese culture, as well as a metaphorical relationship between this practice and other objects and concepts in the culture. This suggests that the elimination of female genital mutilation might necessitate a complete reinterpretation of gender roles and female sexuality.

There are also other explanations of female circumcision by -informants and Western scholars. The Sudanese claim that the practice increases a man's sexual satisfaction, and the Maasai claim that it is not significant in terms of women's sexual fulfillment. Theories concerning clitoral-phallic sexuality and bi-sexuality might be seen as attempts to impose Western psychological categories onto non-Western peoples. Although it might indeed be possible that circumcision does serve to differentiate the sexes, one cannot help but wonder why such drastic measures would be necessary in such highly sexually-segregated societies. The psychoanalytic theory that fathers impose circumcision on their daughters to curb their own incestuous desires is perhaps more of the same ethnocentrism. First of all, in

neither culture do fathers directly impose the operation; it is performed by women and males hardly acknowledge its existence. Secondly, this explanation is never offered by informants.

More impressive are the explanations concerning social structure and the ways in which circumcision facilitates and marks status changes. Certainly, female circumcision is a rite of passage in a Van Gennepian sense. Yet, it seems significant that female circumcision rituals are so much less glamorous and public than those of males. This is perhaps related to the fact that circumcision does not immediately secure adult status for women; it only bestows the right to marry and bear children. Women in both cultures do not achieve a significant status change until they bear sons, and even then they can never hope to obtain the status available to males. Women's rights more closely resemble the rights of children than the rights of men in the sense that they have limited claims to children and property, and that they are always dependent on some male relative for status and for economic survival. Furthermore, a single, childless woman is a source of shame and a burden to her family in both cultures. Since circumcision is thought to be a necessary prerequisite for marriage and childbearing, it is essential for women to be circumcised in order to be spared public humiliation and to achieve the highest status available.

Also, it appears that female circumcision helps to define categories of women, and to protect men's rights as

property owners. However, this seems to work differently within the two cultures. In Maasai culture, female circumcision defines to whom a woman is sexually available; uncircumcised female "belong" to moran, and circumcised females "belong" to elders. In Sudanese culture, unmarried girls are the property of their fathers, and married women are the property of their husbands. In both situations, it is circumcision which permits the marriages which will ultimately transfer ownership from one group of males to another. However, in the Sudan, circumcision is thought to ensure virginity, which is highly valued. The Maasai, on the other hand, do not value virginity; it is mandatory that Maasai girls engage in sexual activity with moran. Yet, it is interesting to note that a Sudanese female who engages in sexual intercourse prior to marriage and an unwed Maasai girl who becomes pregnant before her circumcision both suffer physical punishment and ostracism, and in the past, the threat of death. This suggests that while norms concerning sexual behavior differ between the two cultures, what is ultimately being threatened is male control of women's sexuality. It is interesting to note, however, that cross-culturally, men employ a number of methods in an attempt to control women's sexuality. Why female circumcision is part of the repertoire in Sudanese and Maasai culture is a subject worthy of further study.

Yet, it seems that circumcision does fulfill an important role in these two cultures. Although women in both

cultures are seen as lacking the positive traits that men possess, only they can reproduce society. Children are important in that they bring a man status and security. Female circumcision in the Sudan is thought to guarantee a woman's virginity, reduce sexual desire, and make it less likely that she will indulge in extramarital affairs, thus assuring her husband's paternity of any children she might bear. Among the Maasai, female circumcision marks a change of status which legitimatizes childbearing, and prohibits sexual relations between married women and moran, who cannot claim paternity of their children. There seems to be an assumption here that women left to their own devices could or would not control their sexual behavior, and the result would be illegitimacy, which robs men of essential resources and threatens to reek havoc throughout society. Circumcision, therefore, can be seen as an attempt to control women's sexuality and reproductive potential in order to avoid illicit sexual behavior which would be detrimental to men.

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- 6 Cloudsley, Anne. P. 88

## A POSSIBLE HISTORICAL BASIS FOR LA LLORNA LEGEND

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The widespread legend of La Llorna seems to have a possible historical basis dating back to Mexico City area in 1550. A lovely young Indian girl, reportedly once of Aztec royalty, but now non-distinguished from peasant women under Spanish rule, sought out and received the affections of the local Spanish leader, one Don Nuno de Montesclaros. They became lovers. He promised her nothing; she hoped for marriage, and eventually she became the mother of two children. As often happens, once the interest in her face and figure became commonplace he ceased to pay any attention to her, and she was forced to return to her humble home.

Still desperately in love with her faithless lover, and without funds to support herself and her two children, she decided to confront the Don in his mansion and demand marriage, and if this failed, at least support for herself and her children. Upon reaching the estate of Don Montesclaros she was surprised to hear gay laughter and music. She hesitated to enter during a party of the Don's, especially since she was to make demands, although she thought them proper and just. She asked at the door what was the occasion for the party and was told it was the Don's wedding night. In despair she confronted the Don and sought redress for her plight. He calmly informed her that

marriage was never an option. Although she was an Indian princess, her current station in life made any such arrangement impossible. She then requested that he help support his two illegitimate children she bore as his lover, and again the Don laughed, and ordered her forcibly escorted from the property.

There seems little question that the rude and unfeeling treatment brought on anger and insanity in the air. Her cries rang through the streets as the poor girl, sobbing in frustration and humiliation, ran to her house, her face stained with tears and her hair in disarray. Her mind was bitter and confused. Like many a distraught woman who has been abandoned by her lover, she thought only of revenge, and in doing so transferred the hatred of the father to the children. Picking up a knife, she murdered her defenseless youngsters, the offspring of the nobleman. This was a foolish act, since apparently the nobleman had no emotional ties to either the mother or the children. Surely the youngsters were positively innocent of the events that brought them into this world. The children's bodies were carelessly thrown into Lake Tezcoco in a feeble attempt to hide the deed. This was unnecessary, since the next day the bloody madwoman, still wearing the clothes that spoke of the terrible unnatural deed she had committed, confessed her terrible secret to the authorities. The Don, seeing the opportunity to rid himself forever of this irritant, had her quickly brought to justice: convicted and hung. The Don even witnessed the event and requested that her body hang from the

gibbet for some hours as an example to others. Even in death he rejected her, allowing her body to be buried in a paupers grave. He apparently had little compassion for his ex-mistress. It is reported he slept very well the night after the execution in the arms of his new wife. There is no record to show that his new spouse had any knowledge of her husbands connection with the executed madwoman. However, the DonIs days of peace and tranquility were nearing an end. The wails of a ghost were nightly heard outside his mansion, and throughout the region. Along streams and shores of Lake Tezcoco, a woman in white cried constantly for her lost children, murdered and lying beneath the waters. It was believed that her deeds, although she was insane, barred her from Heaven, and made her an earthbou-nd spirit. She was forever to remain a ghost, seeking the bodies of her children she had killed, in hopes of their resurrection or at least a proper burial. This is just one possible source of the spirit of La Llorona, lithe weeping woman," whose presence is strongly believed by the Hispanic population from the American Southwest to the southern tip of South America. In our Southwest, harldy any household, and surely no village, is without its personal encounter with La Llorona, dressed either in white or black, crying along waterways, seeking her lost children. Folklorists claim an Aztec "water spirit" is the basis for these legends, while many claim that Dona Marina, the famous "Malenche," the mistress linguist of Cortez forms the

basis of the folktale. Malenche's linguistic knowledge gave Cortez the ability to converse with subject Indian tribes and have them join him in his campaign against the Aztecs, something he needed, if he was to succeed in his conquest of Mexico. The Indians claim she is the weeping woman and she cries not for her biological children, but for the Aztec nation she betrayed by allying herself with the Spanish against the Indians. However, the only source that gives actual dates and location is the story of Don Nuno de Montesclaros and his forsaken mistress. The ghost of Dona Luisa, however, must have reached his ears. All along Lake Tezcoco, and even beyond, wherever water was known, the ghost of the hanged woman cried out for her children whom she murdered. Her deeds must have made her earthbound and her own repentance for her deeds was to seek the bodies of her children and give them proper burial. This is just one origin account of La Llorona, for there are others, perhaps not as well documented, but certainly as entrenched in folklore as the one presented in this paper.

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## TWO PERSPECTIVES ON THE ETIOLOGY OF PIBLOKTOQ

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Mental illness may be viewed as a disorder common to the human condition and has long been the subject of investigation by various disciplines. Anthropology brings a cross-cultural perspective to this inquiry. Two divergent approaches to the etiology of mental illness<sup>1</sup> are evident in the literature on mental disorders in other cultures. This paper presents an overview of both etiological perspectives with Arctic Hysteria as the focus.

Various areas of the circumpolar region and particular populations inhabiting the areas have been specified in the literature as displaying hysterical-like mental disorders known as the Arctic Hysterias. This paper will generalize the subject matter to the "traditional" Eskimos (before culture contact change) who inhabit the polar regions and who exhibit these behaviors. The native term, "pibloktoq," will be used to denote this condition.

Pibloktoq, a condition which may or may not be a mental disorder, was first brought to the attention of Western scientists by early missionaries and explorers to the northern regions. It has occurred with some frequency among different cultural groups inhabiting the circumpolar regions of the globe. The condition has been surmised to have existed from pre-contact periods and continues to be

manifest in the population, though with less frequency, at the present time.

Pibloktoq is said to be found among, though not necessarily confined to, the Polar Eskimo of Northern Greenland. It has also been generalized by at least one investigator to be common to all aboriginal Eskimos, whatever the circumpolar region (Parker 1962: 77). Other epidemiological factors include accounts of seasonal variation in "outbreaks" of the disorder. Though cases have been known to occur throughout the year, its incidence is most prominent in winter when it can reach almost epidemic proportions (Wallace 1961a: 264). The literature cites adult females as the gender most predisposed to such attacks, though they have been known to occur among adult Eskimo males. There have been no reported cases among children (Gussow 1960: 227). Pibloktoq appears not to be racially specific. European sailors stranded in the Arctic regions for a period of time during the 1800's were reportedly afflicted with similar symptoms (Wallace and Ackerman 1960: 252). There is also a possibility of species non-specificity. "Fits" among sled dogs which usually end in death are regarded by the Eskimo as the same pibloktoq condition as the human variety (Wallace & Ackerman 1960: 253).

The pibloktoq attack is characterized by Western psychological definition as an hysteria, or a frenzied dissociative state of apparent sudden onset. Chief among the symptoms is the convulsive, hysterical seizure which frequently includes the conversion manifestation of paralysis

of the limbs (Vallee 1966: 55). A variety of symptoms have been judged common to the disorder, though all are not present in individual cases.<sup>2</sup> Symptoms include a loss of consciousness during the attack and amnesia of it afterward. The attacks are usually short-lived, lasting from a few minutes to an hour during which time the victim may tear off clothing and run naked into the snow or wade in frigid water, muttering or shouting unintelligibly. Bizarre superhuman feats are sometimes attempted, such as trying to walk the ceiling of an igloo or scaling an iceberg. The victim may throw things about or run around picking up all sorts of objects. Mimetic acts and feces eating have also been reported. Rhythmic singing or moaning and a beating together of the hands has in some cases preceded the flight out into the open and continues during such flights onto the tundra or into the hills. Physical symptoms include tremors, crying, fever, high pulse and bloodshot eyes. The episode usually leaves the victim weak, but rational, and prone to a long period of sleep (Gussow 1960: 224-227) •

Among the Eskimo, the attacks are not considered to be anything out of the ordinary as evidenced by the dispassionate attitude of on-lookers during an attack (Wallace & Ackerman 1960: 254) • Intervention by others is only forthcoming if it becomes evident that the victim of the attack may harm him or herself or others. Injury has rarely been reported despite the dangerous feats accomplished or attempted during such an episode. Despite the disruptive

nature of such behaviors, the Eskimos regard "going pibloktoq" as a natural thing, something that can happen to anyone (Gussow 1960: 229). Perhaps this is why no native theory of the origin of this disorder has ever been reported (Wallace & Ackerman 1960: 254).

Non-native and specifically Western speculations as to the cause of the Pibloktoq behaviors abound, however. Theories offered by early explorers and missionaries who first brought back accounts of these "bizarre" manifestations among the Eskimos include an environmental theory emphasizing "long polar nights," severe climate, and long periods of isolation (Parker 1962: 79). Explorers Peary and MacMillan felt that the attacks were caused by abuse because the "disease" seemed to occur in women "of jealous disposition" who had been abused by their mates or who perceived themselves to be somehow abused or neglected (Gussow 1960: 224). Other and possibly more plausible theories offered by anthropologists can be categorized into two major perspectives: the psychological which encompasses the psychoanalytic and psycho-social schools of thought and the biological perspective which holds that many behaviors classified as psychological disorders are in fact physiologically based.

The psychological explanation for pibloktoq rests on the determination that the behavior exhibited during an attack falls into the Western psychoanalytic category of "hysteria." According to psycholanalytic definition, hysteria is a "functional" (psychogenic) mental disorder (Wallace 1961a:

167). The first published account of pibloktoq interpreted in terms of psychoanalytic theory dates to 1913. After his examination of the writings of explorers Peary and MacMillan, A.A. Brill, a follower of Freud, determined the seizures to be classic cases of hysteria. Thus, various accounts of pibloktoq were interpreted in Freudian fashion to suggest that the seizures were expressions of frustrations over ungratified love and affection, a common diagnosis of European women thought to be suffering from hysteria during the Freudian "heydey" (Wallace 1961: 264). The fact that most reported cases of pibloktoq occurred among women reinforced this interpretation.

Gussow also viewed the behavior during a pibloktoq episode from a psychoanalytic perspective and determined it to be regressive, a display for the purpose of satisfying an "infantile need for love and emotional support" (1960: 233). He attributed the flight reaction during an attack to an unconscious "invitation to be pursued, *i.e.*, to be attended to, taken care of" (1960: 233-34). This and other behaviors of pibloktoq he felt were manifestations of the Eskimo personality which he characterized as "psychologically primitive and infantile" (1960: 234). He felt that the "disturbed" individual was fraught with some unconscious anxiety that was brought to the surface number of the "real world" threats indigenous to the Eskimo lifestyle.<sup>3</sup> The seizure is viewed as a defense mechanism aimed at restoring ego balance (1960: 233).

Seymour Parker (1962) as well as Gussow believed the pibloktoq "performance" to be culturally patterned (Gussow 1960: 233). The nudity exhibited during an attack is not uncommon inside a well heated igloo nor is it uncommon to roll naked in the snow after a sweat bath. The unintelligible sounds as well as the mimicking of animal sounds during an attack may find their origin in the ethnic shamanistic religious rites. Shouting, singing and hurling insults are central aspects of the "drum song," a ritual which allows a socially acceptable outlet for feelings of anger and hostility. Mourning rites feature crying, moaning and wailing, all common components of pibloktoq (Gussow 1960: 232-33). Gussow points out that such group "hysteroid" behavior may be a model for the individual catharsis of pibloktoq during times of personal stress.

Parker further explains the pibloktoq syndrome in terms of Eskimo personality and culture. He believes that hysteria is the correct classification for the pibloktoq behaviors because various characteristics are also found in other societies predisposed to hysterical behavior<sup>4</sup> (1962: 81). Among the characteristics he cites as leading to a predisposition to hysterical reactions among the Eskimo are "child rearing techniques, the cooperative social organization and communalistic value system of Eskimos, and the provisions of sanctioned outlets for hostility and role models for hysterical-like behavior in their traditional religion" (Vallee 1966: 56).

Child rearing practices and early socialization are characterized as permissive and the child quickly learns that his fretting will bring quick and comforting response from his environment<sup>ll</sup> (Parker 1962: 92). The resulting lack of ability to repress wishes and needs, according to psychoanalytic theory, results in the adult's infantile display of pibloktoqll to call attention to needs in order to have them satisfied (Foulks 1972: 20; Parker 1962: 92; Gussow 1960: 233).

Parker also views the co-operative and communalistic lifestyle of the traditional Eskimo to be a causative factor in hysterical reactions because there is little room in such a social organization for independent thought, need, and behavior. The close proximity with which everyone lived left one under the watchful eye of the community. Just as the community was responsible for the care and survival of the individual, so did the actions of the individual affect the survival of the community. Each group member had a role to play and there was little room for deviation. Social control was maintained through ridicule, shame and humiliation (Foulks 1972: 115). The necessary repression of anger and competitiveness in such a social structure was released during the periodic "drum song"<sup>ll</sup> ritual and the shamanistic rites. Vallee points out that societies where one is bound to certain limited roles, "role incongruence" between what is expected of one and what one is actually capable of being may be a factor in

psychological stress (Foulks 1972: 109). Thus the tenuous existence in a harsh environment necessitates this particular social organization and communalistic value system. Although the means to relieve the additional stressors imposed by such a system are built into the culture, the outlet may not be enough for some individuals who find a catharsis by "going pibloktoq."

The psychological perspective, then, emphasizes internal, often unconscious conflicts emanating from the subject's early social learning and conflicts in the current social situation as precipitating factors in mental illness (Wallace 1961a: 172). This perspective espouses the belief that pibloktoq is indeed a psychopathology and that it serves the purpose of reducing individual tension and anxiety (Wallace 1961: 257) •

Whereas the psychological perspective emphasizes psychosocial factors in the etiology of mental dysfunction, the biological perspective looks more to organic determinants. Wallace has noted that "various known organic impairments can and do regularly produce symptomatology practically indistinguishable from the whole gamut of 'functional' symptomatology ranging from psychoses to the transient situational reactions" (Wallace 1961a: 172; emphasis added). This alternative view of the etiology of mental disorder includes theories of nutrition emphasizing diet desynchronized calcium rhythms brought on by the erratic light/dark cycles of the Arctic, infections affecting the central nervous system and epilepsy. These various factors

are said to produce disturbances in physiological functioning with resulting behavioral patterns identical to those displayed in pibloktoq.

Two Scandinavian investigators who studied nutritional deficiencies in Greenland found dietary deficiencies in calcium among both the Eskimo and their sled dogs (Wallace & Ackerman 1960: 255). The arctic environment limits the types of food available for the traditional Eskimo diet. The almost exclusive carnivorous diet with no dairy products and little vegetation, both good sources of calcium, were proposed to account for this deficiency. It was hypothesized that since low blood serum calcium can adversely affect the central nervous system, resulting behavior would be similar to that described in the arctic hysterias of the Eskimo. Later studies by Foulks (1972) revealed that the subjects tested were not chronically hypocalcemic (deficient calcium) though he did not rule out calcium levels as a factor in attacks of pibloktoq since most subjects tested below normal range. Other factors could tip the already tenuous calcium balance and further lower serum calcium levels bringing on a pibloktoq episode (Foulks 1972: 8).

Wallace felt that a state of hypocalcemia was adequate to explain the symptoms of tetany<sup>5</sup> often accompanying a pibloktoq attack. The low exposure to solar radiation due to the amount of clothing necessitated by the climate, as well as the lack of sunlight during winter months, would

sufficiently inhibit adequate vitamin D<sub>3</sub> formation through the skin. Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> is necessary for proper absorption of dietary calcium. Wallace hypothesized that in addition to low calcium intake of the diet, plus low vitamin D<sub>3</sub> syntheses, hyperventilation by certain individuals during times of emotional stress would further lower the serum calcium level, producing the seizures and tetany reported in pibloktoq episodes (Wallace 1961: 265-67).

Stimulated by the proposed link to hypocalcemia put forth by Foulks (1972) and Wallace & Ackerman(1960), David Landy (1985) has more recently suggested an alternative nutritionally based hypothesis, hypervitaminosis A, as a precipitating factor in some cases of pibloktoq. The high concentrations of vitamin A found in the liver and fat of animals traditional in the Eskimo diet, which likely contributed to the adaptive advantage of keen eyesight, may also, at times, have accumulated to toxic levels sufficient to provoke episodes characteristic of pibloktoq. Landy believes that extreme behavior exhibited in such episodes may be responses to the painful effects of vitamin A intoxication whose symptoms include severe headache, joint pain, intracranial pressure, nausea, and vertigo. Though he admits that not all the physical effects usually associated with vitamin A toxicity, such as desquamation or peeling of the skin, have been reported for pibloktoq, he feels that many somatic symptoms may have been overlooked by early

investigators in favor of the more dramatic psychopathological symptoms.

The inconsistent light/dark cycles of the polar regions have been found to seriously disturb certain physiological rhythms of the Eskimo. Biological rhythms, both internal and environmental, need to be in synchrony for proper functioning of the central nervous system. Two important environmental synchronizers are the 24-hour light/dark cycles and the accompanying social patterns of sleep and activity. As is typical of the polar high latitude, the light/dark cycles change dramatically during certain times of the year. The social patterns of sleep/activity change as well. When certain bodily rhythms "free-run" out of phase with the 24-hour sleep/activity cycle, "intermittent" psychoses and epilepsy can result (Foulks 1972: 84) •

Bohlen found that at all seasons the Subject's calcium cycles were out of synchrony with the body's other biological cycles and with the 24-hour day. She suggests that the resulting interference with normal central nervous system functioning would manifest in episodes of pibloktoq in individuals predisposed psychologically to anxiety attacks. In those individuals that may already possess some organic cerebral pathology, the additional load of dysfunctional calcium metabolism could precipitate epileptic seizures. Certain forms of epilepsy manifest in behavior resembling pibloktoq (Foulks 1972: 84) •

Another speculation on the cause of central nervous system damage that may eventually lead to displays of mental

dysfunction are the respiratory tract infections common among the Eskimo. Such infections are said to be the result of the cold, dry air of the arctic climate. These infections often lead to high fevers, middle ear disease and meningitis, all capable of adversely affecting central nervous system functioning (Foulks 1972: 115).

The biological perspective, then, views many of the behaviors present during a pibloktoq episode as signs of severe physiological distress. Causative factors leading to this acute condition are believed to primarily stem from the physical environment: limited food sources, extreme temperature and erratic light/dark cycles.

Viewed independently, the psychological and the biological perspectives each present plausible explanations for pibloktoq. On the one hand, the seizure is looked upon as conversion hysteria brought on by extreme anxiety. On the other hand, it is seen as caused by tetany brought on by physiological stress. Both perspectives view the behaviors as an individual imbalance, the one a mental imbalance, the other a physiological imbalance. When viewed side by side, each approach reveals the weakness of the other. The psychological perspective tends to view the body as the constant and mental functions as the variables. The opposite is true of the biological perspective.

Both approaches yield primary causative factors on the etiology of pibloktoq. Each view brings with it other secondary factors: family and social systems, cultural beliefs and practices, nutrition, climate, etc. When the

mind/body dichotomy evident in the two linear approaches is dissolved, however, the two perspectives can be integrated into a holistic ecological approach. This perspective looks to multi-casual determinants of behavior from within the human organism's environment - social, cultural and physical.

Viewed in this respect, pibloktoq may be the result of both psychological and physiological causative factors developing from the milieu of other attenuating factors in the environment. Pibloktoq may well be both psychologically and biologically functional within the Eskimo's environmental matrix. Pibloktoq, as a catharsis may be necessary to the psyche in such an environment. The physiological tendency toward hypocalcemia and the resulting periodic episodes of tenany may have been genetically selected over more serious physical impairments.<sup>7</sup>

The notion that pibloktoq is characteristic of the aboriginal populations inhabiting the polar regions may be entirely correct given the environmental matrix. What is incorrect is to view it ethnocentrically and label it a mental disorder and then generalize that label to the basic Eskimo personality.

Behavior has been "psychologically overdetermined" (Foulks 1972) and in that respect the biological perspective may bring a balance. However, many factors enter into human behavior and different factors become salient from one culture to another, from one individual to another. By taking an ecological perspective of human function, behavior

that now draw the label "mental illness" with the attending negative connotations may be viewed as "normal" adaptive responses of a human organism to its particular ecosystem. The human body as well, may be viewed as a synergistic whole where dysfunctions are not categorized as socially "acceptable" (i.e. physical in nature), or socially "unacceptable" (i.e. mental in nature). The term "mentally ill" that so often jeopardizes the continuing integrity of the individual so labeled, may be more selectively used or fallout of use entirely.

## ENDNOTES

1 Though there is confusion in the literature as to a definition of mental illness, a general "Western" definition of abnormal or aberrant behavior which results in an individual's incapacity to carry out his or her normal role can be inferred. The definition of mental illness appears to be subject to variation depending on the perspective taken to explain the cause of the mental condition.

2 Wallace summarizes the "classical course of the syndrome" from the accounts of cases observed by travelers to the region:

1. Prodrome. In some cases a period of hours or days is reported during which the victim seems to be mildly irritable or withdrawn.
2. Excitement. Suddenly, with little or no warning, the victim becomes wildly excited. He may tear off his clothing, break furniture, shout obscenely, eat feces, or perform other irrational acts. Usually he finally leaves shelter and runs frantically onto tundra, or ice pack, plunges into snowdrifts, climbs onto icebergs, and may actually place himself in considerable danger, from which pursuing persons usually rescue him, however. Excitement may persist for a few minutes up to about a half hour.
3. Convulsions and Stupor. The excitement is succeeded by convulsive seizures in at least some cases, by collapse, and finally by stuporous sleep or coma lasting for up to twelve hours.
4. Recovery. Following an attack, the victim behaves perfectly normally; there is amnesia for the experience. Some victims have repeated attacks; others are not known to have more than one." (Wallace 1961: 263).

3GUSSOW believes that the "Eskimo culture institutionalizes 'hysteroid' behavior" in communal "emotive dances and chants" as a "memorialization of all misfortunes and hardships" indigenous to their lives. Such behavior, he believes "reveals the major axes of stress and trauma embedded in Eskimo culture: threat of starvation, insufficiencies of food, loss of members through hunting and other accidents, as well as the physical discomforts and dangers ever present in their lives" (Gussow 1966: 229) •

4parker found that hysterical behavior tends to prevail in societies:

- a) Where early socialization experiences are not severe and involve minimal repression of dependency needs and sexual drives. In such societies, where there is relatively high gratification of dependency need, the modal super-ego structure will not be severe or rigid.
- b) Where there is an emphasis on communalistic values, a relatively great amount of face-to-face cooperative patterns, and high expectation of mutual aid.
- c) Where the female role involves considerable disadvantages and lower self-esteem compared to the role of the male.
- d) Where the religious system involves beliefs in supernatural possession and where "hysterical-like" behavior models are provided in the institutionalized religious practices." (Parker 1962: 81)

5"The neurological symptoms of tetany include characteristic muscular spasms of hands, feet, throat, face, and other musculature, and in severe attacks, major convulsive seizures. The tetanic syndrome may be precipitated by trivial stimuli and is usually brief and

sporadic rather than continuous (continuous tetany may of course be fatal)" (Wallace 1961: 226).

6Wallace believes that an investigation into the possibility of a tendency toward epilepsy being genetically determined by inbreeding in a small, isolated group in Greenland would be a worthy one since reports have been made of a high incidence of epilepsy in northern Greenland compared to other parts of the island.

7One factor that mitigates the calcium deficiency hypothesis in pibloktoq is the rarity of rickets and osteomalacia among the Eskimo which would also result from a calcium deficiency. Wallace theorized that "the Eskimo physiology must for generations have been forced to 'choose' between tetany and rickets". . "and has chosen tetany as the lesser of two evils. (More precisely, of course, it is the environment which has selected the better-fitted physiological alternative.) Rickets and osteomalacia would in a primitive Eskimo economy be fatal because they are physically crippling. Sporadic attacks of tetany, even if occasionally damaging or even fatal, would be by comparison merely an annoyance" (Wallace 1961: 268) .

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