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Errata

The editors regret to point out a computer error in the printing of the figure of Daniel Raffalovich's article that appeared in Volume XXX, No. 1 (1988) on page 90. Please note that in the right-hand column the topmost entry ("Heaven") should be deleted and the remaining entries all moved up one rung. The corrected figure will thus show, as its top rung, "gods; immortal (full life)," on the right, adjacent to "Heaven," on the left. On the bottom, "Gods; immortal (full death)," on the right, is adjacent to "(Hades)" on the left.

Please note also the correct institutional affiliation for Dr. Raffalovich: it is California State Polytechnic University (as incorrectly stated under his name on page 87 and correctly stated under "Contributors," p. 111).

We apologize to our readers and to Dr. Raffalovich for these errors.

FROM SHAMANS TO HEALERS: THE SURVIVAL OF AN INUPIAQ ESKIMO SKILL[1]

Edith Turner
University of Virginia

Abstract: This paper is based on eleven months' fieldwork among the Inupiat Eskimos of Point Hope, Alaska. The effects of missionization on Inupiaq life are discussed in the first part of the paper. The Inupiat have been fully Christianized but have retained much of their pre-Christian symbolic culture. The second and focal part of the paper, an essay in the "anthropology of experience," describes the author's observation of and participation in contemporary tribal healing as practiced in Point Hope.

Résumé: Cet article fait suite à une recherche de onze mois sur le terrain parmi les Esquimaux Inupiats de Point Hope en Alaska. La première partie traite de l'influence missionnaire sur les modes de vie Inupiats. Bien que ce groupe soit aujourd'hui chrétien, il a néanmoins préservé une bonne partie de son patrimoine symbolique préchrétien. La deuxième partie de ce travail, qui est la plus importante, se veut une « anthropologie de l'expérience ». A cette fin, l'auteur présente ses observations personelles et décrit les rites médicaux pratiqués aujourd'hui par les Inupiats de Point Hope.

Introduction

In Alaska of recent years the vast majority of work in the social sciences has been on various branches of history, archaeology, economics, and the medical pole of medical anthropology. It is now time to make studies of contemporary social life in Native northern Alaska. In the present study I go beyond economics or Western medical concerns to present-day healing which includes an element of "Eskimo spirituality." The Inupiat have been fully Christianized but have retained much of their pre-Christian symbolic culture. My paper focuses on contemporary tribal healing as practiced in Point Hope—a craft that combines the practical and spiritual in a unique fashion. Although the area was new to me,[2] I made a full-length study of eleven months among the Inupiat Eskimos of Point Hope.

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Point Hope is a very ancient whaling settlement on the northwest tip of Alaska, with a population of about 600 of whom about 30 are White, the rest being Inupiat Eskimos. The people are U.S. citizens and at the same time members of a village Native Corporation that is near bankruptcy. An air pervades the village that is a mixture of prosperity and economic collapse. Ups and downs of mood are prevalent, the supreme *up* occurring at the climax of the whaling season.

In order to join in the life of the village I rented a house next door to a whaling captain and helped his wife with her daily work. Because charges for tape recording were exceedingly high, and because general rapport could not easily be gained when using a tape recorder or even in the presence of a pen and notepad, I reserved taped documentation for language learning only. Fieldnotes were completed from memory every night, the facts being checked and rechecked as the year went on. My language teacher, Dorcus Rock, was herself a traditional healer, which facilitated the study of healing.[3] Dorcus and the other healers regarded me as an encouraging friend, and later as a pupil in healing. I felt myself to be their advocate, lending myself to the duty of "advocacy anthropology" (E. Turner 1987:x).

In addition, in July 1988 I was able to spend a month on St. Lawrence Island, comparing the way of life of the Siberian Yupik with that of the Inupiaq. In August I made a five day trip to the Siberian Yupik in the Chukotka Province of the U.S.S.R., which provided more comparative material.

To understand how the Inupiat developed, we have to go back to the years from 1912 to the 1930s when a drastic change took place in the lives of the Inupiat at Point Hope. They had been living in underground sod houses and were becoming interested in Christianity. Then, during this period, the missionaries moved them from their sod houses into frame houses surrounding a school. The new site constituted the first mission settlement of Tigara (different from the present site of modern Point Hope which is further up the spit). From the accounts of Mollie Oktollik, Tigluk Oviok, and other elders it was clear that this mission-induced event constituted a threshold of change, a *limen*, in their history. Details of the history will make clear the context of the change, and we will find that a somewhat different type of healing developed which contstituted a marker of the new kind of Inupiaq Eskimo.

My paper will be divided into two main sections. The first will give the historical events, in the course of which it is possible to identify the stages through which the culture passed and to trace the effect of the coming of the Whites on that once populous coastline. The second section will unfold present day healing in the mode of the anthropology of experience, giving close-up cases to convey a sense of a healing that is different from our own. General features of healing will be illustrated and discussed to show how a hybrid form of healing works in a modern context.

The Historical Context of Inupiaq Healing

Phase 1: Before Contact

Archaeology shows that "at least 1000 persons lived [at Point Hope] during the early part of the nineteenth century, before diseases were communicated to the natives by American whalers" (Rainey 1947:236). The people's own traditions give a figure of 5,000. My own viewing of the twelve mile beach remains and scattered up-river sites extending for some twenty miles would support the Eskimo claim. Larsen and Rainey (1948) suggest that around 400 A.D. at the time of the Inupiaq culture there were 800 houses at Point Hope. Seven or eight people to a house was normal in sod dwellings (Shinkwin 1978:29), so the possibility of a high population—at least among the earlier Inupiaq peoples—appears to be substantiated. Work on the U.S. Navy Research ship *Thomas* has determined that Bering sea water is the richest in nutrients in the world, further supporting the claim.

The religion before contact, according to old people's reports given to Rainey (1947), Spencer (1959), and Rasmussen (1952), consisted of various spirit elements: the knowledge, experience, and use of a shaman's animal spirit helper, the shaman's awareness of her or his own spirit and its power to go forth in trance, and the consciousness of the exigencies and wanderings of a lay person's spirit at times of sickness and danger.

The shaman was of great assistance to her or his community. (It is possible that in precontact days shamans were often women, one in each family. Hints of this are found in the accounts I have received in which a shaman might be a close woman relative). She or he could heal—sometimes by sucking out harmful intrusions, find lost objects, predict and change the weather, bring animals for the hunters, and revive and speak with the dead. Drumming at that time often bespoke ritual performance on the occasion of some crisis, that is, in "contingency" ritual, stimulated by the need to cope with sickness, bad weather, being lost, hunting needs, and so on. A classic healing ritual consisted of a public shamanic séance with the sick person in the circle, drummers playing and some of the people attending, a number of whom went into trance themselves. The shaman danced and sang his personal spirit song until he became dissociated, would fall beside his patient, and allow his spirit to leave to follow the fleeing soul of the sick person. With the aid of his own helping spirit—one gained at his initiation—he would seize the fleeing soul and return with it to the living scene of the séance, where he would restore the missing soul to the patient and, along with it, the patient's health. Here it should be noted that psychological benefits were a by-product, and that the spirit action and healing were primary and direct.

In addition, the religion was expressed at calendrical festivals: the Clan Food Exchange, the First Full Moon Rites, the Messenger Feast, the Early Spring Whale Distribution, the Whaling Festival, the Fall Whale Distribution, and the Bladder Festival, all of which had the effect of communicating with the animals and bringing them near to the hunters.

As with competing religions throughout the world, competing shamans became a danger to the community, using their powers to kill. It was the corruption of the old religion that appeared to the missionaries as the typical characteristic of the shamanic era, and affects attitudes to this day.

Phase 2: From Contact to the Missions

My material is drawn fron Burch (1981), Rasmussen (1930, 1952) and from the archaeologist Rainey (1947) who wrote a study of the pre-mission culture based on accounts of old people given during his fieldwork from 1940 to 1941. Rainey stated that during his time with the Point Hope Inupiat the people obviously still believed in the old religion and its powers.

The earliest known white contact with Point Hope probably took place when the Russian Shishmarev landed there in 1820 (Shinkwin 1978:24). White commercial whaling became intense from 1850 onwards. A commercial whaling depot known as Jabbertown, named for the various languages spoken there (Portuguese, Russian, and many others) was set up five miles east along the spit. These contacts brought measles, venereal disease, influenza, tuberculosis, and alcohol to the village. The Frankson family and others in Point Hope have a tradition that whalemen and Revenue Marine persecuted and killed shamans. Traders drummed up a lively business in whiskey and rum which, in the view of the missionary Hoare who arrived later, was the principal reason for the disastrous drop in population (King 1951:86-87).

Scholars whose work deals with Inupiaq healing in the commercial whaling era include Fortuine (1985) who held that two types of healing existed with different roots: shamanistic healing and empirical healing. Lantis (1947:87-88, 107-109; 1950; 1959) and Murphy (1964) also documented southern Eskimo healing. Shamanistic healing as described above continued in this era.

Phase 3: The Era of the White Episcopal Mission, 1890-1961

At this time, as far as the practical aspects of Inupiaq life were concerned, the daily work of sea and land hunting went on much as it had done in precontact days on the long narrow spit of gravel facing the Arctic ocean—with the addition of firearms and of supplies of store food to supplement their diet. The basic patrilateral kinship system remained, retaining adoption, namesake, and clan links,[4] with their benefits in social cohesion (see Burch 1975; Foote

1966; Giddings 1977; *Puiguitkaat* 1978; Pulu 1980; also VanStone published the one full length social anthropological account of subsistence and economics, *Point Hope: An Eskimo Village in Transition* 1962, dealing with his on-the-spot fieldwork from 1955 to 1956). The population at Point Hope was now very small. In the depth of the people's trouble, the missionaries arrived with some sort of good message.

Written material on the mission itself is limited. John W. Marshall (1954) wrote a Masters thesis for Pasadena College entitled *The History of the Protestant Missions in Alaska*, in which he describes the arrival and work of the first missionary at Point Hope, Dr. John B. Driggs, who was both a clergyman and a medical doctor. Driggs published a short account of his experiences entitled *Mission Life at Point Hope*. It was written in a cheerful tone but contained the passage: "My earliest experience on Point Hope had not been very agreeable" (1906:12). He set up what was to become the Episcopal Mission of St. Thomas at Tigara Village (derived from the Inupiaq word for Point Hope, Tikigaq, "the pointing finger"). Driggs also started a school. He had an empiricist tendency and was known as a strong character who was foremost in persuading the people to espouse the Western medical system. At the time of his arrival in 1890 the population had dropped to 250 because of tuberculosis and measles.[5] By 1908 it had fallen further to 179.

A further piece partly in the setting of Point Hope is a 146 page manuscript on the life of the next missionary, the Rev. Reginald Hoare, written by Basil King and entitled *An Apostle of the Stone Age* (1951). Hoare was a man whose fervent aim was to change the ways of the Eskimos and bring them into a modern Christian world. In 1920 he was murdered by a white village schoolteacher who was in love with a Point Hope woman. A later missionary, Archdeacon F. W. Goodman, wrote "The Jubilee of St. Thomas Mission" (1940). Letters by Rowland Cox and other Point Hope missionaries exist in the Rasmussen Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Further scattered references to the present-day church exist in the records of the Episcopal Central Chapter meetings which are held in Kotzebue.

Although the Church and its mission house had been built two miles from the village for fear of unfriendly Eskimos, it was well attended, and by 1916 the people could sing like "the best-trained congregation in the States" (King 1951:100). Elders report that life was very happy in Tigara Village. Sometime before 1907, the Tigara Villagers voluntarily imposed an embargo on rum, causing the traders to complain to the missionaries (King 1951:88-89). A word should be said about the missionaries themselves. As Episcopalians they taught a straight non-folk and strictly biblical brand of Christianity. "Strength" is the quality the mission writers praise in these men, along with their devotion to the tasks of missionizing, improving the lives of the people, and saving them from exploitation by the whalers. "Young men and women

looked upon Dr. Driggs as a father" (Marshall 1954:26). But according to Spencer in 1952 the people did not consider that the missionaries possessed spiritual power (1959:314). This has been corroborated recently by a Point Hope Inupiaq whaling captain: "They just did a job."

The missionaries opposed all manifestations of the old Inupiaq religion and all aspects of the culture that had reference to it. They established the celebrations of the Whites, and at these celebrations Inupiat dances were performed, but only those of a social and secular nature. Shamanic performances were everywhere abolished. The Inupiaq language was forbidden in the school. Inupiat adults remember the post by the entrance to the school, beyond which any child that spoke Inupiat would be punished with a ruler on his knuckles or with sticking plaster across his mouth. This training coloured and re-educated the minds of Inupiat about their own culture. However, recently there has been a reversal: now the speaking of the language constitutes a statement in favor of Eskimo nationalism.

The mission was eminently successful: the new village was built and an American Episcopalian culture was established which the people took deeply to themselves. Curiously this turnabout set the healers off in a powerful new direction, for Inupiaq healing had always had profound roots in religion; and now that a new religion was provided, itself with deep supernatural elements—whatever the prosaic tone of its White expounders—new nourishment was supplied to those sources of healing.

Meanwhile sickness was prevalent, partly owing to the chilly above-ground homes of the new village. The growing tuberculosis epidemic reached its peak in Point Hope during World War II, thereafter coming under Public Health control. Inupiaq healing continued, having quietly changed its spirit helpers from shamanic ones to the Christian God—an almost painless turning point. At this stage it appears that the techniques of healing were more varied than they were later, in 1988, and included the use of a number of herbs, manipulations, surgery such as "poking" (minor operation involving bloodletting at the seat of pain), and midwifery (DeLapp and Ward 1981; Lucier, VanStone, and Keats 1971). Two Eskimo midwives, Beatrice Vincent and Daisy Oomittuk who had had some instruction at the White hospital in Kotzebue, served the village. These women also possessed the old gift of healing, in contrast to the "health aides"[6] of today. James VanStone well remembers the two midwives sweeping through the village on their way to a confinement (personal communication), and such was their reputation that the new clinic of 1989 was dedicated to their memory. In the 1960s and 1970s came the era of a great healer of another village, Della Keats of Noatak, who was renowned throughout indigenous Alaska for her "healing hands," and who taught many of the present day healers of northern Alaska, including Rosella Stone of Point Hope. Here also we see the turning point in

Inupiaq healing, with more emphasis on the hands. Della was also a Christian, though not an Episcopalian, Noatak being a Quaker village (Juul 1971; Lucier and VanStone 1987, 1987). During her lifetime a system of "tribal doctor" services was set up, beginning in Kotzebue under the Maniilaq Association. The "tribal doctors" were traditional healers first and foremost, although they were paid on a contract basis and were under instruction from hospital authorities not to give treatments such as "poking" and seal oil about which the medical authorities had expressed concern. Unpaid healers in Point Hope prefer to be termed "healers," not "doctors," to distinguish their craft from the work of Western doctors (Dorcus Rock, personal communication). I have accordingly adopted the term myself.

Once the tuberculosis epidemic decreased, the population began to rise. Western health care improved. Because of the hospitalization of maternity cases the infant mortality rate dropped to something near the normal U.S. figures. The number of health aides was increased from two to four, and in the 1980s the pay, which was poor at the start of the health aide system, was raised. In the era of North Slope oil alcoholism and its attendant hazards became a serious threat. Owing to the nucleated layout of the village, the many contacts with outside, and the school policy of winter indoor exercise only, minor epidemics spread easily—conditions that remain to this day.

Healing was still flourishing. When asked about healing, Lilly Oktollik, aged eighty, prefaced what she had to say about healers with the subject of shamans: "A medicine woman was under the house, she was going to kill us. I saw the door handle turn, but there was no one there." Lilly demonstrated graphically. "The medicine woman came in to kill us, but I held out my cross." She held out the large cross hanging from her neck. "The person ran away." I asked her if she had aches and pains in her back. Lilly smiled and groaned. "Much." "Did people work on your back for you?" "The hands," she exclaimed. "When they put their hands on me, I felt the pain go right away. Many people have the good hands."

Today among older Point Hope people the initial reaction to any reference to shamans is horror: "They were bad, they killed people. It was devil worship." As had Lilly, Dinah Frankson, aged 78, then went on to recall with gratitude and pride a healing act performed in the style of the old healers by her aunt. This ambivalence was explained by an Inupiaq discussant who preferred to withhold his name. He said "Bad shamanism [killing sorcery] was got rid of and good shamanism remained and became what you call tribal healing." Aspects of the old culture were carried through and are now responsible for a type of healing that has strong elements of the old gift of clairvoyance, a gift vouchsafed to shamans through a spirit helper. The present Eskimo healers are indeed helped by a spirit, but it is the spirit of "The Good Lord." A pair of accounts illustrate the two types of spirit:

Spencer describes the shaman of pre-Christian days: "He would have himself bound. The group, seated in the darkened house, would hear him fly up through the skylight of the house, hear his voice on the roof, and after a period of silence, hear him return" (1959:304). My friend Annie said in 1988: "I had a dream. I dreamed about Martin Luther King. I dreamed we were in the old townsite, and his face was in the skylight. I could see it. Saying something—something—and then his face turned into God's face." Annie's eyes squeezed with the memory, her voice softened and became gravelly, like brown sugar.

A substitution has occurred between the two accounts, one spirit for another. In the second story a transformation takes place as Martin Luther King's face becomes God's face. And we see the tendency toward ethnic nationalism, shown in the appearance of the ethnic martyr, Martin Luther King.

Such readiness for transformation can be inferred for the early misssion times. Spirit transformation was already deep in pre-Christian Inupiaq culture, as evinced in art, where whale/person, walrus/person, seal/person were often depicted in some stage of transformation; as they are still in contemporary carving. One first sees the outward form of the being, then the inner soul or *inua*, emerging from its flesh, its "parka." Annie saw a human being, Martin Luther King; then she saw his inner soul, God. The skylight was present in both accounts, representing the light from above; also conceived as the door of the soul, framing its usual path. It can be seen how a new conception of spirit, alive and using modern Western symbols, has taken over in this generation.

Phase 4: After Oil-Induced Inflation

Before going into detail about healing as it exists today, a brief picture of contemporary social conditions at Point Hope must be drawn in order to highlight what tribal healing means to the people now. The community still derives approximately 60% of its food from subsistence sources, that is, from whales, seals, walruses, belugas (or white whales), caribou, polar bears, ducks, fish, crabs, eggs, tundra greens, and berries (see also Lowenstein 1981). Since contact, the original culture has been swamped by outside influences, and one cannot help but see the present huge American school as an almost invincible weapon of assimilation. Four of the teachers predict the abandonment of subsistence activities in the near future. The distributive industry encourages the demand for sugar and candy, sweetened drinks, tobacco, and store food. Alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs find their way into the village and the results of addiction are violence and crime.

Indeed, since Rainey's lament in 1940 that Inupiaq culture was doomed, many researchers have expressed the same despair. They see education as the only hope for obtaining jobs either inside or outside the village—jobs which are not numerous enough to absorb the workers in the 1980s. But Eskimo culture has not died. Younger people, from about thirty years onward, are speaking the Inupiaq language since they are no longer afraid of being laughed at by their schoolmates. Subsistence activities have continued; the excitement and interest in whaling could be said to be even greater than it was earlier (see Zumwalt 1987). Skin sewing and the making of colourful Eskimo parkas are gaining in popularity. The Christian festival of Christmas has been "Eskimoized," incorporating the Qalgi feast exchange, Qaqumisaq. In January 1988, the Messenger Feast, a trading and socializing event, was revived on the North Slope and was attended by 52 people from Point Hope. This was the first real performance for 97 years. On December 31, 1988, at the first full moon after the winter solstice, "Utuqtaktag" or "Immigluk Tinman" (Full Moon) was performed for the first time for many years, ending the Christmas festivities. This is a complex dance with several episodes. A spinning device which cast feathers into the air was used to divine the coming of whales: headdresses were worn featuring two ear-like projecting feathers and an animal-ornamented frontlet. There was a kaveatchaq "wolverine" puppet which was made to move back and forth on strings. Beside it was suspended a "bladder," now an inflated object like an American football. (Originally in this rite the bladders of seals were hung in the qalgi meeting chambers to honour the seals and to bring them plentifully in the coming season. The spirit residing in the bladder could grow its body again if the bladder were finally taken and cast into the sea.)

Thus Inupiaq nationalism is alive and well in its own field—that is: in the middle adults' use of the language, in subsistence, in skin sewing and the making of fine parkas, in festivals, in dancing, and in the telling of history, and most centrally in healing, which represents the epitome of what it is to be Inupiaq. In the June whaling festival of 1988 it was the healers who were honoured first with gifts of whale's flipper; and we see in this the conscious acknowledgement of healers as markers of Inupiaq patriotism.

During the 1960s and 1970s the character of the church was changing. In 1961 the first Inupiaq preacher, Donald Oktollik, was ordained. From then on, the church was "Inupiaq Episcopalian," still run straight by the book with regard to the liturgy, but soon there was an influence from a different quarter. In the mid-seventies the fundamentalist church known as the Assembly of God established itself in the village. When, in 1976, the village was moved to a site two miles further along the beach, the Episcopal church was set up in one sector of the new village, while the Assembly of God meeting room, though small, dominated the opposite one. At first there was resent-

ment among the Episcopalians because some of their congregation were leaving them for the new church—a more democratically organized group. The Inupiaq discovered that anyone in the Assembly might testify and "speak with tongues" if the spirit was within her—and the spirit had been waiting for this. The emotional life of the village, already rich, found further expression; hymns of the Sankey-Moody kind took over the souls of the people and ran over in their eyes. The Inupiaq propensity for connectedness, appearing in their kinship system, in subsistence activities, in the dance gestures, in language, and in healing, came to the fore. Virtually all of the Assembly of God features were welcomed and found their way into the Episcopal services—and along with the Anglican lines "Take out our sin and enter in" promoted an active view of salvation as a cure, just as the healer takes out the bad disease and adds energy to the body.

Episcopal attendance varies at present from 30 to 70, with a full church of 180 at Christmas and Easter. The steady congregation comprises the heads of the core families, the elders, and the religious younger families. The congregation's participation and the preacher's style convey much warmth and emotion. This small inner community, the congregation, acts as an anchor to the larger, the village community. From within the church community one gets a clearer view of the outer village as a community that goes through many bad experiences: crime, men lost in the tundra, serious illness, frightening weather conditions—the same hazards that were formerly dealt with by shamans. These troubles are always the subject of special prayers. The finding of Jimmy Nashanik who was lost on the tundra for three days in January was attributed to God, to whom the whole city, including myself, had been praying during the time of the young hunter's danger. On February 14, 1988, seven whaling captains went forward into the sanctuary to say prayers, to sing and to receive a special blessing for the coming whaling season.

The healers are another kind of inner core for the village. They have a strong "Blessing" of their own, as Titkiaq, a friend, put it, using a fundamentalist term. The healer Dorcus Rock said that the Inupiat believed in the One God long ago, before the Whites came. She said that they then fell away from goodness (in the age of the "evil shamans"). When the missionaries came, she said, everyone recognized the teaching; it was their old religion. She described how signs of this old religion were to be found in the Inupiat's moral code of sharing. For Ernest Frankson and the other Point Hope people the creator God was Tulungigraq, the Raven-Man, who drew the land out of the sea with his harpoon. Ernest Frankson, Dorcus Rock, Jack Shaeffer, Rachel Craig (from outside Point Hope), and others, believe in the goodness of their own past and are beginning to question the way in which the Whites framed their writings. If they are right there may be less inconsistency between early and modern forms of spiritual healing than first appeared.

Healers in the Contemporary Village

With regard to contemporary healing, several writings exist. The most detailed is by DeLapp and Ward, *Traditional Inupiat Health Practices* (1981). In this handbook numerous treatment methods are evaluated, but the work does not attempt to go beyond the empirical effects of techniques. Other short articles have appeared, such as Book, Dixon, and Kirchner (1983); Dixon and Kirchner (1982); Juul (1979); Katz and Craig (1987); Kirchner (1982); and Lucier, VanStone, and Keats (1971). These have more sympathy with nonempirical means of healing. Barry and Roderick describe the gifts of the late Della Keats of Noatak—her healing hands, her Christian prayers before healing, and her knowledge of the patient's sickness before seeing him "I'm not a secret old lady, not a superstitious person."she said. "I just pray to my Good Lord. I pray all night, and before I arrive in sick person's village, my Good Lord tells me what's wrong" (1982:24)—which reminds Barry and Roderick of the Eskimos' link with the spirit world.

In Point Hope nine adults practice the craft of healing—six frequently. Of the nine, five are between forty and seventy, and four are over seventy. Two more between twenty-eight and thirty are aspiring healers. Seven juniors, aged from seven to twenty-seven, are learning the craft.

Healers cure mainly headaches, stomach complaints, backaches, injuries, sprains, arthritis, bone dislocations and fractures, severe loss of breath, pneumonia, boils, snow blindness, gallstones, and faulty presentation in childbirth along with normal midwifery—these last when the mother gives birth before she can be taken by plane to hospital, the regular practice. The majority of ailments are cured by inner manipulations combined with prayer and by taking out of the body whatever is troubling the person; this I will describe below. "Poking," that is, minimal bloodletting in the area of the pain, is now rarely practiced. Herbal potions of "stinkweed" *Artemesia tilesii*, a variety of wormwood and sagebrush, which might be better named "salvation plant," since the word "sage" derives from "salvia"—Webster), and seal and beluga oils are used as medicines. In the Kotzebue area patients from all over the north are taken to Serpentine Hot Springs twice yearly by a tribal doctor.

In Point Hope, between September 8, 1987, and August 24, 1988, I gathered accounts of 151 healings. I was participant-observer in 46 of these. Five of the total were unsuccessful. Of the 6 people, who said that they had never been to a healer, all were between the ages of 15 and 30. The majority of cases—57%—were injuries, including 18% back and 9% leg injuries. Another 23% concerned stomach ailments, 11% were gynecological, 7% concerned respiratory troubles and included a cure of pneumonia, 1% was liver trouble, and 1% skin rash.

In describing the healings I have witnessed and experienced, I adopt a narrative style in keeping with the style of the events. If I were to attempt a medical and strictly objective academic tone it would be impossible to convey the typical Inupiaq intimacy of the scenes. To pretend that the anthropologist was not there, or not involved, would be false, as would the assumption that I was without religion myself. Victor Turner taught that lived experience in anthropology is primary; thought is its interpreter (following Dilthey; Turner 1985:208-213). This concern with experience underlies my method in the cases given below.

Personal Experience of Eskimo Healing

Let us look at a typical minor Eskimo healing that demonstrates its style and context. I will follow with an account of my own attempt at healing, then my experience of being healed myself.

Healing Observed

Pamela, herself a healer, came to see the old healer, Dinah Frankson, in her living room. "My finger hurts," she said. "See, it's all swollen on the joint." It was her right forefinger, swollen on the knuckle of the second joint. Dinah took it into her hand. I got my glasses. Dinah attended, her fingers feeling into the sore spot, exploring, then focusing. "That's the place," said Pamela. Dinah tried to bend the finger. It was stiff. "Relax." said Dinah. Pamela put her head up and back a little and let things go. Dinah's two fingers doubled over, pressing onto the sore joint. "The muscle. It's wrong," she said. The old fingers crooked themselves in powerful pressure. "You have strong hands," said Pamela. Dinah's face was entirely blanked into what was going on in her hands. Her face was tilted up toward Pamela, blanked, intent. Pamela suddenly said, "That's it." Now Dinah took the finger and moved it. It moved beautifully, fast and easily. There was no more swelling to be seen. Dinah worked on the tendons between the forefinger and thumb, turning her fingers into the muscle. "That's done it," said Pamela. "It feels OK." I talked to Pamela afterwards. "Can you learn this from Dinah?" "I *am* a healer. Dinah taught me, she taught Dorcus. She's the one." I had previously heard from the schoolchildren that "healers take the bad spirit into their own bodies." I said to Pamela, "It's not just manipulation, is it?" "No. You take out the illness. You take it into your own body, then *you* have the pain, pain in the foot or wherever it was in the person." "How do you get rid of it?" "Dinah taught me. Wash your hands. Then there's another way. Blow." Pamela blew from her hands upward as if up and out through the chimney. "Blow it out."

Here I had actually seen a simple cure, seen the swelling disappear and the finger move properly once more. I was learning to look at what was going on in detail. Dinah's "blanking out" struck me forcibly. And I heard how the trouble comes out into the healer.

A Personal Attempt at Healing

When my friend Annie had a headache I tried the healing on her, wanting to know what happens. I touched her brow, then put my hand fully on it and the other hand at the back of her neck. At that I began to feel sorry for Annie, I was feeling a kind of soul-love. There was a clear sensation of something being released out to me; Annie was happy to let it go. "That's better," she said. I was somewhat surprised. Annie and I played cards for a time; then I was aware that I had a headache. I blew my hands upwards and went to wash, after which I felt better.

This process is consistent with the old shamanic removal of a harmful substance from the body—which was sometimes an actual object such as a little wooden spear put there by an enemy (Spencer 1959:321). However, the shamanic extraction of material objects was not mentioned to me in Point Hope.

Once I had begun this technique and felt with my hands what was inside, it seemed obvious, simple, and yet previously I had no notion that it could be done.

Experience of Being Healed

It was also necessary for me to experience being healed myself. Another healer, Jane, told me, "I know from the way a person walks, or sits down—I just look into their faces and I know what's wrong with them. You," she said to me. "Your stomach's up. When you walk you use short breaths." I indeed had a stomach ache. Jane said "Shall I work on you?" "Yes," I said immediately.

She made me lie down, and she quite strongly attacked the area just below where my ribs part, my midriff (the location of the diaphragm). That area was hard and tense, sure enough. After a time she worked on my lower abdomen. She hauled up from the right side, strongly, and at once located an area of pain that was, I think, in the large intestine. What was it in there? Was it full of slowed-down food, or what? It was inflamed. I could recognize what she was doing by feeling. She pressed the Y-midriff junction again keeping her other hand on the center side. At this point I realized that her hands were *good*; they were busy doing good, and my abdomen was obeying. The communication—which I began to call the conversation of bodies—was tak-

ing place. She shifted my side up a little more, also the midriff. I myself felt the midriff. It was quite soft and inwardly comfortable. She had done what was needed.

These cases, all involving experience, show an immediacy, a closeness, an intimacy in the healing act. The hands are touching the body, feeling into it, and they do a "work." The Inupiaq term for healing, in its common English translation, is "working on the body." It is a one-on-one process in this modern era, compared with the pre-Christian social healings where in important cases there was community involvement along with drums and a shamanic séance.

In the cases I have studied general elements can be traced:

1. A different level of perception ("clairvoyance").
2. The existence and help of a healing spirit (here it is always "the Good Lord," Jesus); the life entity of the sufferer.
3. The concept of disease as a thing, a substance, that can be drawn out.
4. The hands as the instruments of cure, their special faculty.
5. The connectedness of healer and sufferer, the "conversation of bodies."
6. Correct positioning of the bodily organ—a fundamental concern of Inupiaq healing.
7. Therapeutic readiness, "healability."

The Elements of Healing

Perception, Clairvoyance

Inupiaq healing operates under Lévy-Bruhl's law of "mystical participation" (1985 [1910]). Lévy-Bruhl posited a "prelogical" era of humankind when all things were felt to have a mystical participation with each other; here the primary perception of the healer Jane—"I know . . ."—has its place, a sphere which is not prelogical in time, but nonlogical here-and-now. There is an immediacy of diagnosis, based on perception in that sphere.

Primary perception is illustrated by the following description in the context of a healing. Dorcus Rock related, "When I saw the old injury on the back of the young man I passed my hand along his back and prayed. I *saw* that kid fall off his snowmobile and get caught because he couldn't get the gun off his back. You know what it's like—it's like fantasy. I might write a book." The patient corroborated what Dorcus had seen by means of her hands. It had indeed happened ten years before.

This aspect, primary perception, clairvoyance, highlights the distinction between Inupiaq healing skills and those of White doctors. Primary perception is often experienced in Point Hope, both in healing and saving endangered people; it is a direct kind of knowledge. The healers are aware of their immediate knowledge. Dorcus illustrated it like this:

"A lady came to see me. When I saw her I knew that she was pregnant, two weeks pregnant. I was right, the baby was born eight and a half months later. I *know* without touching the lady. You can't put it into words."

This awareness is based on a multitude of senses—body language among them—along with "clairvoyance," a gift which Dorcus says scares some people. It is nonverbal, not concerned with left-hemisphere brain logic.

On one occasion an official with a pain in his side at the back came to see Dorcus. She related that before he arrived she had a pain in her own side at the back, so she knew exactly what part hurt the patient. This awareness at a distance belies the dependence on body language alone as a clue. The Inupiaq healer, Della Keats from the village of Noatak, had the same gift of knowing the sufferer's condition at a distance.

The corresponding early shamanic faculty was similar, given him by an animal or ghost spirit.

Spirit, Life Entity

I have tried manipulation without supplying the feeling of concrete sympathy and the following up of fellow feeling, communitas, into the body of the sufferer; and beyond a simple friction warming of the area, nothing happens. As we have seen, Dorcus prays before and during a healing; Della Keats was aware that when she healed, the hands she used were not her own, but were "God's hands." Inupiaq healers always ascribe their ability to God: thus we have the concept of some spiritual force beyond the human, enabling the work.

Inupiat have a vivid awareness of the life-entity itself, exemplified during the serious illness of Dinah Frankson, aged 78. I attended in the sick person's room. Dorcus was there with Dinah, using her hands to alleviate something that was badly amiss in Dinah's stomach, a large cyst, as it appeared later. We were greatly concerned to see that the old lady flopped back lifelessly after each spasm of pain, totally blanked out. She seemed to have left us. We were scared. Dorcus told me later that Dinah's spirit kept escaping out of the fontanelle at the top of her head. Dorcus had the task of drawing it back. Dorcus put her own head on Dinah's abdomen, and some warmth returned to the old lady's face. Dinah's life principle was in the balance, but after a time she rallied and with the help of surgery made a good recovery. Dinah recounted to me her near-death experiences which were very similar to those described by Raymond Moody (1975).

During this early experience I was learning my first lesson in perception, the sense of Dinah's life principle, her life entity. Eskimologists trace the existence of at least three types of soul or spirit among the Eskimos: the spirit that helps healing, corresponding to the shaman's spirit helper; the life-entity

of the person which leaves the body at death; and the spirit that can be reborn in a person if the same name is given to a newborn child.

Disease as a Substance

This is shown in a discussion with Dinah Frankson. When confronted with the subject of shamanism, Dinah at first showed revulsion. "A shaman killed my babies," she said, but immediately went on to relate how she was healed when she was a little child by a shaman, her aunt. Dinah was wasted away by disease. The shaman lady felt Dinah's stomach and found that it had shifted its position: it was up. She returned the stomach to its proper position, then took the trouble in her hands (Dinah cupped her hands half an inch apart and demonstrated), raised her hands, blew into them, and blew the trouble up through the smoke hole. Dinah learned this method and used it herself, later teaching it to Pamela as a way of getting rid of the sickness drawn out of the patient.

Here is the idea that sickness has the character of a substance, as mentioned already. When the substances are such objects as small wooden points we find ourselves in an ambiguous area of belief and disbelief. The extraction of harmful intrusions is familiar to anthropologists who have observed it in various places elsewhere. It is an element that has persisted in Inupiaq healing throughout the changes. To me when I feel a painful area of the body, it seems odd how diseased tissue seems to be at war with the body—hostile and sulky—yet the condition is only too willing to migrate if the hands can give it passage through. The consciousness of the hands can follow into the spirit of the sufferer and pray for her; it is the hands that understand the matter, and the body of the sufferer knows. This simultaneous consciousness is the moment of cure.

The Hands

Dorcus told me. "Sometimes when I'm working on people my hands get red, and I'm plain red along here." She indicated her arms. "My bones will move like their bones move inside. Just *move*. If a person has a bad stomach I gather all of whatever it is and it gradually disappears. If it's really bad the pain will go to me. I know that if I keep my hand on there it gradually goes into my hand. It travels all the way up to my heart and so I always block it on my arms up to here." She showed her hands halfway up the wrists. "With some people my hands get really *hot* like an oven, burning hot, and I can burn the trouble away. Once when I worked on a woman with a lump in her stomach I prayed to the good Lord for it to move to me, and then I got sick and had to have an operation. I took her pain." This capacity of the hands has been developed more sensitively since shamanic times.

Connectedness, Conversation of Bodies

At one time the healer Dorcus allowed me to feel her own side where there was a nagging pain from an injury. I felt a tense hot miserable lump on one rib, mushy, not like normal firm flesh. I felt pity on it, and caressed around it. I felt it soften as my hands rounded over it. Dorcus said, "Yes, that's getting better." I had to continue patiently until the lump had dissolved into a sliver of hardness and finally disappeared altogether. Dorcus warned me to wash my hands. She told me later that the pain had not recurred.

Now it can be seen that the perception of the trouble is not "extrasensory perception," *outside* the senses, but an actual fine sense—existing contrary to expectations—in the fingers, somehow resulting in the transferability of an ailment. The sense perception of the fingers exists, and there is a knowledge, a certain awareness in the human consciousness of a link between oneself and the sufferer empowered by a kind of rushing of one's own consciousness into that of the other, very like "love" or "sympathy" but following a palpable path, through the fingers' understanding. In my experience it has something to do with the cast of feelings. When they are open (they cannot be forced) the channels to the other person are open. For myself, again, nothing happens if a person is not sick; it is the hand's concrete sympathy with the person's sick organ that opens the way. What passes is not merely energy, it is too personal for that. Whatever it is, it is the cause of the opening at the hands' contact with the sickness. In Dorcus's examples of knowledge and also healing at a distance there is no bodily touch, but perception may still take place in a bodily way, as when Dorcus felt the pain of someone outside the house. The sense that does the perceiving appears to be on a single continuum with the fine bodily sense and extends along to the visionary *seeing* from afar, to the seeing of spirit beings, or the sensing of disease as a substance.

Dorcus and Rosella Stone emphasize, "This is a different kind of doctoring. There is much to learn." One has to learn in detail, in particulars. The Inupiat have developed sensitivity to another body, a phenomenon not described in detail in early writings on shamanism.

Position

In Inupiaq healing, an important principle is that of repositioning the shifted or dislocated organ. Dinah in her description of her shaman aunt's healing described how the shaman repositioned Dinah's stomach. The healer Jane also took care that my uptightness was corrected by repositioning the various organs of my own abdomen, for all is connected with all.

Therapeutic Readiness or "Healability"

I had noticed when I helped Annie with her headache how ready she was to let the pain out to me. I began to think about a concept of "healability" or therapeutic readiness. The healer Rosella said that when a sufferer walked into her room she could tell whether he would allow himself to be healed or would put up a barrier against it—for the healing takes place *between* tribal doctor and patient. When I asked Rosella how she knew his disposition she said, "I just *know*. If they're like that you can't heal them."

I have referred, then, to primary perception; the help of a spirit; disease as a thing; the hands; connectedness—the conversation of bodies; position; and therapeutic readiness. These are all survivals from the ancient era. No one has to take a drum and fall into a trance: the hands have learned supersensitivity by themselves; they are a *seeing* organ. The healing is primary healing, done directly through the body, different from a psychological cure.

What is the general picture here? It is of Dorcus easily and smoothly curing people by a method involving primary perception. Usually there are no frights, no fuss; only in the cases that appear the most bizarre does her "vision," "seeing," fill one with wonder. Here an anthropologist may literally move close and herself experience the sense of that level. What do we conclude? What is the theory?

We have seen an indigenous people—marginal in that they live on the margins of the Arctic Ocean, conscious of the forces of assimilation, vigorous, led by continually overlapping generations of elders. Those who were VanStone's modern young men in the 1950s are now Inupiat traditionalists themselves, busy organizing Eskimo revivals. The young, too, are coming forward, alive to the sense of direct perception—young dancers in the stomping ecstasy of Inupiaq dancing, young healers. Nested in this moving mass are the adult healers, active, using that sense as a matter of course. From the outside it is easy to say that this is a broken society, that many of the old values have gone. However, overlapping from behind, there is always the influence of the elders and of the environment itself bringing them the richest sea water in the world, and there is the pride in the subsistence hunting. Healing provides the reinforcement of connectedness, which gathers webbed strength from all its sources: The long inwardly-connected Inupiaq words, the meat sharing, the unison dance-drum-song rite, the clan system with its ludic competitiveness and the kinship network which includes "your bosom friend," *umma*, the spouse of your namesake whom you can kiss, and your adoptive siblings who are your divorced parents' children. Connectedness is even increased by the CB radio which nearly everyone possesses, so that all can speak to all—and do; and by Bingo, which is a wordless tense ritual of redistribution of money according to chance. It is a continual redemocratization in a world where modern bureaucracy has spawned a com-

petitive meritocracy, where it is only too obvious who are the bright ones or who are in the right family—they get the jobs—and who are not. Then there is the healing, concerned with bodies which get sick in a truly democratic manner. We all have the body, and in healing, bodies connect; they converse in a direct way; the bad is taken out by the other body.

This churning movement of a community is an effect (as inside a food mixer) going on in a society which has two forces playing, one upon, and one within it. This is another version of the "social field," and in this version the field is viewed as being in rapid motion.[7] The result is a heady whip (like Eskimo ice cream made with an electric beater.) At Point Hope the effect is unique, and in each village it is different. All aspects of life are continually in touch with earlier traditional forces on the one hand and with modern forces on the other—as in the case of "Little Al," the big old white teacher who was treated by Dorcus and instantaneously healed, while at the same time grumbling about the students playing hookey, and predicting the early downfall of subsistence culture. The people live both integrated homogeneous lives and at the same time non-integrated piecemeal lives. It is this continual churning, the face-to-face relationships, the movement, process itself, that gives unity.

We come back finally to Eskimo spirituality which rises as a flourishing outgrowth from an old stock whose power cannot be easily predicted. Many other events in Point Hope life have been informed by Eskimo spirituality. The people are conscious, like the healers of the past, that they have been helped, that the healing is not their doing. It is likely that if they are not opposed by the churches, the Inupiat will continue to regain their old culture.

Notes

1. My thanks are due to my sponsors, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and the University of Virginia. The help given by James and Mary McConnell is warmly acknowledged. I am particularly grateful to Dorcus Rock for her patient instruction of a pupil who found the language, if not the healing she taught, extremely difficult. I also thank Rosella Stone, Dinah and Ernest Frankson, many friends in Point Hope including Molly Oktollik, also Dr. Theodore Mala, Lori Krumm, Karlene Leeper, Ann Riordan, and others, who have instructed me or made my way easier.
2. Previous fieldwork was conducted in traditional healing in Zambia, about which I wrote in *The Spirit and the Drum* (1987), and also in *The Tooth: Addressing the Spirit in Ndembu Ritual* (forthcoming). I briefly researched healing in Brazil, healing shrines in Europe and Central America (1978), Israel (in press), India, and Japan, also shamanic trance in Korea. The study of Arctic healing is proving a valuable comparative case.
3. Where named persons are mentioned they have either given permission for their names to be used or pseudonyms have been adopted.
4. Point Hope at present is divided among two clans or "qalgis": Ungasiksikaq and Qagmaktuuq. Their members enact competitive games and make mutual food presentations at the winter solstice and at the Whaling Festival. Membership tends to follow a patri-

lineal pattern, with some exceptions in that a woman might keep her father's clan affiliation at marriage.

5. In the 1930s there was a nurse on the "North Star," the Bureau of Indian Affairs supply ship that stopped at each village. Later there were public health nurses, each situated regionally, who trained village health aides and midwives; and in the 1950s there were specially trained local tuberculosis control aides. In 1955, the health service was transferred from Indian Affairs to the U.S. Public Health Service. Today state and federal governments combine in health work.
6. Health Aides are the women paramedical staff of the clinics in the small villages in northern Alaska, qualified by brief training in Native Health Service hospitals. In 1987-88 none of those at Point Hope were at the same time traditional healers, nor were they regarded as similar to the latter. In the eyes of the villagers they acted as an extension of the hospital system. It should be noted that no doctors practice in the small villages.
7. See V. Turner (1985:54): "Kurt Lewin (1951) found it possible to link in a definite manner, by means of his 'field theoretical' approach, a variety of facts of individual and social psychology, which, from a classificatory point of view, seem to have little in common. He was able to do so by regarding the barrier between individual and environment as indefinite and unstable. His approach requires the consideration of an organism-environment field whose properties are studied as field properties, and not as the properties of either organism or environment, taken separately. The flow of events within the field always is directed to some extent by the relations between the outer and inner structures." In Point Hope the barrier between organism and environment becomes unstable at every turn, owing to the effects of connectedness already mentioned.

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TO DIE ON AMBAE: ON THE POSSIBILITY OF DOING FIELDWORK FOREVER*

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Abstract: "To Die on Ambae . . ." is ethnography cast in the form of a narrative, a "true fiction" about illness in the context of fieldwork on a remote Pacific Island. We reflect on the way in which our direct involvement in the politics of curing shed new light on our relationships with people in our host community. We also deal with some of the hidden costs of fieldwork, both for anthropologists and for the people they study. Implicitly, we seek to contribute to discussion of three current issues in interpretive anthropology: the points of interface between fiction and ethnography, the representation of reflexivity in ethnographic writing, and the uses of dialogue and multiple voices in ethnographic narrative.

Résumé: « To Die on Ambae . . . » [« Mourir à Ambae »] est de l'ethnographie exprimée en forme narrative, « un véritable ouvrage fictif » dont le sujet est la maladie. Le contexte est celui du travail sur le terrain sur une île lointaine de l'océan pacifique. Nous cherchons à comprendre comment notre engagement dans la « politique de la guérison » remet à jour nos relations avec nos hôtes. Nous examinons aussi les coûtes invisibles du travail sur le terrain, tant pour les anthropologues que pour la population que nous étudions. Nous cherchons tacitement à contribuer aux études de trois des problèmes courants de l'anthropologie interpretive: premièrement, les points où la fiction et l'ethnographie s'entrecroisent; deuxièmement, la représentation de la reflexivité dans les écrits ethnographiques; et troisièmement, l'emploie du dialogue et de la multiplicité des voix dans la narration ethnographique.

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December 7, 1985: Late Saturday Night, Our House, Ambae—Bedside

Bill

And then I said: An Anthropologist gets sick and dies while conducting fieldwork on the small South Pacific island of Ambae. Suddenly, there she is, standing in front of these big gates beside a man with a long beard and a scroll. "Hello," says the man, "I'm St. Peter and these are the Pearly Gates. I have some good news and some bad news for you. Which do you want first?" "The good news," says the anthropologist. "O.K.," says St. Peter, "the good news is that you have been admitted to Heaven." "That's just great," she says. "If I've been admitted to Heaven, then what could possibly be the bad news?" "Well," says St. Peter, "Heaven consists of little worlds. People spend eternity in the same place where they drop. You planned a few months fieldwork on Ambae, but now it looks like you'll be doing fieldwork there forever."

It was a bad joke and I knew it. Still, Margy managed a weak smile: "That's not very funny," she said. She thought for a moment and her expression became more serious: "You don't suppose. . . ." "No," I told her, "Of course not. Dumb joke. Sorry." For two days, she had run a fever and endured severe chills and worse sweats. She hadn't been able to keep down a thing, not medicine, not food, not even water. We kept thinking the fever would break, but it didn't, and she was getting weaker. She had been a trooper but now I could see in her eyes she was getting scared. "Bill." she said, "you've got to get me out of here." I wanted to, God knows, but there was no way, at least not for another few days.

Friday, December 6, 1985: The War Museum in the Rainforest

Margaret

On our first fieldtrip to Ambae in 1969 we discovered that the island is, for us, a place where the days last longer and time slows down. Back in Canada, we yearned to re-set our mental clocks to Ambae time, and indeed we've returned to the island for three more fieldtrips over the years. Our most recent trip, in 1985, provided both a respite from a demanding period of fieldwork elsewhere in Vanuatu and a chance to fill in some gaps in our material.

By early December, we were ready to leave the field. My last scheduled interview was with an old man named Charlie Siu, a collector and connoisseur of World War II memorabilia. Charlie lives in an isolated hamlet near the coast with his wife, Betty, a healer with a twinkle in her eye and an aura of mystery. For years, I paid more attention to her than to him. I recorded her songs, photographed the medicinal plants she uses, learned from her the sexual facts of life that she thought every Ambae woman should know. For years, Charlie had wanted to tell me of his wartime experiences working for

the Americans on Espiritu Santo, a huge medical and supply base for the Battle of the Coral Sea. It was a topic that interested our son Sean, then 13, so he decided to come along with me and help by taking pictures.

We set off early on Friday morning, exactly a week before we were due to bring the fieldtrip to an end. I had a headache and hiking to Charlie's hamlet seemed an immense effort, but perhaps the weather was to blame. It had rained in the night and then again at dawn, a windless rain that left the air so damp I could see my breath. The rainforest steamed as we followed the path down the hill, our flipflops slipping and slapping a gritty spray of dark volcanic mud up the backs of our legs. We crossed a pile of mossy stones, once a garden wall, into Charlie and Betty's plantation, a raggedy stand of old coconut palms from which they earned a little money making copra, smoke-dried coconut meat, the "palm" part of Palmolive soap and an ingredient in coffee whitener. Copra is the main cash crop in Vanuatu and it provides the only source of income for most people on Ambae.

Their hamlet occupies a clearing in the plantation. Sean and I stood in the plaza at the centre of the settlement, looking down at the bare earth, shuffling our feet and clearing our throats, politely signalling our hosts that we had arrived. Sean picked up a piece of paper in the mud. "Mom, it's a pay slip from the US Navy!" It was a blank, undated, unsigned, but the navy hasn't been in the area since 1944. We knew we were in for a treat.

Charlie led us into a bamboo house where we sat on new copra sacks that smelled like freshly mown hay. He sang, his soft, whining old man's voice recalling the war as the islanders experienced it. The traditional melodic forms of Ambae warriors' songs contrasted with the sounds of a white man's war—boom, ratatat, whirr—and with songs he learned from soldiers: "God Save America Wan Gudfala Ples." Betty joined us and took charge of presenting Charlie's World War II collection for our inspection: 47 American dimes with dates ranging from 1928 to 1944, shell casings, bullets, blankets, dinner plates from Los Angeles and forks marked USN. "And see that big cooking pot in the corner? That's from the wartime, too." I nodded, and suddenly I felt my enthusiasm run out of me like water. I wasn't feeling well; my head still hurt and my bones ached, perhaps from the damp, hard earth beneath the copra sack.

Before we left, Charlie posed solemnly in front of a red hibiscus bush. Sean snapped a picture of him wearing a US navy cap, long sleeved shirt, and fatigues with cuffs rolled several times to keep them above his bare feet and the muddy ground.

Sean and I climbed slowly through a soft rain to the hill village of Waileni, our fieldsite during our three visits to the island since 1978. We walked past a fallen banyan that lay on the edge of the village like a great wooden whale beached in the last hurricane. Then we continued on to our

compound, which consists of a bamboo house, a separate kitchen, and a privy concealed in the bush. Our compound is part of a satellite hamlet just out of sight of the village plaza. It's the chief's hamlet: Chief Mathias Tariundu, a leader of the highest rank in the *hungwe*, an association in which men kill tusked boars in order to gain prestige. I am Chief Mathias' "daughter-in-law" because, in 1978, he adopted Bill as his "son." Since then, we have spent about twenty months living in his village.

Channing, our 5-year-old daughter, hurtled down the path to greet us, village playmates in her wake. Sean ducked into the cool, dark kitchen in search of something for lunch and Channing followed, chattering, her eyes on the small ripe bananas hanging from the rafters. I wasn't hungry. I thought I'd lie down for a while. It was a week before I got up again.

Bill

I, too, conducted my last scheduled interview that Friday morning. When I returned to our compound, I asked Sean where his mother was. "Mom isn't feeling well" he said. "She went inside to lie down." "No big deal," I thought, and I left her alone to take what I thought was a nap.

I had mixed feelings about leaving the island. I was pleased that our field-trip was almost over and sad for the same reason. Pleased that it had all gone so well—Margy and I had gathered good data, and we'd renewed old friendships, some of sixteen years' duration. The kids had readjusted to village life and the family had remained in good health. I was sad mostly because I was leaving Mathias, my second father, almost certainly for the last time.

Once, Mathias told me he was as old as the century; I think he believed the birth-date he assigned himself and thought of himself as not doing badly for an "olfala" of eighty-five. He'd slowed down a bit, but not much: he mediated fewer disputes in the village but he still attended just about every rank-taking in the area, the art of killing tusked boars being his particular passion. He'd raised me to my first rank in 1978; on this fieldtrip, I'd taken a second rank. Most days, we spent hours together in the shade of the canarium almond tree near his clubhouse. I'd heard most of his stories before but just being with him gave me pleasure. Most nights, we drank kava together, he and I, and felt the sweet communion of the slightly stoned.

Toward nightfall, Mathias came by our house. He leaned through an open window and I stopped typing the morning's interview. We talked for a moment about the man I had visited, then he asked: "Where's Margaret?" "Lying down. She's not feeling well." I said. "Fever?" What he meant was: "Does she have malaria?" "I think so." "Too bad." He paused, and then, with a trace of a smile: "Some men are coming over. Do you want to drink

kava with us?" "No, not tonight. I have to make dinner for the kids." "Too bad," he said, and wandered off.

Saturday, December 7: At Home at the End of the Line

Bill

Margy and I have always thought of malaria as a kind of dues. Everybody who works in northern Vanuatu gets it: it's part of the price you pay to conduct fieldwork there. We take anti-malaria pills whenever we are in the field, chloroquine in the '70s, newer and more sophisticated drugs in the '80s, but still we've both contracted the disease twice. On one occasion, my fever went high enough—and stayed high long enough—that I heard two little village dogs talking to each other across the plaza from where I sat propped against a tree. That they were holding a conversation didn't surprise me at the time; however, I remember being impressed that dogs on the island speak English.

Most often, in my experience, what happens when you develop a bad case of malaria is this: you get a splitting headache, followed by a high fever, and then you become very cold, even though the weather is warm. Your teeth begin to chatter uncontrollably and you cover yourself in blankets. You have a miserable time out there on the ice-floe, and then your personal thermostat swings into turnaround and you throw the blankets off because the room you are in has become a sauna and your sheets are soaked with sweat. By this point, you should have taken a "curative" dose of anti-malaria pills, roughly three times the weekly suppressive dose, and after a while your temperature begins to fall as rapidly as it rose only hours earlier. You feel enormous relief, then you sleep, and then you feel wrecked for about four days.

That's malaria as we knew it, awful, but not lethal. In the late 1970s, new strains of the disease appeared in northern Vanuatu. The most recent types of malaria don't respond to chloroquine or any other medication an anthropologist might have in his pack. Left untreated, the disease can be deadly.

We worried about our children contracting malaria, so we took all the precautions we could. We chose a fieldsite high in the hills of the island. There are no mosquitoes at night in Waileni: it's too cold for them. Sunday was Pillday. Every Sunday, without fail, our whole family took the bitter-tasting pills that suppress the most common strains of malaria. One of the smells I associate most vividly with fieldwork is the smokey scent of mosquito coils made from pyrethrum, the dried flower heads of chrysanthemums; we burned a coil any time we were in the house during the day. "Deep-Woods Off" was as much a part of our interviewing kit as a tape-recorder and spare batteries. For all our precautions, Margy had every symptom of malaria with which we were familiar from experience, plus a few more.

Her illness didn't respond to the initial dose of chloroquine; her fever remained constant. Starting late Friday night, she began to vomit and could hold nothing down. Medicine came up immediately; so did as much as a mouthful of water. My main concern was that she might have contracted cerebral malaria, an especially dangerous form of the disease, but I was almost equally concerned about the possibility that she might become severely dehydrated. How long can a person with a fever last without water? Three days? Less? A bit more, perhaps? I wasn't sure, but I knew that it wasn't very long.

On Saturday, the seriousness of our situation struck me with full force. Not only was Margy a very sick woman: we were isolated, temporarily unable to leave our fieldsite. Margy was in no shape to walk anywhere and the single motor vehicle in the village, an old, battered Toyota truck, belonged to a leader of the area's small population of Seventh Day Adventists. Saturday is the Adventist day of worship: they maintain a strict prohibition against work of any sort on Saturday, their Sabbath, and they count driving a truck as "work." Even if we had transport, our options were limited. A truck could drive us to the cowpasture that serves as a landing strip on that part of the island, but no plane was due until Monday or, possibly, Tuesday. A truck also could take us an hour over rough road to a small hospital located on the southeastern tip of the island. The hospital is staffed by two "doctors" whose titles are honorific: one holds a degree in hospital administration while the other, "Dr." David, has received training roughly equivalent to a North American paramedic. Regardless of their qualifications, we perceived the hospital as our best hope for obtaining medical aid. But we had no way to get there.

So all day Saturday I stayed in our compound. I transcribed interviews and, every so often, checked on Margy, remaining with her for as long as she wanted company, which was never very long. She was pale and her eyes had become dull and sunken. Her skin was hot, as if she had a furnace casting off heat inside her body. She couldn't read (a side-effect of the malarial headache) and she couldn't sleep either. So she spent most of her time staring at four photographs of horses I'd torn from a Minolta calendar and taped to the bamboo wall of the room.

The village was quiet: all the kids, including our own, were off in the bush, hunting for crayfish or pigeons, gathering nuts, playing games. Around noon, Mathias came in to check on Margy's condition. He leaned through the big open window in the bamboo wall of the house and rested his forearms on the sill. He looked very old and his eyes were troubled. "How is she?" he asked. "Not so good. About the same. She still has the fever." He slowly and audibly exhaled, eyes fixed on the floor. Then he looked up, directly at me. "What do you think she has?" I told him I still thought she had malaria.

"Did you give her the medicine?" "Yes. But it won't stay down." He thought about this for a moment and then shook his head. "You say it's malaria but if it is, then your medicine should help her." His statement didn't surprise me. I'd heard many times his view that Western medicine was made for white people; "hospital medicine" (as opposed to "bush medicine") always helped restore white people to good health. Modern medicine sometimes worked with islanders; other times, bush medicine worked better. "Well," I said, "I think it's a *different* kind of malaria."

He quickly raised and lowered his eyebrows. It was an ambiguous gesture that could signify agreement or a witholding of judgement or even disagreement, but with a desire to avoid confrontation. He left abruptly, without saying another word, and retreated to the cool semi-darkness of his men's house. I didn't see him again for the rest of the day.

Sunday, December 8: The Farewell Feast

Bill

In the January before our August arrival in Vanuatu, Hurricane Nigel devastated most of the northern islands of the archipelago. On Ambae, only one person lost his life in the hurricane but damage to property was immense: according to the government newspaper, over 90 percent of the houses on the island were flattened. When we heard the news in Canada, we wanted to do something to help the relief effort on Ambae, especially that part of the island with which we had longstanding ties. We conduct our fieldwork in the Anglican sector of Ambae and, at that time, Margy attended the Anglican church in our neighbourhood in Canada. She received permission from the minister of the church to give a Sunday sermon concerning the plight of the people in Vanuatu. Part of the collection was set aside for hurricane relief. A few weeks later, she showed slides and gave a talk to a church woman's group. They too made a generous contribution to the small relief fund we were accumulating.

Margy had planned to present part of the money she had collected to Waileni in church on our final Sunday in the village. She was too sick to attend the service, so I acted in her stead. I explained the origin of the funds she had collected. Mathias stood up and made a short, graceful speech thanking us on behalf of the community. After church, I went immediately to find the man with the truck to take my wife to hospital.

Margaret

The very complexity of a passage that I had always performed simply and without thought brought home to me, and to our neighbours, how quickly I had become as weak as the oldest, feeblest widow in the village. To walk from our house to the waiting Toyota Landcruiser, pull open its heavy, squeaky door, clamber into the passenger seat, and close the door behind me

was much more than I could accomplish on my own. I leaned heavily on Bill's arm as he led me across the few yards that separated our house from the truck. I tried to smile but the eyes that gazed back solemnly reflected my own discovery that, try as I might, I could not even create the illusion of being less sick than everyone feared. This scared me. And I could see that it scared Sean and Channing. Bill helped me into the passenger seat, closed the door, boosted himself into the truckbed and signalled the driver that we were ready. The children waved as we drove off, Channing almost, but not quite, in tears and our teenage son beside her, dry-eyed and tall. "Two brave kids," I thought.

I rode with my eyes closed as the Landcruiser lurched through potholes and ruts. The driver was proud that he had maintained this truck for nine years; he eased it carefully through washouts and down hills. Time slowed to walking speed, and I remember the journey mostly as a sequence of scents—the fecund smell of gardens, the damp earth of the forest, wood smoke from cooking fires, the rancid bacon odor of drying copra. When at last the driver shifted into third gear, I could smell cattle manure mixed with sea-salt and I knew we had reached the flat, coastal plantations. The hospital was nearby, just over the lip of an extinct volcanic crater that had blown open to the sea.

A local nurse in a crisp blue uniform and bare feet greeted us, seated me on the veranda which serves as the waiting room of the colonial-style hospital, and took my temperature. She was young and shy; long thick lashes protected her downcast eyes from the intrusive gaze of outsiders. Her sympathetic bedside manner depended entirely on softly sibilant intakes of breath combined with clicks of the tongue. Nurses in Vanuatu all seem to be experts at producing this consoling sound, somewhere between that of a purring cat and a sitting hen.

Lulled by the nurse's care, I began to think everything would be all right. Then "Dr." David appeared, dressed in Sunday shorts and a Foster's Lager T-shirt. He was proprietary about my illness. I remembered his Australian predecessor haranguing us in 1970 when we complained of loose teeth: "No one on my island gets scurvy," he bellowed as he treated our vitamin deficiency. I don't know if the old doctor was really David's role model, but it was quite clear that no sick person would be evacuated from his island if he could help it. Go back to the village, take more anti-malarial drugs and rest, he prescribed. He had seen more serious cases. Why, one man from a remote settlement came down with resistant malaria and had been unconscious for two days by the time his friends carted him to hospital. He survived and so will you, David assured me. Turning to Bill, he signalled the end of our consultation with a cheerful: "No worries, mate!"

Bill

In fieldwork, as in show business, there are times when the show must go on: our farewell feast was one such occasion. The village had planned the feast for weeks. By Sunday, the event had a momentum of its own, an inevitability quite independent of the mood and wishes of its guests or even its planners. Some invited guests lived in the deep bush of a neighbouring district. There was no way to contact them quickly in their own communities: in any case, by Sunday morning, they were on their way to our village. During the past few days, our neighbours and friends in Waileni had brought taro and yams from their gardens. They had grated and processed the tubers into the principal feast food in Vanuatu, *lap-lap*, a starchy pudding. In small compounds all around Waileni, *lap-lap* had been cooking in earth ovens since early Sunday morning.

Upon our return from the hospital, I was told to remain in our compound until preparations for the feast were complete in the main village. Sean posted himself at the window of our house overlooking the dirt track connecting our compound with the village. Around 4 pm, he saw a small group of men leave the main village and walk down the road toward our house. He turned to me. "Better lighten up, Dad," he said. "It's party time!"

My mother's brother gave me a head of kava to take with me to the feast. He gave Sean and Channing each a small bundle of *lap-lap*. Then he led us into the meeting house, located on a small rise overlooking the plaza and fallen banyan in the village. When we arrived, the meeting house was filled with the people. It had been decorated for the occasion with flowers and ornamental shrubs, gardenias shaped like ivory pinwheels, hibiscus as red as heartsblood, crotons with corkscrew leaves that look like a thermal map, splashes of sea-green on a base of vivid canary-yellow. The three of us were seated on a plain wooden bench: facing us were ten heads of kava and twenty-six bundles of *lap-lap* wrapped in banana leaves, each weighing from ten to fifteen pounds—a lifetime supply unless you know the rules for disposing of it. Channing's friend, Ndiu, ten years old, placed an artificial lei around her neck. This was an honour indeed: in Waileni, real flowers are commonplace but plastic flowers (which bridesmaids carry in all church weddings) cost money and last indefinitely. Sean and I received wreaths of real frangipani. In fact, Ndiu placed two leis around my neck, one for the absent Margy.

There were speeches of welcome and thanksgiving, of friendship and the sorrows of distance, and then ten half coconut-shells of kava were set out in front of the bench where I was sitting, and I drank the gray-coloured, bitter liquid with all the chiefs, a kind of kastom communion. According to one local myth, kava first grew from the decomposing genitalia of a murdered woman and everyone agrees it tastes terrible. It is acceptable, even polite, to

make loud phlegm-summoning noises and then spit after drinking kava. So the chiefs and I all rushed outside the meeting house as soon as we had drained our shells. There we all stood, lined up on the grass in front of the meeting house, spitting over the edge of the small rise, and at that precise moment the sun broke through the clouds, bathing the fallen banyan across the plaza in golden light.

It was the last light of late afternoon. Night fell quickly and I distributed the bundles of taro and yam pudding with the help of my adoptive kinsmen. Women and children began to leave the area of the meeting house for their own compounds. Most of the men stayed behind to drink more kava. The wife of my mother's brother sent one of her children to tell me that I was to remain with the men, that she would look after Margy and would summon me if I was needed. I trusted her and, gratefully, I accepted her offer. As I waited for my second shell of kava, some of the men asked me about Margy's condition. I told them she had malaria and they said "ahhhh" or "sori" or else they drew in their breath sharply through their teeth in an expression of sympathy. I had no idea at the time how thoroughly the villagers rejected my diagnosis in favour of their own judgement.

I returned home after my second shell of kava. As soon as I stepped through the door of our house, I wondered if I was hallucinating. Margy was sitting up in bed. By the light of a single kerosene lantern at her bedside, I could see that she was grinning. That struck me as odd but odder still was the way she smelled. She smelled smoky, funky, as if she had spent the last few hours putting out a brush fire in a coconut plantation. "You'll never guess what happened while you were away," she said.

Margaret

As I lay in my bed, drifting with the fever, I became aware that not everyone was at the feast. The corrugated iron roof creaked as it expanded to absorb the heat of the day; but the bamboo floor also creaked, and for no apparent reason. From time to time, I saw worried brown faces peeking through the open window above my bed or watching me from the darkness of a doorway as I staggered to the privy. By evening, the worried faces had settled down at the foot of my bed to stay.

Woibani, the local kindergarten teacher who lived next door, acted as the spokesperson for the other women. I should realize, she explained, that while I might be ill with malaria, I was clearly suffering from something more serious. "Like what?" I asked. "Well, like spirits," she said, her dark eyes shining with excitement and concern. "Oh," I said. "The women—my mother and the others—want to do something to help you."

It soon became evident to me that I was being made an offer I couldn't refuse. "No" was not an acceptable response: what I didn't have was a choice. Looking back, I realize that the village women had no choice either. To fail to give me the appropriate customary treatment would have been like a doctor witholding a tetanus shot from someone who had rolled through a barnyard full of rusty barbed wire.

Woibani's mother inched forward from where she had been standing at the foot of the bed. She held a tiny green coconut husk. I felt the round smoothness of the coconut move down my right side from my cheeks to my thighs, while the coarse, scratchy fibers followed the same course on my left side. Then she took the coconut and the husk away and faded into the outer dark. Woibani explained to me that she was taking the implements to Eva, a local healer. Eva would say a spell over the coconut and the husk and that would begin my cure.

Eva must have been nearby. In a few minutes I heard voices outside the house: "Woibani, pssst!" Woibani slid off my bed and conversed softly with her mother through the slats in the thin wall. As she listened to her mother, Woibani looked down at the dry, woven bamboo floor of the bedroom, shook her head and said: "No, Mother, I think I'd better do it in the kitchen." I began to be apprehensive about what was going to happen next.

Soon I found myself, unsteady but upright, standing in our kitchen, surrounded by Woibani's younger sisters. They drew back as Woibani carefully put a match to the crusts of coconut husks. First, she held the burning husks and solemnly wafted the smoke around my body like a priest with a censor. The sisters cringed away from the smoke which was meant for me alone. Then she placed the little fire right between my feet. I was relieved that Woibani had had the good sense to suggest the coral floor of the kitchen for this event.

Someone handed me the small green coconut and said: "Here! Drink this in one swallow!" I did, and promptly threw up. That didn't seem to matter. Woibani helped me back to bed, and I lay there, reeking of smoke, feeling that—in a small way—I had given my body for science.

Monday, December 9, 1985: Denying the River Spirits

Bill

The night passed. Margy seemed to sleep well enough—sheer exhaustion will do that—but when we took her temperature first thing on Monday morning, I became alarmed. During the last few days, she had a relatively low fever in the morning, and then her temperature had risen gradually during the day, reaching a peak at night. Today, she was starting out close to 103. I tried again to give her some food and medicine: none of it stayed down. I decided that I had to get her out—today.

Mathias came to the house at about 6 am, as soon as he saw we were awake. He looked grim. His eyes were serious and his mouth was set in a deep frown. I assumed that he agreed with my diagnosis that Margy had malaria, even if he didn't understand the technicalities of chloroquine-resistant strains. I further assumed that he would be relieved if I put her on the plane to Espiritu Santo, where Western doctors could treat her. He listened to me in silence as I tried to reassure him that proper medical care could cure her and told him my plan to get her to Santo. I expected agreement, sympathy and relief. Instead, he wore a curious expression on his face, one I had never seen before. There was something about the set of his eyes and a certain tightness around the edges of his mouth. Then I knew: I recognized with a shock that he disbelieved and discounted what I was saying. But there was something else, too, in his expression, something more than mere disbelief, an emotion closer to contempt. What was the matter? Why was he looking at me like that? Then he told me, his voice cold and harsh:

"You white men think you know everything," he said. "You may *think* this illness is malaria, but that's just not right. If you take Margaret to Santo right now, you will kill her. She must stay here in the village." "What are you talking about?" I asked him angrily. I felt confused and defensive and not fully awake. "I'm talking about *wande*, river spirits, the ones that killed Elsie a few years ago. When your medicine had no effect on Margaret's illness, we knew it couldn't be malaria. We began to consider other possibilities, other ways of explaining why she is so sick. I thought it might be *wande* because I know she went swimming at Waisala last week. That's their place, you know; that's where they live. Last night, Eva took the young coconut that the women rubbed over Margaret's body and she dreamed on it. Early this morning—before dawn—she came to see me. She told me her dream. She said she saw rows of little houses on the banks of the Waisala, dwellings just like our own but much smaller. As Margaret swam with her friends, the *wande* watched her from the other side of the river. They liked her and they decided she must come live with them. They lined the river bank and waved at her, but she couldn't see them. She couldn't hear them either, but they were calling to her: "Come live with us. Come live with us."

Mathias's voice became soft, melodic, almost pleading as he imitated the *wande*. "Come live with us" was a bush-siren's call, entrancing, irresistible. I felt a chill run down my spine.

He continued: "Eva spoke to them in her dream. She told them that Margaret couldn't come to live with them, that they must release her. The *wande* agreed, but now Margaret must take the medicine that will cure her." "What medicine?" I asked. "It's *our* medicine," he said, "special leaves. Eva prepared some to give to Margaret. She must take it." "No," I said sharply, and knew immediately that our relationship had been altered forever.

With one word, I had shown him the limits of my trust in him and the boundary of my belief in his world. Damn it, life has its bottom lines: mosquitoes, not bush spirits, had made Margy sick; proper medical care would cure her, not concoctions made to guard against invisible enemies. I had known Mathias for sixteen years. I had spent almost two of the last eight years living with him, much more time than I had spent with my own kinsmen during the same period. During all the time we had known each other, we played our roles well: he was my teacher and I was his eager student, he was a warm father and I tried to be his loving son, he was the chief and I was his follower, bound to respect his word. Suddenly, it all seemed like play-acting. If the stakes were high enough, and I thought they were, then I was willing to take off my mask called "anthropologist" and kiss cultural relativism goodbye. What I didn't consider at the time was that he thought the stakes were high too, and he, too, was willing to take off his mask. "She *must* take the medicine," he said.

Margaret

Bill didn't know that Mathias' will had already been done. While the old leader confronted Bill in the front yard, Woibani slipped through the bushes and came silently in the side door. She stood by my bed, breathless for a moment, holding another little coconut and a green leaf, folded as if something was wrapped inside of it. "You have to drink this. Drink it all at once," she said handing me the coconut. "And here, you must eat this medicine. Eva made it for you." She opened the leaf wrapper, revealing a paste made of chopped greens. Mixed with the greens were dark brown chunky bits, like dry cat food in puréed spinach. "It's useless, Woibani. I'll just throw up." "That doesn't matter," she said reassuringly. "Just eat it and see what happens!"

"See what happens, eh? What if I take a bite of that stuff and grow so big I fill this entire house. Or would I find myself as tiny as a mouse, swimming in a pool of tears?" I really didn't say that, except in my mind. In fact, I said nothing at all as I reached out for the medicine. I heard Mathias' and Bill's voices outside, in front of the house, and I wondered what they were arguing about. I envied them their strength to argue and knew I was too tired to do likewise. The simplest thing was just to do as I was told. How could a few leaves make much difference to my poor body?

Later, Bill asked me what the leaves tasted like. They tasted green, that's all I remember. What did strike me as remarkable at the time was that they were the first thing I'd eaten since Friday that stayed down. Woibani smiled the smile of the vindicated. She *knew* the leaves would help me. Before she left, she told me with something like pride in her voice that she would bring me another round of medicine in only a few hours.

I didn't want to be around for that. Not that I felt that the medicine was harmful; I simply had no faith that herbal cures could prove effective against a new strain of malaria. The women meant well; they really cared about me; but I'd had enough.

And so I left the village. It was a visit cut short and not properly ended. The women stood at the edge of the clearing in front of our house; they did not approach the truck that came to take me to the airport. I wanted to assure them that I would be all right, but for them to really believe me, I would have had to stay in Waileni. Anyway, I was having difficulty putting words together coherently. My head had begun to buzz. I felt as if I was underwater listening to people speak on the surface. As the truck pulled out of the village and headed for the airfield, what had been ordinary daylight began to pulse and flare.

Bill

Semi-conscious and still smelling strongly of smoke, Margy must have been quite a sight to the young French pilot of the Britten-Norman "Islander" that landed on the airstrip on Ambae. He helped me carry her to the plane and settle her in the co-pilot's seat. I kissed her on the cheek and whispered to her that I love her. Then, when the pilot made ready to close the door of the aircraft, I let go of her hand and walked back to the bush shelter at the end of the runway. A few minutes later, the plane raced down the cowpasture that served as an airstrip, gathered speed, lifted, and then headed out over the coconut plantations, toward the sea. Santo was only thirty miles away but it might as well have been on another planet. My separation from Margy was complete, as complete as if she had been in Voyager passing the dark side of the moon.

That afternoon, I packed our bags. Getting ready to leave Waileni was lonely work. Except for Mathias, the compound was empty of people: no kids played under the almond tree, no women clustered around our kitchen, no men squatted on the bare packed earth in front of the clubhouse. It was an ordinary Monday in an average week. Children were in school and, for their parents, there was work to be done in the gardens, copra to be made, pigs to be tended. Mathias often remained behind when others set off to work; he was an old man, entitled to an old man's rest. Every so often, he would come to my house and sit in the place where he always sat, just inside the door, on the bamboo floor. Neither of us felt like talking. Silently, he watched me pack, and then, as silently, he would leave, only to return a little while later. His anger at me was gone but I could still feel his concern and his sadness. He *knew* I'd made a terrible mistake in sending Margy to Santo before her cure was complete. He'd done what he could but in the end I had acted just like the white man I was. There was nothing much else to say.

Tuesday, December 10, 1985: Final Acts

Bill

Getting out of the field is simple in concept (pack only two suitcases; everything else stays) but difficult in practice (you must dispose of the rest of the stuff). I arose at 3 am and went to the kitchen, my storeroom and staging area. I lit the kerosene lamp and looked around me: there on tables and on the coral floor, was the detritus of our stay in Waileni—plastic buckets, gray trade-store blankets, a machete, bright blue calico curtains, spare flip-flops, a half-empty sack of rice, a can of shaving cream, a case of corned beef, an unopened bottle of French champagne Margy and I had planned to open on our last night in the village, and more, much more. My problem was how to distribute our belongings fairly—that is, how to give everyone in the village *something*, with special gifts for special friends. I made myself a cup of coffee and sat down at a table with two pads of Scotch Post-its.

By dawn, every item in the kitchen bore a little yellow sticker with someone's name on it. I woke up the children.

Outside the house, people were gathering—under the almond tree, in the clubhouse, on the road. I could hear men's quiet laughter and women shushing noisy children. I carried the first bundles outside. It was like Christmas morning, two weeks early. Mathias received the lion's share, as was his due. He sat apart from the rest of the men and received my gifts without comment. To Eva, I gave our very best lengths of calico; to my mother's brother's wife, a silver-plated necklace I had brought from Canada for just this occasion; to Woibani, many small gifts, including Margy's favorite brush and comb. And so it continued, the final act, with everybody on stage except Margy.

Then the stage emptied: I'd given my last gift, shaken everyone's hand, said my goodbyes. For the people of Waileni, it was the beginning of another ordinary day and there was work to do. Only Mathias stayed behind, waiting for the truck that would take us to the airfield. When it arrived, I slung our suitcases up to Sean, who had clambered into the back of the truck. I lifted Channing into the Toyota's cabin, beside the driver, and shut the door. It was time to go. I stood beside the truck on the road with Mathias, not knowing how to end it, what to do or say.

"I don't know when I'll see you again," I said awkwardly, "maybe soon, though. You never know." He just stood there. "Goodbye," I said, and stuck out my hand. He just looked at it. Slowly, his gaze returned to my face, and he said loudly "Awwww, buggerit!", which is not a local word at all. He smiled and put his arms around me in a short, strong embrace and then let go of me forever.

* * * * *

The Australian doctor's wife in Santo is the only woman in town with freckles and long red hair. As we landed, before we disembarked, I saw her standing behind the wire fence bordering the airstrip. We had become close friends, and with dreadful certainty, I knew that she had come to the airfield to meet me. "My God," I thought as the plane rolled to a standstill, "what's happened to Margy?" I raced across the tarmac toward her, my mind a broth of nightmares: Margy flown out to a larger hospital, Margy in coma, even Margy dead. "She's going to be all right," I heard the red-haired woman say, "I thought you'd want to know immediately."

Recovery Time

Margaret

"You ate those leaves!" The young, bearded Australian doctor at the Santo hospital looked appalled. He was my friend and one reason we had become friends is that we seemed to share so much in common. He had visited us in the village, drunk kava with the men, and gone swimming (without ill effects) in the Waisala. I had assumed that his attitude toward customary medicine would be rather like my own: it can't do any harm and it might do some good . . . *they* take leaf potions themselves when they are sick . . . and anyway, who knows, maybe the cure for cancer grows wild in the rainforests of Ambae.

There's a certain expression that humans reserve for friends who have acted foolishly. The doctor wore that expression—benignly incredulous, bemused, embarrassed *for* me—as he stood by my bedside. He didn't want to tell me he thought my views on customary medicine were naive and romantic, but that's what he let me know. As he took my temperature, he said he had seen many patients arrive at the hospital unconscious and half-dead from the effects of "bush cures." Indigestible leaves sometimes caused intestinal blockages. In any case, he said gently, when he had finished taking my pulse, "the medicine probably *did* have an active agent. From your symptoms, I imagine they were trying to ward off the spirits with leaves that contain atropine."

My recollections of the first few days in Santo are vague. I lay in bed in the doctor's house, my jaws and every muscle in my body clenched tight, a side-effect of the massive doses of quinine the doctor gave me. He also gave me medicine to inhibit the vomiting, which had resumed some hours after Eva's treatment.

We left Santo on Thursday, four days after I'd arrived, but before I was really well enough to travel. According to the hospital scales, I had lost 15 lbs: I weighed less than when I was fourteen years old. I still couldn't walk

steadily. Both my vision and hearing were impaired from the malaria or the quinine or the leaf medicine, or all three.

In Port Vila, the capital, we stayed on the outskirts of the town in a house more suited to the plantations of Mississippi than those of Vanuatu. It was a mansion in a state of genteel decay, redolent of rotting flowers and the sea breezes and mildew. We were houseguests of a British public servant who spent early evenings and weekends whacking away at decorative shrubbery gone wild. Hibiscus flowers, purple bougainvillea vines, avocado trees, all fell to his machete and left a swath like a firebreak between the house and the jungle. I lay in bed looking out the window, listening to the hum of tropical fields and to the slap of the knife, growing stronger, and gaining distance from what had happened on Ambae.

"That Which Does Not Kill Me (Gets No Second Chance)": Conclusions from Experience

Margaret

Would I go back to Ambae? Certainly. In part, I want to return so that I can make a proper leavetaking. I want Woibani and the others to see that I have regained good health. I've written letters but I'm sure some people in the village wonder if I'm telling the whole truth. Maybe I'm shaving the edges of the truth to save them worry or maybe I'm unaware of some lasting effects of my brush with the spirits: maybe the *wande* are not so easily denied. Peoples' residual doubts will be stilled only when they see me. That's the way things are on Ambae. Seeing is believing.

When I return to Ambae, there's one thing I *won't* do: I won't swim in the Waisala. *Wande* may exist only in people's minds, but I am not brave enough to mock them or fool enough to risk another invitation to come live with them. Fieldwork is the most tempting of fates for an anthropologist, but in doing fieldwork, you don't tempt fate, not unless you're willing to do fieldwork forever.

Bill

Nietzsche said "That which does not kill me makes me stronger" and Hemingway believed him. Me, I'm not so sure. I think experience makes us wiser, wilier, sometimes sadder, but seldom stronger. If anything, a crisis such as the one we experienced is more apt to introduce new hesitancies to the human soul than to build character. To do fieldwork in a remote area, an anthropologist needs self-confidence, a sense of being able to cope with the islandness of islands, the secret ways of jungles or the emptiness of deserts. This can lead—easily—to a soldierly illusion of invulnerability, a fiction that the slithergadee (which comes out of the sea) "will get all the others, but won't

get me." Make no mistake: we are all vulnerable. It is not the mere fact of isolation that makes us vulnerable, nor is it a lack of caution or preparation that is most apt to get us into trouble. What renders us helpless most often is circumstance. Even where there are planes, there is always a last flight out. If you need to be on it, and you are not, then—for you—there might as well not be any flights at all.

Another thing I learned from the events surrounding Margy's illness concerns a hidden element in the economics of fieldwork. Anthropologists never view themselves as being a burden on their hosts: we all try to repay the many kindnesses of the people we study in whatever ways we can. It's true that there is a sense in which our exchange with our host communities always is imbalanced: without fieldwork, we would have no careers as anthropologists. We never repay the people we study for the benefits we receive in our own societies from our fieldwork. But it's also true that reciprocity always underlies a good relationship between a fieldworker and a host community—we exchange goods for glimpses into lives, the rewards of learning for the pleasures of teaching, big gifts for oceans of story and a host of intangibles. Everyday exchange and mutual generosity come to feel natural, balanced, value given for value received, a relationship between equals who like each other. What I learned during our last fieldwork was that some people had been giving us gifts that we hadn't even recognized, let alone repaid. Margy's illness cast into bold relief the degree to which our presence in the village was a burden to Mathias. We chose to live with him because we respected his knowledge and liked his personality. It was easy for us to choose him; it was an added burden for him to accept us. He likes us, of that I'm sure, but he also felt very, very responsible for our well-being. We were babes in the woods and, as such, a source of worry for him. He knew about hazards to our well-being (river spirits, bush spirits, God knows what else) of which we were either unaware or else did not take seriously as threats. He loved us, I think, and I also think he must have counted the days until our departure. When we left him, we were sad; he may have been sad too, but he also was relieved. It couldn't have been otherwise. Looking back, I am a bit mystified that he managed to tolerate us for so long with such apparent ease and good humour.

The final lesson I learned was the hardest of all, and it has to do with the *real* politics of fieldwork. In most places, at most times, anthropologists conduct fieldwork in an atmosphere of political relativism—we observe but do not interfere; the people we study tolerate our observation and do not attempt to exercise authority over us. A crisis can change all that. During our final days in Waileni, Margy and I became key participants in a small-scale drama involving the politics of curing and, by so doing, we became less innocent about the political realities of fieldwork. I had always thought that my rela-

tionship with Mathias was based on rough and ready equality and bonds of mutual goodwill. After all, he adopted me: I interpreted that as having to do with kinship and amity, not politics. But Mathias understood something I did not: ordinary sentiments of friendship and affection are inappropriate to extraordinary times. He is the chief of a territory—we were in his territory at the point at which Margy became ill. I assumed (incorrectly) that he would never try to impose his will on us. He assumed (incorrectly) that I would not challenge his decision in a time of crisis. Being in conflict with each other was a learning experience for us both. We both learned something about ourselves, about each other and about each other's culture. Those lessons are important, and there are other lessons I learned that are less cautionary and more personal; they are implicit in the story we have told and need no underlining. The lessons we learn breed lessons we go on learning. Even when anthropologists return from the field, they continue to do fieldwork as they remember and interpret their experiences and learn from them. In that sense, for as long as we care, we do fieldwork forever.

Note

* "To Die on Ambae: On The Possibility of Doing Fieldwork Forever" will be published as a chapter in Philip DeVita, ed., *The Humbled Anthropologist: Tales from the Pacific* (Wadsworth Publishing Co.).

BROKEN PREMISES[1]

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Abstract: This article attempts to explain in an unpedantic way how knowledge is arrived at in anthropological research. It does so by telling two anecdotes about the author's misinterpretation of people's activities while he was in the field. These errors, which are paradigmatic of anthropological research in general rather than the result of the author's obtuseness and superficiality alone, demonstrate the difficulty of conceptualizing the cultural *Other*. The article shows how objectivity and subjectivity, established conceptual schemas and unexamined personal feelings hinder the apprehension of this *Other*. The author is bold enough to believe that such an experience, undergone by all anthropologists, reproduces on a modest scale the discourse on *Tradition* and *Modernity* developed by the great 19th-century social theorists and that fieldwork is essentially a personal reinvention of the sociological/anthropological wheel.

Résumé: Cet article tente d'expliquer d'une manière qui ne se veut pas savante comment la recherche mène à la connaissance anthropologique. Y sont racontées deux anecdotes montrant que l'auteur a mal interprêté le comportement des gens qu'il observait lors de sa recherche sur le terrain. Ce genre d'erreurs, qui sont inhérentes à toute recherche anthropologique plutôt que le simple résultat d'un manque de perspicacité de la part de l'auteur, démontrent la difficulté de conceptualiser l'*Autre*. L'article indique comment objectivité et subjectivité, de vieux schèmes de pensée et des sentiments personnels à peine conscients font obstacle à l'appréhension de l'*Autre*. L'auteur considère qu'une telle expérience, partagée par tous les anthropologues, reproduit à petite échelle le discours sur la *Tradition* et la *Modernité* développé par les grands sociologues du 19ème siècle. En ce sens, l'expérience de terrain est en fait une redécouverte personnelle de la roue sociologique/anthropologique.

Introduction

I wish at the start to outline my argument as clearly as possible since parts of this article are written in a digressive style which does not easily allow for the marshalling of arguments like soldiers on a battlefield. On the other hand, such a style renders very well, in my opinion, the dynamics and tensions leading to the creation of anthropological knowledge, the subject of this article.

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Starting from the idea that fieldwork represents the key element of anthropology because it encapsulates fully the *grandeur et misère* of the anthropological project, I shall attempt to show that fieldwork leads by necessity to a reflection on *us* and *non-us*, on the available ways of conceptualizing a culturally different *Other*; that it is no simple matter to escape our own ideological discourses about this radically different *Other*, whether in the form of articulated anthropological ideas or unstated feelings; that the apprehension of this *Other* is through inherited models of *Tradition* (Primitivity) and *Modernity*,[2] reverse images of one another; and that if we wish to free ourselves from our own ideological projections, we must first understand the intellectual context of the birth of this pair of opposites. To accomplish the latter, we must know what 19th-century social theorists such as Tönnies and Durkheim were trying to say about their own society by inventing its opposite. Anthropology can only escape the circumstances of its birth by acknowledging its parentage.

I shall also argue that the inadequacy of anthropological models of the *traditional* leads researchers to consider models more congruent with their experience in the field and, in so doing, they duplicate the intellectual endeavour of the great 19th-century social theorists responsible for the invention of the *traditional society*; that although we know today a great deal more about traditional peoples, we are still inventing this *Other* in order to understand ourselves and that, furthermore, this *Other* can still only be grasped through our own intellectual schemas; and finally that fieldworkers become anthropologists when, after realizing that anthropology is part-truth and part-lies about ourselves and others, they develop the heroic resolve of making even the lies mean something.

I illustrate this process of becoming an anthropologist by presenting two vignettes of my fieldwork which show some ineptitude or, at the very least, some lack of perspicacity on my part. I have chosen to focus on mistakes and missed opportunities because, paradoxically, it is in showing the making of anthropological errors that the mechanisms of production of anthropological knowledge are the clearest.

The article is made up of four parts. The first is a bird's eye view of the emergence of the notion of traditional society used by anthropologists. The second and third parts are "true confessions from the field": a personally embarrassing story about gifts of food shows the underside of reciprocity and the costs of living in a close-knit community; the Ntuam Sok story, a case of modernization which has taken place in the absence of an expanding secular outlook, points to our faulty definition of religion. These vignettes, which show errors of interpretation committed in the field, lead me in the last section to reflect on the nature of anthropological understanding and to state what distinguishes anthropology from other social science disciplines.

The History of an Idea: The Invention of the Traditional Society

Anthropology has been from the start a somewhat desperate enterprise, no less rash and ill-considered than the behaviour of 19th-century European missionaries leaving home to save the souls of South Pacific Islanders living in the cultural antipodes, when they could not persuade the workers living in new industrial towns to practice Christianity. There is something senseless about both enterprises, which are but the two faces of the same coin, though what is even more astonishing is that both should have met with a measure of success. The project of anthropology is foolish because anthropologists choose to go where words are not simply bound to fail, but where they must fail in order for the fieldwork to succeed. How does it work? How can intellectuals, many of whom cannot, if truth be known, navigate the aisles of a supermarket at home, find their way in the South Pacific? How can people, who make a profession of learning a great deal more about the practices and beliefs of obscure peoples than they will ever know about their own society, convince those who considered all along that leaving home was pointless that they have returned with worthwhile knowledge? After all, even our informants ask us why we have come amongst them when we have everything we could possibly desire at home. Why willingly endure material privations? The answer is as obvious as it is difficult to explain: we study others in order to understand ourselves, for self-knowledge is only found through the eyes of the *Other*.

Ever since the Age of Enlightenment, Western intellectuals have invented the "Savage," to serve as a foil while attempting to understand, criticize and change their own world. By the 19th century, members of traditional societies were no longer regarded as "savages," people belonging to uncivil societies, in other words societies without government, organized religions, and complex legal systems. Instead they became primitives. This was because the leading metaphor explaining the difference between "us" and "them" was now provided by evolutionary theory. Time, a before and an after, became the filament connecting the observed cultural discontinuities. Unable to grasp the 19th-century social forms emerging out of the test tube of the French and industrial revolutions, toward the end of the century, sociologists invented, in an imaginative reach, the *traditional* society.

Let me describe the "invention" of the *traditional* in the 19th century because it has a close bearing on anthropology today in general and my behaviour in the field in particular. Sociology was, from the start, preoccupied with social pathology even while it was busy determining its subject matter. Given the rise of hygienist theories and practices and the growing "medicalization" of this period, it is perhaps not so surprising that sociology developed essentially as a form of social prophylaxis. Social commentators of the time believed they were faced with imminent social disintegration.

They witnessed the breakdown of the old social order with the development of the factory labour system, the appearance of the industrial city, the transformation of property, the political agitation of the working class, the secularization of the age, the emergence of mass culture, etc.

There was among members of the left and the right of the time, i.e. from the radicals as well as from the conservatives, perhaps because they could see so much of it, a general condemnation of individualism, this "social, moral and political isolation of self-interested individuals, unattached to social ideals and unanswerable to social control; and they saw it as a breakdown of social solidarity" (Lukes 73:96). But what matters even more than the anticipated spread of individualism was the reaction to it, a movement profoundly influenced by the rehabilitation of the medieval period going on at the time: critics of the age fell back on a romanticized view of the Middle Ages which, quite wrongly, made of the monasteries the standard of Middle Ages social institutions (Williams 1985:37).

A bourgeoisie which had barely had the time to savour the fruits of power was now confronted with the end of the social order it dominated: their fear in turn helped shape the image of the good society held by conservatives. The rediscovery of the "community," as a counterpoint to individualism, represents "unquestionably the most distinctive development in 19th-century social thought" (Nisbet 1966:47). But what did the term community mean in the last century? To quote Nisbet again, at some length, the term

> encompasses all forms of relationship which are characterized by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion, and continuity in time. . . . Its archetype, both historically and symbolically, is the family. . . . Fundamental to the strength of the bond of community is the real or imagined antithesis formed in the same social setting by the non-communal relations of competition or conflict, utility or contractual assent (ibid.:47-48).

This brings us to what Nisbet penetratingly sees as the paradox of sociology. Although the discipline "falls, in its objectives and in the political and scientific values of the principal figures, in the mainstream of modernism, its essential concepts and its implicit perspectives place it much closer, generally speaking, to philosophical conservatism. Community, authority, tradition, the sacred: these are primary conservative preoccupations in the age . . ." (ibid.:18). If the medieval town with its guilds and other groups forms the natural, organic community, then it follows that the newly-born industrial city could not escape being the locus of most sociological propositions about social disorganization and modern alienation.

This contrapuntal opposition of tradition and modernity finds its most accomplished exposition in Tönnies' models of *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society). Each social world exemplifies different sorts of

social bonds: in one case, human wills (we would say individuals) are united by blood ties, common morality and common world view; in the other, individual wills are joined purely instrumentally in social relations typified by the business contract. The point is that neither polar opposite really exists: the family is after all the usual stage of most acts of emotional and physical violence and 20th-century capitalist society has not become the Hobbesian world entirely dominated by the "cash nexus" predicted by many 19th-century social critics.

The theoretical itinerary which concerns us here starts with Emile Durkheim. Although for him community was a form of society based on mechanical solidarity, he did not on the whole greatly modify Tönnies' notion. What he did, in his book *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895; trans. 1938), was to transmute "the attributes of mechanical solidarity into the eternal characteristics of social facts in general" (Nisbet 1966:86) and these became the hallmark of the *traditional.*

Durkheim's thought reaches us through a double current of ideas in social anthropology: Radcliffe-Brown took his ideas to England and made them the foundation stones of British social anthropology; a second current, faithful to another dimension of Durkheim's work, goes from Mauss to Lévi-Strauss. Mauss, studying forms of primitive exchange in traditional societies, made of reciprocity the essence of society in his justly famous book *The Gift* (1924; trans. 1967). The structure of society is reciprocity itself; the whole is made up of holes, of discontinuities between the parts, and the structure consists of the tension between them, a sort of mobile without strings.[3] Going a step further, Lévi-Strauss studied societies as though they were a vast communication system, an exchange of various forms of messages such as greetings, ideas, material goods, women, etc.

The reason that I have described at some length the emergence of the notion of tradition and modernity is that my research had to do with the transition from one to the other. I had chosen to study a "modern" peri-urban village in Vanuatu, a country that had experienced several cargo cults,[4] a sure sign that the modernization process was running into difficulties.

I thus left for the field armed with an ideal model of the *traditional* and the *modern* which had perforce to be polar opposites of one another if they were to hold any explanatory value. They were more recent versions of Tönnies' and Durkheim's ideas, but not fundamentally different ones. My error, as we shall see, consisted in taking this oil and water model of societies for the reality.

Food for Thought

Before leaving for the field in 1972, I had been told what all anthropology students have drummed into them, that the notion of reciprocity is not only fundamental to understanding traditional societies, that it amounts to traditional life itself, although, as all but anthropologists know, social life is by definition an endless round of give-and-take in *all* societies, with a division of labour usually prevailing between those who mostly give and those who mostly take. I received my first practical lesson in the intricacies of gift giving from my advisor prior to leaving for the field. It took the form of a warning about presents of yams and what to do with them when they become too numerous to eat by oneself. To give them away seems to be the answer, except, as my advisor pointed out, that people recognize their own and other peoples' yams. It would be like giving away unwanted gifts.

The answer, an obvious one upon reflection, is to give the yams away in the form of cooked food. So I left for the field[5] with a heightened appreciation for the symbolic role of food sharing and with the firm intention of eating and drinking, come what may, whatever would be put in front of me.

My neighbour, the ex-village chief, had been singlehandedly responsible for my being in Erakor village. He did it mostly to spite the villagers who had forced him to resign from his hereditary post. It was months later that I found out that villagers had been opposed to the presence of a white man in the village, to someone whose reason for being there could only be "to steal their land," a statement meaning that the worst was bound to happen.

> At the beginning of my stay, when I was trying to learn the language while I was kept under constant observation, I asked my neighbour, the ex-chief, if I could try some of his food. I was really fishing for an invitation to dinner where I could meet people in a normal social context. Good idea, he said, but no invitation came. Most nights, half indulging in the fantasy that soon an informant would arrive, uninvited, to lay bare to me the structure of the community, I stayed in our small hut reading novels by the Coleman lamp. One night, around 8:30, there was a knock at my door and in came one of his granddaughters with a plate full of *laplap*. The latter is a delicacy made of grated tuber (yam, manioc, taro) or plantain which is diluted with coconut milk and to which is added salt, and, on good days, small shellfish, or small pieces of chicken or pork. The pudding is so heavy that, paradoxically, it induces a feeling of lightness as the blood rushes from the brain to the stomach to cope with the extra work. Having already had our dinner, my wife and I took a few nibbles commenting on "how extraordinary the texture was"; a few more nibbles, "like nothing ever experienced before"; still more nibbles, "the dominant flavour must be yam or is it taro?" In short, we thought it tasted revolting! Not knowing what to do with the large amount left over, we decided to keep it until the next day in the hope that the flavour would improve overnight. It did not, and with much guilt we secreted the food away in the garbage can.

A few days later, a new present of food appeared at the same hour. We sampled it, left the rest for the following day and discarded it in the garbage can with the same sense of unease. It went on like this for about a month. Growing confident that my secret was well guarded, my scruples had been firmly reined in.

Children would spend the day with us, watching and reporting to adults what we were doing, this being one of the social roles of children. One day I threw away some old ball point pens. The following day they were back on the shelf where I kept them. Not absolutely sure that I had discarded them, I threw them again in the garbage can. They were back the following day. At the same time, I got rid of leather shoes with holes in the sole as there was no cobbler in town. The following day they were back. Horrified by the suspicion slowly forming in my mind, I asked the child who took our garbage away about the shoes. He thought I had inadvertently thrown them away so he had retrieved them as he emptied the pail on the garbage pile. It suddenly dawned on me that, from the first day, the children had systematically gone through our garbage with the application, method and dispassionate curiosity only found among archaeologists before reporting their findings to their parents. A sense of embarrassment and shame descended upon me which has not entirely left me even today. I had broken one of the fieldworkers' rules by throwing away presents of prepared food!

Prepared food is one of the richest media for expressing sociability and closeness as indicated in English in the following expression of distance or dislike, "I will not break bread with them." Moreover, the preparation of these delicacies reserved for special occasions required a considerable amount of labor and time. What compounded my ignominy was that my neighbour knew about my unspeakable behavior from the first day, yet kept sending more food. His *grand seigneur* gesture emphasized even more my ungratefulness. My only hope, I selfishly thought, was that the local whites were so very awful that I would not be found too wanting in comparison.

My neighbour and I were looking at each other across a divide we were both powerless to cross. Given the special role of food as a medium through which social relations are expressed, it is not surprising that it is often the form first misunderstandings take in the field. There was more than simply a question of taste in our inability to cope with the gifts of food: there was the problem of quantity as well. My neighbour no doubt knew that foreigners do not like native food at the first try. Yet he could not stop sending some, because this is the way sociability is expressed, nor could he send less, because parsimony would have amounted to a denial of the message he wanted to send. We, on our part, knew we had to accept the gift, although it was more than we could consume. The statements made through this exchange needed to be made and this is why it continued for a while even though the ex-chief knew that the food was discarded. The message that we were welcome could only be encoded one way.

It took me months to face the man once more with a semblance of equanimity and I was never again comfortable enough with him to use him as an informant. I had found out what shame was, the loss of face, the vulnerability resulting from everyone knowing the unmentionable acts one has committed. I then realized that the harmonious community I was living in resulted as much, if not more, from an unforgiving form of social control than from an "organic harmony of human wills." Let me explain. In modern societies, social order results from the interplay of complex social institutions. Civil order is not taken for granted and the social system receives constant adjustments in the form of new welfare policies or laws protecting various rights or new measures for suppressing dissent. Before my neighbour's failure to comment upon my own lapse led me to look beneath apparently harmonious surfaces, I naturally assumed that the social harmony achieved in Erakor without the use of such complex mechanisms must be the by-product of reciprocity in the raw, the result of numerous forms of mutual help built into the kinship system, life-long friendships and neighbourhood ties. I had overlooked the different sort of social control found in close-knit communities. What had been until then separate observations suddenly formed a pattern: juniors and women barred from speaking in the council meetings in which community decisions are taken; juniors forbidden to disagree in public with seniors; parents placing a curse on their children; mild rules of avoidance between in-laws pointing out the tensions between them; men with a legitimate grudge having to get "blind drunk," as they put it, before confronting those who caused them to be angry; sporadic outburts of inexplicable violent behaviour in unlikely quarters; a prevalent fear of sorcery reflecting the smoldering tensions in that sort of community. This is when I discovered that I could not have spent my life there.

The range of human experiences conceptualized by the opposing pair *tradition/modernity* is also expressed through the couple *country/city*, the *country* forming a powerful image of an organic society. My desire to see in Erakor the workings of an organic community came from a lack of theoretical sophistication, that much is clear. However, it was not caused simply by over-theorizing the ethnographic reality, imposing on it a 19th-century conservative view of the good society. It also came from a more insidious source: I had unintentionally invested the model with childhood memories. Nostalgia is not exclusively an affliction of old age! Childhood memories of simpler times, when life seemed more authentic, feelings less ambiguous, the meaning of experiences clearer, are what we use to make sense of our adult life. There exists a *Gemeinschaft* of youth in the form of a "structure of feelings" rather than articulated thought which makes its containment all the more difficult. My childhood consisted of school years spent in town and summer vacations in the country helping relatives on their farms. By the time I

became a young man, I knew that farming had fewer rewards than I had imagined at first; my cousins certainly did not mind leaving it for a job in town. Yet the feeling of belonging associated with this period of my life was never examined, let alone questioned, in the light of the realistic attitude to rural life acquired later. Finding myself once again in a rural community in which sharing and cooperation were everyday events, I had transferred my feelings from one context to another. And it is these unwitting feelings which prevented me from seeing the village reality for what it was.

As for native food, we eventually developed a taste for it though never the ability to consume it in quantities even approaching what the villagers consider an elegant sufficiency. We also became involved in reciprocal exchanges of food on Sundays. Sunday lunch, after service, is the special meal of the week. Kinsmen, neighbours and friends send each other a plate full of *laplap*, fish or watery stew. The following week, this plate is returned also full of food. Friends had instigated these informal exchanges and we soon found ourselves exchanging with four or five households every Sunday. We have here a good illustration of the fictitious character of the participation of anthropologists in local life. We had finally mastered the code for such food exchanges: we knew what to cook and how to cook it, as well as how and to whom to give it. Yet some artifice was still required on our part to give the act the appearance of being natural: we had to stick labels on the empty plates in order to be able to identify a week later whose plates they were.

In time, we discovered what to do with excess food because we were now getting more of it than ever. It is perfectly acceptable to feed children from the neighbourhood with leftovers. What the children left we surreptitiously fed to dogs and what the dogs left we took to town under cover of darkness to dispose of in friends' garbage cans.

What's in a Name?

Interested in the process of transition from traditional to market economy, I had devoted in 1972 much time to studying the remarkable career of a successful entrepreneur in Erakor who had, almost entirely by himself, built from scratch a large and diversified commercial enterprise.

> Kaloris' father had asked his son to claim from the French Residency land that had once belonged to their ancestors in Rentapao. This land had been abandoned roughly at the turn of the century when Rentapao people resettled in coastal villages such as Erakor at the suggestion of a Christian missionary. After persistent petitioning, Kaloris obtained from the French Residency 200 ha of land for the small sum of $500.00 on behalf of the descendants of Rentapao people. This land however had to be fenced and partially cleared within a period of three years. Kaloris then became director of Ntuam Sook (N.S.K.), the joint stock company formed to receive the land from the Residency.

The financing of the company was quick, with enthusiasm running high in the village: in only two years, the company had raised in capital the sum of $10 000.00. The director then decided to expand operations in the retail field and the company joined the cooperative movement. Between 1966 and 1970, N.S.K. built and operated two retail stores, acquired three pickup trucks and a 25-passenger bus. A second 200 ha of land was purchased from the Residency which was later divided into three sections: one was made into a paddock for 60 head of cattle; a second was developed into a cocoa plantation of 5000 trees; the third part was used for commercial gardening. By 1970, the 182-member cooperative had a capital of $22 524.00 and annual sales of $29 339.00. Kaloris' was a success story, and yet his leadership was seriously questioned in the village.

It was clear that this man had no problem speaking the language of various government representatives, such as district agent, land officer, and cooperative officer. In fact, he was so well thought of by them that he received, from the hands of the French Prime Minister, the *Médaille du Mérite Agricole*. The contrast between capitalist and pre-capitalist enterprise was, paradoxically, at the heart of his problem with shareholders. In a way, a cooperative is a "traditional" institution: membership is made up of small shareholders, the decision making is communal, and the yearly profits of the enterprise are distributed amongst members in the form of dividends. Kaloris' management was felt to be autocratic by members who were rarely consulted. He behaved like an entrepreneur by re-investing profits rather than paying dividends to members. He firmly believed that he knew better than the shareholders what was good for the company and he was, in my opinion, right on this score. Finally, he had a standard of living superior to that of the villagers, keeping a truck for his personal use, helping himself at will to tinned food from the co-op store and drawing a good salary. Members found him simply too enterprising with and for their own good(s).

During interviews with him, I was struck with his business acumen, his handling of figures, his understanding of concepts such as costs, capital, profits, etc., and attached great importance to his contribution to village economic life. It was after all, in reaction to him, that villagers refused to accept the entrepreneurial role in the village. In 1979, when I went back to Erakor, he unexpectedly revealed to me over a few beers (his treat) the magical origin of the company.

His father had taken Kaloris' two sisters to the Rentapao bush. At the foot of a mango tree near the seashore, he told them to dig a large hole in the sand and, after the water filled the hole, to drop a fishing line. Immediately a big red fish hooked the line. The father instructed his oldest daughter to bring the fish in and to kill it as soon as it touched the ground. She replied she was afraid to do so. He ordered her to be silent and to get on with it. After the fish was killed, they threw its body back into the sea and returned home. Afterwards, their father informed them that they had become lucky (*kasem laki*), but that they were to give this "luck" to their eldest brother, Kaloris. This is how the co-operative *Ntuam sook*—"a spirit emerges"—was created under the sign of spiritual forces. A spirit inhabiting the sea at their ancestral home had been tricked to come on land where part of his "power" had been taken away

from him and transferred to members of Kaloris' family.

I was shocked by the story! All I had written about Kaloris had followed what I thought were exhaustive interviews with him on the origins of the enterprise, a careful study of the workings of the company, double-checking the information received with other informants, some of whom were his opponents, and government officials. It had led me to talk about the emergence of a new role model, that of the entrepreneur, in Erakor. It puts a somewhat different complexion on the matter when tutelary spirits are involved from the start to act as guarantors of the success of a modern enterprise.

When I forcefully asked him why he had not told me this story in 1972, he gave me the classic answer, "You never asked." He added, "you only seemed to be interested in figures, so figures are what I gave you." He no doubt thought that I was singularly obtuse not to have suspected or anticipated what was in his eyes the most important event in the creation of the enterprise. I remember asking Kaloris' brother about the company's name and being told that there was a good story attached to it. He added, "You should ask Kaloris about it. He tells the story so well that you would enjoy it. Do you want to see the accounts now?" He had been so matter-of-fact about it that by the time I was able to work with Kaloris, months later, I had forgotten his suggestion.

The discovery of the spiritual origin of the company led me to be more sensitive to religious issues. Indeed, what struck me in 1979 was the place occupied by supernatural and occult forces in what is the most modern village of Vanuatu. It had taken me months of persistent questioning in 1972 to get these deeply committed Christians to admit the existence of traditional spirits and to express their fear of sorcery. By 1979, it came up all the time even on the lips of *church elders*. Villagers had a different presentation of self during my second stay, almost as if the time of my absence had been considered by them to be a continuous learning process on my part, which in some ways it was. There was either nothing left to dissimulate or else, like old actors, they could not remember their lines. As for myself, I could now use the right words and expressions to imply that I knew a great deal more than I really did. This did not always work in my favour as people would refuse to discuss certain topics on the ground that I already knew all there was to know about them. They reacted the way people react to a foreigner stating in unaccented English that he does not speak English: no one believes him and his claim to ignorance is simply taken to be false modesty.

Was my blind spot regarding the religious component of a modern business enterprise simply then the result of a well-executed mystification by Erakor villagers? I think not for a number of reasons. I had decided to start my research with an historical reconstruction of the *traditional* way of life because it is a neutral subject, less threatening than being asked by a stranger belonging to a powerful social group about land ownership, monthly income or patterns of household expenditure. Yet I was from the start confronted with what can only be described as cultural amnesia. Knowledge about the

pre-European past was fragmentary at best. It never amounted to a systematic view of the kinship system, the political organization or the cosmology. Villagers had bits of knowledge about traditional life, but these never formed a whole; it was like asking second generation immigrants to describe their parents' culture in their former country. Informants kept saying, "If only you had come fifteen years ago, so-and-so was still alive then and he knew. We are ignorant because our parents have never told us about these things. They thought it did not matter anymore." A break, a cultural hiatus occurred at the end of the 19th century (Philibert 1982). The contrast between the "time of light" (the historical, European-Christian period) and the "time of darkness" (the prehistoric, traditional period), the way villagers conceptualize this break, is still today of considerable ideological importance.

Something else also explains my shortsightedness. Modernization in the West has meant the secularization of society, the role of religion being reduced by the growth of scientific knowledge, and national bureaucracies taking over public education, health care, welfare, etc. The opposite took place in Vanuatu: there, modernity has been phrased as the transition from paganism to Christianity. Christian churches from the 1870s onward established schools and hospitals and supplied ni-Vanuatu with the vocabulary with which to make sense of the modern world.

These two factors taken in conjunction—a dimly remembered past and the present-day situation expressed largely in religious terms—led me to conclude that villagers who spent so much of their time in church must be devout Christians. The large number of Christian churches and sects in existence in the country (five in Erakor alone) bears witness to a ceaseless religious quest. I thus assumed that, except for the use of magical aids during times of particularly intense lust or hatred, a behaviour only too human and easily understood, there was little left of their traditional religious world. What I saw as remnants, however, were on the contrary only the tip of the iceberg. The two systems of beliefs naturally appeared to me as antithetical, while for villagers they are simply complementary dimensions of the same reality; the two systems have the same factuality, the same legitimacy, except that they operate in different contexts. That Europeans do not see it this way can only mean they are very naive in some matters. The special genius of Melanesian culture seems to be the ability to reconcile the most diverse ideas in such a way that a belief in magical stones and bush spirits, the expression of traditional spirituality, can coexist with a profound Christian faith.

Upon reflection, there is no reason why these two sets of beliefs should not coexist when they account for different sorts of experience. An illuminating analogy is that of the treatment of disease in Erakor. Villagers believe that diseases can be caused by germs and viruses, though like us they are not always very knowledgeable about these, but also by offended bush spirits and

sorcery. They first go to a dispensary or hospital when they recognize the symptoms of well-known afflictions. However, if the treatment does not produce the expected cure, then it is clear that there is more to the disease than meets the eye. They then consult a *kleva* (native doctor) who will diagnose the "true" cause of the illness and provide a remedy.

This is precisely the procedure they follow in their religious life. The fact that a doctrine is true does not imply that another is automatically false. The contradiction that I saw between the beliefs was entirely of my own cultural making. It is perfectly acceptable for anthropologists to use models built around pairs of opposites for the purpose of understanding the way very complex factors fit together, indeed we cannot escape using models, but we should not take such models for the reality. Our category of religion is simply too narrow to render adequately the Melanesian religious experience. We must enlarge our notion. After all, the fabulous and magical world found today in the pages of the *National Enquirer* and other newspapers of the same ilk belonged, not that long ago, to the field of religion in our own culture. They no longer do, but such ideas, the closest we come to beliefs in bush spirits and magical stones, have not disappeared for all that. They are now diffused according to methods of distribution only found in advanced capitalist economies, in the form of weekly newspapers purchased at the checkout counters of supermarkets.

Anthropological knowledge usually starts with the discovery that our sociological categories such as the family, economic exchanges, or the state, are born out of our own society, out of a particular social and cultural setting; they are derived from common sense and as such carry limited scientific content. But we only become aware that we have categories of our own when we discover those of others. The realization that what we had until then taken for a fact of nature exists side by side with different notions is no small achievement. Not only is anthropology as scientific as the other social sciences in that it attempts to prove or disprove given hypotheses about social life, it goes even further by challenging the conceptual tools themselves. It places such concepts in situation, to use an existentialist expression; it relativizes these ideas by showing them to be dependent on a particular social and cultural weft; finally, it forces us to step ever further beyond our own culture to search for the meaning others attach to these concepts.

To return to the villagers' religious world, I am tempted to say that although they have become Christians, they still live in a spiritual world far richer than our own, a world in which Christianity has displaced but not destroyed the spirits of the old order which have retreated to the bush, gone literally underground. The dark forces of nature have not been evacuated from what is now for us a mechanistic universe; the varied sources of human experience are refracted in a number of water and bush spirits which are subse-

quently used to explain the behaviour of individuals. As for us, having unduly simplified nature in our culture, we have had to make human nature more complex and to give ourselves a subconscious to account for what cannot be readily understood; the operative forces which we place inside individuals, they leave in some contexts outside, in nature.

The opposition between *traditional* and *modern* was no more true in the field of religion than it was in economics. Although still a practicing atheist, I can now more easily think of myself as religious. Adopting the villagers' notion of spirituality has allowed me to regard some of my own experiences as being fundamentally religious in a way that I would not, or could not, have done before. What's in a name? There is plenty in a name! Half of the ideological battles we constantly wage with ourselves and others are resolved, less by changing the culturally defined experience of, let us say, age or gender, a hard thing to do in any case, than by finding a new and more acceptable label for it.

Conclusion

The 19th century had only just rediscovered medievalism, which it romanticized beyond recognition, when it made the "community" into a utopian image of an organic social grouping modelled after the natural ties of affection and morality found in the family. Through Durkheim, this vision of the communal came to be applied wholesale to the model of traditional society.

It is true that we are bound to invent the *Other* the same way that important historical events are reinterpreted every few generations by asking a new set of questions about them, because the explanatory function of the *Other*, whether located in time or space, is that of a mirror. While it is also undoubtedly true that more and more precise instruments of measurement tell us ever more about the mirror's surface, the surface itself never ceases to be reflective for all that. Anthropologists forget at times that they paint the portraits of exotic societies by numbers and I am not only referring here to economic anthropologists; it is easy for us to be taken in by the fiction that there are no numbers, unaware that the forms and shapes we fill with local color are drawn from our own social categories. By transforming the personal experience of cultural differences into an anthropological analysis, fieldworkers go through what the great social theorists have imaginatively gone through when they created the categories of sociological thought. Anthropologists in the field reinvent the sociological wheel and so free themselves at the same time from some of its limitations. Now aware of the precariousness of sociological concepts, having experienced in the flesh, as it were, *them* and *us*, the *traditional* and the *modern*, they realize that for better or for worse anthropology is, like all the other social sciences, half-science and half-ideology. Anthropology is part of an informed social commentary on our

society: it is a discourse on ourselves, though not exclusively that, in the guise of a description of other societies. Anthropologists are thus essentially the moralists of the 20th century.

However, acknowledging that others can never be apprehended totally in their own terms, the way they perceive themselves, is no cause for despair. Refining the model of the *Other* projected by our own established social categories forces us, albeit only indirectly, to become conscious of our unexamined received ideas. This is only one step away from challenging our own discourses.

The people we study can also go through an anthropological experience. I was baffled for a long time by the behaviour of a few Erakor elders who came to see me, prior to my leaving the village, to thank me for what I had taught them. Now I had made it a rule not to interfere in village life to the point of rarely venturing an opinion about anything. When asked specifically for my views, I would confine myself to hopeless academic ditherings of the "on the one hand, but on the other hand . . ." sort. What could I have possibly taught those who instructed me? It was clear that villagers knew very little about anthropology. All they could observe was the way I inquired about their past and their present. But my investigation was thorough enough that they could follow the questions I asked and in turn ask themselves, "Now, what is the point of asking about that?" It was a case of one question leading to another. Following at one remove my line of inquiry, from behind the scene as it were, they were able to obtain a series of negatives of the image of the community I would eventually develop in my work. What we shared was a method, a systematic inquiry into their social universe. This led them to develop a model of their society that was different from the one available in their traditional social commentary or again different from the one provided by missionaries or other Europeans. We did not reach the same conclusion though I shall never know what they arrived at. How could it be otherwise, as they were viewing the stage from behind the backdrop? However, they could see masses and connections being made between them, get a sense of social relief, and draw a sociological map. What they and I shared was a method of assembling phenomena through logical links, the result of which was a sociological landscape whose shape they had not known before. This is what I had "taught" them. They had in some ways objectified themselves and thus achieved a certain distance from their own culture.

It is not my intention to present what are after all failures in the field as scientific success and more sensitive persons might not have made the same mistakes. But they would have had to make some in order to gain an anthropological experience: other cultures seem to be one of the few things one learns almost entirely through negative reinforcement. As Burridge (1975) points out so aptly, fieldworkers need to compromise their cultural integrity.

Anthropology demands a willingness to surrender one's intellectual correctness, even rectitude. With culture as with love, the true meaning of fidelity can only be known after having been unfaithful.

I hope to have shown in an unpedantic way how knowledge is achieved in anthropological research. Inducing cultural reflexivity in ourselves and others may well be anthropology's principal and most valuable contribution. It remains at any rate a substantial scientific achievement.

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Notes

1. This article was originally written for a book on fieldwork experiences intended for both a professional and general audience. As such, the ideas are presented in a discursive form. Those interested in more conventionally presented scholarly work on the Melanesian village described here should consult Philibert 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1984a, 1984b, 1986, 1988, 1989.
2. By Tradition and Modernity, I do not mean the construct, more ideological than scientific, so dear to Parsonian sociology and Redfieldian anthropology. These opposite terms refer to ways of conceptualizing *us* and *non-us*, to the philosophical problem of how to think the cultural *Other*. A French anthropologist has this to say on this issue, "Et voilà qu'après la Femme, le Fou, et l'Enfant, une quatrième figure de l'Altérité surgit face à ce que la société occidentale définissait comme la Normalité: c'était le Sauvage. Et à l'instar des trois autres figures, ce Sauvage était muet, c'est-à-dire qu'il pouvait supporter un, et même plusieurs discours stéréotypés. Alors le Sauvage, le radicalement Autre, se vit investi des angoisses les plus profondes et des utopies les plus folles de l'Occident moderne. Un Occident en proie à un enchaînement de crises, non seulement politiques et économiques, mais avant tout crises de valeurs morales et spirituelles" (Rognon 1988: 6-7). "And so after the Woman, the Mad Man and the Child, here we have a fourth face of Otherness in opposition to what Western civilization considered Normality: the Savage. And like the other three, this Savage was voiceless,

that is to say he could become the bearer of one or more stereotyped discourses. So the Savage, the radically Other, came to embody the deepest anxieties and the wildest utopias of the modern Western world. A world fallen prey to a series of crises, not only political and economic, but above all crises of spiritual and moral values." (My translation.)

I take a different tack here by focusing exclusively on the part of this discourse developed in the 19th century by social theorists such as Durkheim and Tönnies and by pointing out that l'*Homme Sauvage* and l'*Homme Moderne* must be thought together because they were invented together; however, I do not on the whole disagree with Rognon who believes that anthropology is too often "un appendice des débats idéologiques internes à l'Occident" (Rognon 1988).

3. Mauss' idea that gift giving was central to the social integration of the egalitarian societies found in Melanesia remained the dominant focus of research for a long time. Anthropologists working in Melanesia have only recently turned their attention to forms of social inequality. This is the result of: (1) the influence of neo-Marxism which focuses on production rather than exchange; (2) the impact of gender studies which have analyzed sex-based forms of alienation and exploitation in the region; (3) a growing awareness of the tie between knowledge and power.
4. Cargo cults are a variety of millenarian movement predicting as well as bringing about a Melanesian version of the Second Coming. Given the centrality of the transactional mode in Melanesian cultures, this brave new world in which economic, political and moral equality with whites will be finally achieved takes on a singularly "materialistic" expression: it consists in obtaining from ancestors or traditional deities free access to Western manufactured goods, in other words the key to the cargo.
5. The "field" was for me a peri-urban village located near the capital of a South Pacific country called Vanuatu. It is an archipelago of 80 islands stretching 700 km between the Solomon Islands and New Caledonia with a population of almost 140 000 inhabitants. Prior to acceding to independence in 1980, this group of islands, then called the New Hebrides, was a colonial oddity, being administered jointly by France and Great Britain under the status of a Condominium.

   This cumbersome, bicephalous administration developed as a series of short term solutions to economic, political and strategic problems encountered by both Powers in the region from the 1870s to 1914. In other words, it was never meant to work and it would not be far wrong to describe the workings of the Anglo-French Condominium in the terms that Dr. Johnson reserved for female preachers: "[it] is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well: but you are surprised to find it done at all" (MacClancy 1980; Philibert 1981).

   All decisions concerning the native inhabitants (ni-Vanuatu, people of Vanuatu) had to be taken jointly by both Powers to be legal. Since France and Great Britain had different economic and strategic interests in the territory, not to mention different colonial policies toward indigenous peoples, the end result was near-terminal administrative paralysis. The country's colonial experience was one of administrative neglect for the greater part of its history followed by a period of benevolent paternalism from the 1960s until independence. Native reactions to 75 years of ineffectual colonial rule have ranged from self-imposed social and cultural isolation from foreign influences to the enthusiastic adoption of Western religious, economic and political constructs.

   The strategy pursued by Erakor villagers, the village in which I carried out fieldwork, has been one of receptivity to European influences and in this sense they have been entrepreneurial from the start. They were the first on their island to accept Christian missionaries in 1845 and, under the influence of a Canadian Presbyterian missionary who lived in the village from 1872 to 1902, they abandoned a great number of traditional practices such as the use of magical stones, intertribal warfare, dancing, polyg-

yny, men's houses, etc. As a trade off, they gained a powerful ally in the Presbyterian mission which protected the villagers in the frontier situation prevailing in the last quarter of the 19th century. Just as importantly, the mission provided a social and intellectual framework that allowed villagers to react effectively to the colonial context. As early as 1910, encouraged by the mission, villagers had started to develop coconut groves and to sell their own copra as an alternative to wage labour on European plantations. Fifty years later, they were among the first ni-Vanuatu to participate in the tourist industry.

Erakor villagers have long followed their own ideology of modernization, at first phrased in a Christian idiom and expressed today in terms of economic development and a rise in standards of living. They are the modernization autodidacts of Vanuatu. This is the reason I went to Erakor, as few anthropologists had studied this sort of social world in the early 1970s. The village is what scholars used to call an acculturated community until the notion of tradition itself became problematic. (See Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Keesing and Tonkinson 1982; Philibert 1986.)

I spent 24 months in all in Erakor during three sojourns made between 1972 and 1983. It is the second largest village community in Vanuatu with a population of 1000 inhabitants (1983) living on land covering an area of 1400 ha; the village is bordered on the northern and western sides by a lagoon where villagers find fish and shellfish. Households are involved to varying degrees in subsistence gardening (slash-and-burn cultivation of root crops mostly), with a majority of them self-sufficient with regard to native products. Besides producing coprah and marketing produce in town, villagers are involved in wage labour in the three hotels located across the Erakor lagoon and in town. Wage labour represents the main articulation between the village economy and the national one. In 1983, 243 adults were wage earners.

Though villagers are no longer peasants, they have not become proletarianized. They have retained some corporate solidarities and the sort of political discourses associated with communal ownership of the means of production. (See Philibert 1981, 1988.) My anthropological fascination with Erakor comes from the fact that the ideological reproduction of such a hybrid sociological form can never be assured for very long and that, as such, it is an ideal place to analyze cultural continuity.

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JEWISH MOURNING RITES— A PROCESS OF RESOCIALIZATION

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Abstract: This article is based on fieldwork among members of an Orthodox Jewish Congregation in North America. The author examines contemporary Jewish death and mourning rituals with particular attention to the duties and rights of the deceased's surviving kin. The latent (but sometimes overt) function of such rituals is to re-integrate the survivors into the religious community so that they may become active participants in it. The social facts thus outlined are an excellent illustration of the body of theoretical knowledge developed by Van Gennep and by Durkheimians past and contemporary (Hertz and Mary Douglas).

Résumé: Cet article est basé sur un recherche effectuée parmi les membres d'une congrégation orthodoxe juive nord-americaine. L'auteur examine la mort et les rites funèraires chez Juifs, en particulièr les devoirs des proches parents dans la communauté religeuse ou ils reprennent un rôle actif. Les phénomènes sociaux décrits dans cet article se placent dans la foulée théorique des écrits de Van Gennep et de Durkheim, de même que des disciples de ce dernier, tels que Hertz et Mary Douglas.

Introduction

Social scientists have argued that religious rituals reflect the Zeitgeist of society. Emile Durkheim (1954) and his heirs R. Hertz (1907), A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1952), M. Douglas (1970, 1975, 1979), V. Turner (1969), P. Berger (1969) and Berger and Luckmann (1984) have further developed this argument. The Durkheimians argue that the unity of a society is maintained by means of its collective representations including rituals. Rituals not only reflect society, but are an important variable in the creation and perpetuation of the social system. Moreover, these ritual acts, which are intrinsically valued by their actors (Bird 1980), are fraught not only with explicit but also with implicit meaning (Douglas 1975:66, 75). All these aspects and functions of ritual are enhanced by the dramatic character of ritual behaviour (Turner 1969, 1974). In a cultural setting, one group of rituals will illuminate a wide

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range of related configurations in the overall cultural structure. Such a set of rituals may be termed a "ritual complex." Indeed it is often the case that a ritual complex acts as a symbolic representation of the social system as a whole.

Where Durkheim, Hertz, Radcliffe-Brown, and Douglas stress the use of ritual in the maintenance of social control, Turner sees in ritual an opportunity to air the tensions implicit in, but not otherwise acknowledged by collective representations. Additionally, participants are able to explore patterns of communal experience precluded by quotidian social structure.

This paper first analyzes the mourning rites[1] *as prescribed* by Rabbinic Judaism.[2] It attempts to demonstrate how mourning rites, which communicate explicit and implicit meaning, are structured to serve the welfare of the social unit. This analysis further supports the theoretical models proffered by Douglas, Turner, and Berger. Second, the study of the rites in question is conducted in connection with their *actual* performance by persons affiliated with a modern orthodox synagogue situated in the suburbs of a major Canadian city. This analysis of modern practice, unlike the study of Rabbinic texts, offers more support to orthodox Durkheimian theory than to Turnerian interpretation.

The socio-economic profile of this synagogue community can be described as middle to upper-middle class. Most of its eight hundred member families belong to the managerial and entrepreneurial class. No more than ten families of the non-clerical synagogue members identify themselves as halachically observant Jews (popularly referred to as orthodox Jews).[3]

Problematical, Methodological and Theoretical Perspectives

Hertz (1960 [1907]:38) states: "death has a specific meaning for the social consciousness; it is the object of collective representation." In their studies of mourning rituals, social psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists have discussed the welfare of individual survivors. Hertz (ibid.:86) summarizes this discussion:

> For the collective consciousness death is in normal circumstances a temporary exclusion of the individual from human society. . . . In the final analysis, death as a social phenomenon consists in a dual and painful process of mental disintegration and synthesis. It is only when this process is completed that society, its peace recovered, can triumph over death.

Hertz's basic hypothesis is that mourning rites are concerned with the resocialization (whether psychological, or sociological) of the individual survivor as well as the body and soul of the deceased. The rituals concerned with death have a latent function: the intense emotions of individuals are social-

ized; that which has the potential for social disruption is channelled in communally approved directions.

There is a complementary level of analysis which concerns neither the survivor nor the disposition of the deceased but the welfare of society. In her concise, insightful survey of the facts surrounding the complex of death rituals, Mary Douglas writes that:

> rituals of warm support for the bereaved are consistent with their status being ruthlessly exploited for group purposes in funerary rhetoric. Everyone goes to funerals; they are judged as a major ceremonial form and how to lay on a good one is common knowledge. By contrast, without strong *group*, death having socially no place as such is no subject to celebrate publicly. (Douglas 1979:32)

Douglas has chosen to view the complex of death or mourning rites within our complementary level of analysis. Moreover, one may perceive the "group's" exploitation of rituals as a means of implicitly conveying to the member its message of communal authority, and thus reinforcing the boundaries of the society. Therefore, mourning rites, an example of a ritual process performed within a group structure, serve to strengthen the group norms.

An additional hypothesis that must be considered in our discussion of mourning rites is Van Gennep's processual analysis (1960 [1909]) as developed by Turner. Turner's analysis emphasizes (as did Van Gennep's) society's needs as well as the individual's. Although the rituals concerned with these rites of passage are performed most frequently for the individual rather than for the collective, Turner asserts that their implicit function serves the group as a whole. They give expression to the group's definition of itself. Death and the complex of mourning rites, a time of crisis for the individual and society, is an example of a rite of passage. Turner speaks of the period of transition as a liminal stage. He defines liminality as being located "where time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs" (1969:167). Turner goes on to distinguish between two types of liminality, one that pertains to rituals of status elevation, and a second which he terms "rituals of status reversal." The former almost always is related to life crisis rites and the latter to calendrical rites (ibid.:169). For the purpose of our discussion we will only be concerned with the former. To be elevated in status, the group member must descend the status ladder in order to ascend, all of which Turner sees as occurring during the liminal period. Also according to Turner's paradigm, the liminal phase unfolds within an "anti-structured" or uninstitutionalized setting. The actor is placed in, or belongs to, a space outside of society. The outward symbols and tokens of status are thus stripped to efface the initiate's normal social status. Only when released from liminality does he return in his newly elevated

status to the institutionalized order of society. Structure and liminality are therefore, for Turner, two diametrically opposed phenomena.

Although most of Turner's hypothesis is applicable to our study of Jewish mourning rites, we question whether liminality necessarily entails an undifferentiated state of affairs. If this be true one can then question Turner's hypothesis that when liminality expires those undergoing the "ritual passage" are reincorporated into society. The survivor is never jettisoned from his group nor does he seriously alter his "normal" status. One might argue that such anti-structural behaviour, may have taken place during the performance of Jewish mourning rituals in the early rabbinic period, the culture where the rites were first introduced. But Jewish mourning rites performed during a period of liminality function today in an institutionalized society where the survivor never leaves the social order. Rather than conforming to Turner's model of anti-structure and liminality contemporary performances display merely a state of transition between structural entities. Although the actor remains in the institutionalized culture and is supported by other members of the society, he or she is undergoing a period of transition. This transitional or liminal state is symbolized by the actor's deviant religious and general behaviour, including dishevelled apparel and changed hygienic habits, but all this time the structure of society provides a frame of reference.

As stated above, this paper will explore the historical development of Jewish mourning rites, in *halachah*, as well as their performance in contemporary Judaic society. The mourning rituals, as codified in the *halachah*, continue to be practiced by the rabbinic or observant Jew. Therefore, to analyze the change in the ritual process as practiced by the non-orthodox Jew, it is imperative that we explore the history of the ritual. In this paper, we assume the halachic laws of mourning to represent this history. Turner, who advocates the appropriation of history as a means to explain ritual, states in his discussion of the Franciscan Order:

> In considering the early history of the Franciscan Order, it becomes clear that the social structure is intimately connected with history, because it is the way a group maintains its form over time. Structureless communitas can bind and bond people together only momentarily. (1969:153)

Lightstone in his discussion of M. Douglas' "Cultural Bias" further develops this concept and writes:

> Viewing variation in ritual patterns as movement along an historically given continuum seems particularly salient in the study of contemporary religions. In the modern period a community's ritual forms often arise in a context which stresses an historical consciousness and self-awareness of how one does things differently than another closely related community. (1988:8)

Subsequent authors have reiterated the theories and interpretations mentioned above, but there has been no attempt to apply the concepts to particular case studies of Jewish rites and rituals in law and in practice. Some application of this theory to social data appears called for, if theoretical constructs are to be validated.

Before proceeding, let me provide a brief account of how the ethnographic data were collected. This study of mourning rituals is part of a larger collaborative research project concerning the meaning and function of ritual for contemporary members of the synagogue. The author attended weekday and Sabbath services at the subject synagogue for approximately two years. Furthermore, he participated in ten funerals and attendant rites at the mourners' homes. In addition to such participant observation, mourners and the Rabbi of the synagogue were interviewed regarding the members' religious observance and beliefs. The occupational and social involvements of the subjects, and their attitudes to the synagogue, to the Jewish community, and to its institutions, complemented the data on mourning rites.

Mourning Rites in Judaism

Rabbinical Judaism

For the purpose of this analysis I will use Mary Douglas's social structural typology (Douglas 1970, 1979). Rabbinic Judaism can be equated with what she identifies as "strong-grid, strong-group," or otherwise terms "a bounded structure system" (Douglas 1979:20).[4] Rabbinism created tight group boundaries that constrained the exit of its members and the entrance of strangers. This tight social structure offers "a life support system" (Douglas 1979) as well as direction for the behaviour of its members. But to retain this social structure, strict control of members is a necessity.

In a bounded structure system, stratification, leadership and subgrouping must be developed. Clear definition of roles is demanded. At the same time, society's security necessitates involvement of the individual within the group. Significantly, observance of rabbinical law requires Jews to live in areas of dense Jewish population, thereby promoting intense social and religious interaction. In addition, this public social relationship places the member in open view of society, thus allowing the Jew's role to develop and be reinforced by social recognition. This role and status is also enhanced by means of the members' public proclamation through religious ritual. In the subject community, the members, although they are not orthodox, have chosen to reside in close proximity to the synagogue and are thus subject to the above social pressure, support, reinforcement and involvement. Thus the implicit intent of the rabbinic law and ritual will also apply to these non-orthodox Jews who retain enough identification with rabbinic tradition to affiliate with an orthodox synagogue.

This social map was developed in view of the rabbinical authorities' perception of the diaspora milieu and of Jewish needs therein. Rituals evolved as a tool of rabbinical leadership, thus defining the articulated social structure. The religious rites then enabled the authorities to retain the "tight" social structure. Ritual symbols accordingly expressed and set a high value upon control. The purpose of these rituals or codes, taken for granted by adherents, was not expressed in explicit terms. The rites implicitly conveyed a message or substained a specific need. "It is a system of control as well as a system of communication" (Douglas 1973:55).

The Family

The rabbinic Jew's society is divided into compartments consisting of family units. These are the parts that constitute the whole, the building blocks of society. Family roles are clearly defined, with parents located at the apex of the hierarchy. In addition, this unit has its own set of rites and rituals, which differ from those of society as a whole. The family thus diverges in its social construction from the total social map. Halachic obligations for the observant Jew, in the family context, differ from his requirements in the larger social matrix. Rabbinic society, however, retained for itself the power to define, create and reinforce the roles and rites of the family. Exercising such social religious power was necessary for rabbinism to survive as a whole, for any threat to the compartment would thus be seen as a threat to society. A threat to the part is a threat to the whole. Social scientists studying contemporary North American Jews have also emphasized family solidarity as a factor serving to guarantee the traditional Jewish social structure.[5]

One example is the death of a parent. This results in a leadership role being vacated. Society must identify new actors to fill the role of leadership in the family thus securing its structure. Not to fill this role or to allow it to evolve its own hierarchy would leave Jewish society partly undefined and at risk.

Funeral Rites

The mourner commences the observation of the Jewish mourning rites (in contrast to *onen* rituals) immediately following the interment ceremony at the cemetery. Halachah recognizes the identity of the survivor according to two distinct time periods. Prior to the burial (*steemat hagolel*) one is designated as an *onen* or "in the period of *aninut.*" The survivor is not yet classified as a mourner (*avel*). Only following the burial does one become a mourner thus commencing the period of mourning (*avelut*). Although the focus of my study is the period of mourning, specific *onen* rituals prepare the survivor and society for a later identification of roles. The redefinition of the new role begins with a public proclamation of a new status. This declaration first

entails rending of the survivor's outer garment (*kriyah*) at the moment of awareness of the death. Halachah further requires that if the clothes are not torn at the moment the relative is aware of the death, the rite should be observed either immediately prior to the funeral service or before interment at the cemetery. The mourners of our subject synagogue perform this ritual at the funeral home immediately prior to the funeral service. A representative of the funeral home offers the women a black kerchief and the men a black tie which he directs them to tear. This behaviour, although it is not in accordance with the traditional custom (where one tears his own garment), still does not negate halachah. The Christian influence of wearing "black" garments has been introduced.

The *kriyah* ritual is observed by and for seven relatives: father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, and spouse. The tear which must be plainly visible, is made over the heart at least on the outer garment. It should not be torn along the seam and must be a "purposeful scar" (Lamm 1969:42). A mourner for parents severs the garment in public and on the left side of the body. Persons mourning for other relatives may rend their vestment in private and on the right side. As mentioned above the subjects of our study perform the ritual at the funeral home. It is done in private and on the appropriate side of their body. The torn garment is worn until the completion of the seven-day mourning period. The *kriyah* ritual which is executed during the *aninut* period has publicly singled out the survivor, still an *onen*, for social change.

During the period of *aninut* additional rules and rites can be identified as a public announcement of the new status. An *onen* is forbidden to shave (for males[6]), cut hair, or bathe. One is forbidden to study Torah or to work, thereby being conspicuously absent from daily public social involvement. Furthermore, the *onen* is forbidden to attend a party or participate in public merrymaking. He or she is also exempted from specific religious rituals, whether attributed to Torah or rabbinic law.[7] The exemptions from Torah law include the wearing of phylacteries and the reciting of the "Hear O Israel" prayer. The suspended rabbinical laws incorporate general daily prayers and food blessings. The exclusion of *onenim* from the accepted religious patterns is normative for the liminal state and is therefore both their own personal and their society's declaration of the change in the survivors' social status. This exclusion is emphasized by the suspension of the male *onen's* right to complete the prayer quorum (*minyan*) or the claim to congregate with the required number of Jews to recite the public blessing after the meal (*zimun*).

As discussed earlier, the *onenim* studied are affiliated with an orthodox synagogue, but they are not "committed," observant Jews. They do not practice the halachah on a regular basis. Thus the suspended laws of phylacteries, prayers and blessing are not relevant. On the other hand, halachot for the *onen*, such as not cutting one's hair or abstaining from merrymaking, are

observed. The subject synagogue's Rabbi usually visits with the survivors prior to the funeral and instructs them in these laws. The Rabbi also presents the *onenim* with a book that states and explains the laws and rituals concerned with death and mourning. The time prior to the funeral is usually spent by the future mourners with preparations for the burial. The funeral home is visited, a coffin is chosen and other technical details are concluded. This might include meeting incoming visitors at the airport. Thus, although only the newly introduced rituals are practiced, the *onen* has entered the state of liminality.

Aninut is climaxed at the funeral ceremony. Rabbinic Judaism requires the interment to be completed within a day of death. Halachah also stresses the importance of every Jew participating in the funeral service. The performance of many Judaic commandments is deferred to permit the Jew to attend the service. To encourage attendance, rabbinic sources state that the Jew's participation in the funeral service will gain him the right to the "next (post-mortem) world" (Levine 1985:389).

Attendance at the funerals studied varied in numbers of participants. The popularity of the deceased and his or her family seemed to be the criterion for attendance. On one occasion, in addition to the immediate family of the deceased, approximately 125 additional participants were present. The Rabbi explained that on the rare occasions when there are fewer than 10 men, the quorum required for the prayers recited, he or the funeral home will organize the quorum. Thus, the group's "life support" system is maintained.

Much importance is attached to the eulogy during the funeral service. Levine (1985:343-345) in his discussion of rabbinic eulogies enumerates the themes to be incorporated by the eulogizer. Motifs such as the family, the role of the husband and children, are suggested. The eulogizer, society's spokesman, and in our case the synagogue Rabbi, implicitly informs the survivor of his standing at the threshold of his new role and its duties. The Rabbi explained this: "I speak about the person and his family the way they should remember the deceased." Thus, as Douglas (1979:32) rightly states: "rituals of warm support for the bereaved are consistent with their status being ruthlessly exploited for the group purposes in funerary rhetoric." A society structured as "strong-group, strong-grid," such as rabbinic Judaism, and considered so to be by the leadership of the modern orthodox synagogue studied, demands that its members make the funeral a public affair; thus rabbinic society or its leadership serves its own needs. At the funerals I observed, the eulogy followed the same model discussed, but was delivered by the Rabbi in the funeral chapel, not at the graveside as is often done in other orthodox Jewish communities.

A society may choose to stress one or more of the various points in the process of death, burial and mourning in the encoding of liminality. Hertz, for example, argues that for the Dayaks the period between the first and second burial is particularly important. Rabbinic authority, by naming the *aninut* period, has marked the gap between death and burial as worthy of special attention. According to Hertz, collective representations and collective ritual activity surrounding death are related directly to the body and soul of the deceased. Rabbinic mourning rituals begin immediately after the corpse is covered. Lamm (1969:66-67), in his guide to Jewish mourning rites, speaks of the recessional from the graveside as a redirecting of the concerns of society from the deceased to the mourners. "It marks the transition from *aninut* to *avelut*, the new state of mourning which now commences."

Exit and Entrance Rituals

The *kaddish*, thought by the uninformed to be a prayer for the dead, is to the rabbinic Jew a prayer to celebrate the glory of God. Of the five forms of *kaddish* that exist, only one deals with death and that obliquely. The other forms are used in the general everyday services but the death-oriented *kaddish* is recited by a male survivor once at the graveside immediately after the deceased has been interred. The burial *kaddish* differs in its opening lines:

> Magnified and sanctified be His great name. In the world which He will renew, reviving the dead and raising them to life eternal, rebuilding the city of Jerusalem and establishing therein His sanctuary; uprooting idol worship from the land and replacing it with the Divine worship—May the Holy One, blessed be He, reign in His majestic glory. (Lamm 1969:172)

This particular *kaddish* engages the topic of death but avoids any mention of the deceased in question. Instead, it transcends the immediate situation and links a generalized concept of the death to messianic ideals: "In the world which He will renew, reviving the dead, and raising them to life eternal, rebuilding the city of Jerusalem and establishing therein His sanctuary." Furthermore, the reference to the Jerusalem temple and the glory of God in the burial *kaddish* reaffirms God's authority and therefore rabbinic authority as a timeless entity supported by society into the most distant future.

At the onset of the recital of the burial *kaddish*, the *onen* is declared a mourner. Through this prayer he formulates and pronounces his acceptance of the new leadership role bestowed upon him by society. In leading this recital he appears to take upon himself a new role, as leader. The deceased symbolizes society's acceptance of that chapter of life and the renewal of structure through the new speaker who is reciting the prayer. The mention of

death in the burial *kaddish* reflects the acceptance of the exit role by the survivor.

The fact that this speaker begins a new leadership role in society explains why, in traditional rabbinic Judaism, only men recite the *kaddish.* However reflecting the social dialectics of modern society, some women now recite *kaddish*, a result of the changes in the social map of North America. Among the mourners I observed there were two women who recited the *kaddish* on a regular basis during the synagogue's daily prayers. The Rabbi informed me that since the halachah does not forbid this behaviour (though it does not encourage it), he allows the women to recite the kaddish. At the cemetery he invites *all* mourners to recite and during the year of obligation (to be discussed later) the women recite the *kaddish* from their section of the sanctuary.

The exit-entrance ritual at the cemetery comes to a close when all present form two lines facing inward and the mourners walk away from the graveside between the lines. Turning their backs on death, the mourners pass through a symbolic portal into their newly adopted role. The people present close ranks behind the mourners and the social units can concentrate on the restoration and maintenance of the prior structures.

Shiva, the First Period of Mourning

The mourners are brought directly from the cemetery to the house of the deceased or the *shiva* house. Before entering the home hands are ritually washed in water prepared by "supporters." This ritual may also be performed at the outside borders of the cemetery. The totality of the experience of death and contact with the pollution of the dead is placed behind the mourners in symbolic closure when the pollution is ritually washed away from their hands after departing from the cemetery and before entering the house of mourning. In contrast to many other religions,[8] the Jewish mourners do not undergo any specific entrance rituals before entering the house of mourning. The entrance rites have been completed at the cemetery when they passed between the two lines of participants. The mourners remain in the *shiva* house for seven days as they proceed through the process of confirming their new roles. The *shiva* or mourning house is preferably located in the home of the deceased rather than that of the survivor. If this is not possible, then one of the survivors' houses is used. The emphasis upon the home of the deceased rather than that of the mourner symbolizes the transfer of the mantle of the deceased's role onto the shoulders of the survivor.

Upon entering the *shiva* house, the mourners remove their shoes. Symbolically. the mourners, who have altered the accepted norm, now devoid of shoes, cannot leave until this stage of the process is brought to a close. While

thus incarcerated, the mourners' attention is focused on the demands of their new role in society, and others can proceed with the task of reinforcing these roles. This procedure of confinement for the mourners is not strange in religious mourning rites, but the uniquely Judaic activities which take place in the *shiva* house are significant. The core activities and functions involve food. I do not concern myself here with a Douglas-type analysis of food-related rituals,[9] although within the framework of my hypothesis, food is seen here as a convenient catalyst through which the main events can be played out.

Immediately after entering the house and removing their shoes, the mourners are served the meal of condolence (*seudat havrah*). The food is provided and served by neighbours or friends. Thus we see the introduction of outsiders into the house of mourning. Since the mourners are not yet perceived as being fully integrated into their new roles, they are not yet ready for incorporation into society. Furthermore, the mourners eat alone lest they form the quorum that would require them to recite the public blessing after the meal (*zimun*). The mourners interviewed, since they are not orthodox, do not recite this prayer at any time, nor are they careful about sitting separately.

The menu of the meal consists of bread and eggs. Eggs are often seen in rabbinic literature as associated with the Temple or the destruction of the Temple. They serve as a constant reminder that rabbinic authority derives its power through the "Bible" and the Temple, God's manifestation on earth. This allusion to rabbinic authority and its derivation from Temple society are persistent themes in the rituals of mourning. They are also found in the rituals related to the fast of *Tisha b'Av* and the passover *seder.* This motif was already seen in the *kaddish* at the cemetery. Additional examples of the concept include, first, the expression used to comfort the mourners: "May the Lord comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem." This statement is first recited while the mourners pass between the two lines at the cemetery. The Rabbi articulates the "comfort" both in Hebrew and in English. It is continually employed whenever one takes leave of the mourner during the *shiva* interim.

Secondly, there is a reference to the Temple in the portion added to the blessing after the meals when (if) recited in the house of mourning. It reads:

> O comfort, Lord, our God, the mourners of Jerusalem and those who mourn this sad event. Console them from their mourning and gladden them from their grief, as it is said "Like a man whose mother consoles him so I will console you, and in Jerusalem you will be consoled." Blessed are you Lord, Comforter of Zion through the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Amen. (Scherman 1984:199)

The visit by the neighbours is not fortuitous. Rabbinic Judaism emphasizes the obligation for all Jews to visit the mourners' house and comfort them, a

ritual which continues to be widely practised even among today's non-observant Jews. During these seven days of *shiva*, the mourners alter their normative pattern of sitting and sit on low stools or even on the floor, while the influx of visitors continues. Beyond providing comfort, this procedure of differentiation provides both mourners and visitors an opportunity for the collectivity to apply group reinforcement in adopting their new roles.

In addition to these rituals a further series of rites are in force. Some of these rituals are brought forward from the *onen* period, but several other ones are added. A partial list of *shiva* rites, laws and prohibitions are summarized by Krentzman (1986:5-18). All are deviations from the normative patterns of Jewish ritual. They are: location of *shiva*; burning of *shiva* candles; covering mirrors; meal of condolence; sitting on low stools or floor; prohibition of cohabitation; prohibition of anointing; prohibition of bathing; prohibition of marriage; study of Torah; prohibition of wearing shoes; prohibition of work; prohibition of *tefilin*; prohibition of *talit*; prayer held in *shiva* house, instead of synagogue; ending of *shiva*; The mourners I observed adhered to the "public" rites. I can assume that others, such as avoidance of cohabitation and bathing, were not observed.

The confinement of the mourner to the *shiva* house precludes his attendance at daily prayers at the synagogue. Therefore, additional visitors must come to the house of mourning. These comforters are required to be present at specified times each day to fulfill rabbinic prayer obligations and constitute the *minyan*. Whereas in the *onen* period the survivor was not included in the *minyan*, in the *shiva* house he not only is included, but is also encouraged to lead the prayers. Thus the mourner, by his participation in the prayer service, continues to proclaim his newly adopted status in public. The visitors in turn encourage and reinforce the incorporation of these roles by the mourner. The majority of the mourners studied had the *minyan* in their house of *shiva*. In instances when the minimum of ten males were not present the Rabbi either provided the missing number of persons or permitted the mourners to attend the synagogue. If the mourners could not read Hebrew and were therefore not able to lead the prayers, transliterations were supplied by the synagogue to enable them to recite the *kaddish*.

Psalm 49 is added at the completion of the liturgy in the house of mourning. Even though this prayer refers to death in general, it emphasizes the adherence to Torah law, hence rabbinical authority. This is a reminder similar to those discussed above.

Completion of Shiva

Halachah does not stipulate any entrance or exit rituals at this point. The entrance rituals into the new status were completed by the mourner at the cemetery site. This new status is perceived as enduring and unbridgeable.

Therefore, with the mourner entrenched in this new status, there is likewise no stipulation for exit rituals at the completion of the two additional mourning periods.

As with many North American Jews, our subjects perform a ritual to end the *shiva* with a "walk around the block." Krentzman (1986:18) in his *Practical Guide to Mourning Rites*, states that this is "a formal act to demonstrate their rejoining the community." In my discussion with Rabbi Krentzman, he pointed to research which indicates that this ritual, which originated in Eastern European Jewish communities, was adopted mainly by the non-orthodox community in North America. Since many of these Jews (but not our subjects) end their mourning rites with *shiva*, they have introduced an exit ritual. I suggest that, furthering this interpretation, one may note that the non-observant Jews do subscribe to the full authority of rabbinism. They are, however, selective with regard to their observance and do not fully incorporate the roles required by the social unit as defined by rabbinism. Hence, the exit rite serves to signify the completion of their involvement with rabbinic mourning rituals. However, the mourners observed for this study did not terminate the mourning rites with the completion of *shiva*, but did perform the ritual "to walk around the block." I will further discuss this implications of this phenomenon in the conclusion of the paper.

Sheloshim and the "Year-Long" Period of Mourning

The *sheloshim* period begins at the completion of the *shiva* and extends for thirty days after burial. The "year-long" period continues for an additional eleven months.

As the survivor moves from one period to the next there is a corresponding reduction in number of required mourning rituals practiced. Lamm (1969:145,148) summarizes these laws as follows:

> The following prohibitions continue in force to be observed during *shiva* and during *sheloshim* under normal circumstances:
> - haircutting, shaving, nailcutting, bathing, and the wearing of new clothes or newly laundered clothes
> - getting married
> - attending parties
>
> Following is a brief survey of the observance of the 12 month period:
> - haircut, technically prohibited for twelve months, is permitted upon the occasion of social reproach after the *sheloshim*, as indicated above
> - similarly, the wearing of new clothes is permitted upon "social reproach" after the *shloshim* and after being worn for a brief period of time by others, although, technically it is a twelve-month observance
> - the mourner should change his usual seat in the synagogue at prayer. On the Sabbath he may sit in his usual place
> - regulation pertaining to the recital of *kaddish*

These rites are almost all public in nature and continually serve to mark the mourner as a person learning to adopt new roles. The subject mourners, as in the period of *shiva*, adhere to the public rites, thereby receiving community exposure, support and encouragement.

As the survivors pass through the stages of mourning and their level of commitment increases through their incorporation into their new roles, society's need to draw attention to them is reduced. Hence, the number of public mourning rituals decrease. The most significant of the remaining public mourning rites is the *kaddish*, a prayer the mourner is obliged to recite at each of the three daily liturgies (*minyan*), numerous times.

Kaddish

The *kaddish* is not a prayer for the dead but a glorification of God. It is recited during prayer services. Recitation of this prayer requires a *minyan* and must be recited standing. In the observed synagogue the mourners assemble as a group close to the ark and in full view of the congregation for the recital of the *kaddish* prayer. Within the liturgy four variations of *kaddish* appear, all of them being concerned with the glorification of God. These need not be expanded upon here. Some of them are recited by the mourner and the remainder are chanted by the prayer leader (*shaliach tzibur*) alone. Rabbinism therefore encourages the mourners to lead the prayers, thus enabling the mourners to gain multiple opportunities to recite *kaddish*. The mourner is asked to lead the services depending upon which stage of mourning he is observing. Even in the case of our subject mourners, who have weak Hebrew reading skills, the service is led by a *kaddish* sayer. The survivors with limited skills make a conscious effort during the year of mourning to improve their Hebrew and thus be able to lead services. They will usually begin with leading the short afternoon prayers and then they will attempt the lengthy morning service. The adult education program in the synagogue offers Hebrew and prayer classes which are often visited by the mourners. Once again these public rituals confirm my hypothesis that society publicly and manifestly singles out the mourner.

Rabbinic Judaism differentiates between mourning for parents as opposed to mourning for the other five relatives mentioned (brother, sister, son, daughter, and spouse). Mourning rites including recitation of the *kaddish*, are concluded at the end of one month in the case of the five relatives, but maintained throughout the "year" at the loss of a parent. This differentiation can be understood, if we examine the level of threat to the social fabric on the loss of each category of relative. The loss of a parent who provides a leadership role in the social unit causes a serious rupture in the social network, hence the social necessity of ensuring that a replacement has adopted each of the vacant roles, both functionally and structurally. This necessity is

reflected in the fact that mourning rites and the evolving emphasis on the saying of *kaddish* are extended to "one year." In the modern context the death of a parent is a particular threat to an individual's continued participation in Jewish observance, since many Jews attend synagogue and maintain other traditional rituals and practices mainly for the sake of aging or elderly parents. The loss of the other five relatives engenders less threat to society and hence requires less ritual.

In support of my hypothesis that mourning rites serve to re-establish the pre-death social order, I point to the prescription of rabbinic Judaism that only males are required to recite *kaddish.* Krentzman (1986:32) writes: A daughter should not recite *kaddish* in the synagogue, but should answer "amen" from the women's section. This stipulation is based upon the rabbinic intention that the male survivors adopt the leadership roles lost to society as a result of the death, hence it is the man that society must "incorporate" into these roles. As we noted earlier, as a result of the values of contemporary society, the women subjects are permitted to and do recite the *kaddish* in synagogue. The implication of this modification will be discussed below.

Since rabbinic Judaism is based on male-dominated leadership, women represent a threat to the structure. This may explain why the woman is only accorded by halachah equal ritual status to the man when she is dead. No longer a threat to the social system, she is buried in the same ritual way as a man. The male-dominated structure is further strengthened through the death of the woman since it is the male survivor who recites *kaddish* for her, thus publicly emphasizing his role. Contemporary Judaism is more dependent upon female support than was the case in the past. Accordingly, women have been granted a greater ritual role in recent years and in some orthodox synagogues have been encouraged to recite *kaddish.*

Discussion

In our analysis of mourning rites it has been necessary to modify Turner's theory of liminality. Contrary to Turner's framework, during the Jewish mourning period the transformation is not anti-structural. The group, through the symbolism of ritual and public dissonant behaviour, has maintained and supported the initiates as they enter their new roles. I have argued that in rabbinic Judaism the initiate or mourner is elevated to a new status. However, under the influence of contemporary society, the majority of Jewish families have adopted a modern structure where roles are not clearly defined. These mourning rites were intended to facilitate passage of the mourner to a new status. This new status, however, is ambiguous in our modern society. Therefore, mourning rituals are in danger of being transformed into a ritualism[10] or simply becoming defunct. But the Jewish society, rather than disregard the mourning rites, has subtly and subconsciously reoriented them and thus

allowed them to have an impact upon the family and Jewish continuity. The retention of mourning rites is effected through the community which informs its members what to do and how they must conform to what is considered proper practice. The Jewish mourners attribute importance to the mourning rites because the community tells them to do so, and there is a public consensus that this is proper behaviour. However, the Jew in our subject synagogue only accepts the funeral rites as long as they do not infringe more than minimally upon the family's lifestyle.

In North American public civil Judaism, as practiced in the observed synagogue, the Jewish family remains a constant in the continuation of Jewish identity.[11] Judaism today is aware that the dilution of the family unit threatens its continuity. The construction of the mourning rituals, as we have seen above, continues to foster family solidarity and to emphasize communal needs. It is interesting to note that, as the Rabbi explained to me, during the *shiva* he encourages the mourners to discuss their changed family relationships and obligations resulting from the death. Thus Judaism continues to emphasize the observance of the mourning rites taking into consideration the changed family structure, and thus, for example, does not discourage women from reciting the *kaddish.*

A Concluding Observation

Following the model proposed by Merton in his analysis of functionalism (1957:77) I would like to note additional latent or implicit functions of Jewish mourning rites. These functions which are never necessarily intended or recognized by the survivor operate so as to fulfill the needs and support the continuation of Jewish society in general and the subject synagogue in particular. The study of mourning rituals for this purpose does not exclude the possibility that community exigencies may be served by additional rituals. These other rituals may serve the community's needs in the same way that a specific ritual may fulfill divergent functions. In the case of mourning rites, however, significance must be attached to what Merton defines in his discussion of Durkheim, as a "recurrent activity, . . . [that is] the part [the activity] plays in the social life as a whole and therefore the contribution it makes to the maintenance of the structural continuity" (Merton 1957:77).

Rabbinism is aware that the collectivity is no longer the Jewish communal world, but specifically the synagogue. Rituals that have previously served the social consciousness of the macro-rabbinical society now are directed to function for the micro-rabbinical social structure; the synagogue. The ritual of reciting the *kaddish* is employed for this purpose, while other mourning rites are considered less compelling after *shiva.*

The subject synagogue and its mourners were chosen to validate the hypothesis that mourning rites cohere with the contemporary Jewish social map. The synagogue achieves its religious legitimacy through prayer services which are held daily, morning and evening. The *kaddish* sayers constitute the majority of the *minyan* group thereby helping to legitimize the religious aspect of the synagogue. The synagogue, then, functions not only as a weekend religious gathering place, or an office for the Rabbi, but also endeavours to develop its complementary social and educational services and to act as a community centre. Without the foundation of the daily *minyan*, the wider synagogue activities might not have a legitimate base from which to function. It is the *kaddish* sayers who in essence maintain this on-going service. Rabbinism encourages the psychological need to recite *kaddish*; as people continue to die, the continuation of the synagogue through the collectivity of the survivors is guaranteed.

The strength of the synagogue society is furthered by a reduction in fees for the "new members." The synagogue society socializes these *kaddish* sayers in their roles as skilled participants in the liturgy. Classes are offered in prayer, as well as written and oral Hebrew language. A system of "honours" motivates skilled participation. The most skilled participants are proffered reinforcements such as the following: leading services, honours related to the reading of the Torah, and publicly reading the prescribed Torah portions.

My research has also shown that the majority of members who have a greater involvement in the synagogue have been recruited from the *kaddish* sayers. The *kaddish* period is for them a liminal period after which they are incorporated as active participants in the synagogue community. Furthermore, the incorporation of the *kaddish* sayer will attract his immediate family; they too become involved in the overall synagogue activities, hence, augmenting the committed synagogue membership.

A dynamic based on "positive feedback" evolves. Increased membership enhances the status of the synagogue in the wider Jewish society, which in turn attracts more synagogue adherents. The greater the population base of the synagogue community, the more likely its function will succeed and further enhance its membership. A larger population base will also increase the financial capacity of the synagogue to mount services, which in turn attracts new adherents.

To conclude, I have shown how the mourning rituals of rabbinic Judaism cohere with a specific social structure. The rituals can be seen as a particular model of "strong-grid," "strong-group" society as presented by Douglas which are enacted during a period of liminality as developed by Turner. Lastly, I have attempted to show how rabbinism has utilized the mourning rituals within a contemporary North American Jewish society to enhance syna-

gogue life. The latter has been transformed from an encompassing rabbinic "world," to a Jewish "corporation."

Glossary of Hebrew Terms[12]

Aninut	The state of mourning between death and interment.
Avel (-im, pl.)	A mourner.
Avelut	The period of mourning.
Halachah	Jewish law.
Kaddish	The prayer recited for the deceased.
Kriyah	The rending of the garment of the mourner after the death occurs.
Minyan	A quorum of at least ten Jewish males above the age of thirteen.
Onen (-im, pl.)	A mourner between the time of death and interment.
Seder	The religious festive meals held on the first two nights of Passover.
Shaliach tzibur	A prayer leader.
Sheloshim	The thirty-day period following interment.
Steemat Hagolel	The covering of the grave.
Tallit	Prayer shawl.
Tefillin	Phylacteries.
Tisha b'av	The ninth day of Av, which commemorates the destruction of both ancient Temples. It is observed through fasting and semi-mourning.
Zimun	A quorum of at least three males above the age of thirteen which will thus permit them to recite specific prayers following a meal.

Notes

1. For the purpose of this paper I do not differentiate between the terms rites and rituals. I refer the reader to F. Bird's (1980) characterization of ritual action.
2. The halachic sources I researched for mourning rites were *Tur Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah*; *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah*; *Aruch Hashulchan Yoreh Deah*; Code of Jewish Laws: section on mourning laws; Tzokensiki 1980; Lamm 1969; Levine 1985; Krentzman 1986.
3. For additional data and analysis of the subject synagogue see Fishbane 1987.
4. Scholars have argued that Douglas' hypothesis is not applicable to a modern pluralistic and industrialized society. I suggest Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's (1984) discussion of socialization as a complement to Douglas's mapping of society and an answer to this criticism.
5. For example, see Goldscheider 1986.
6. The topic of women shaving their legs is absent from the rabbinic literature. The subject rabbi, when asked if this type of shaving was permitted replied, "It is not appropriate but I would not prohibit it."

7. Rabbinic Judaism attributes a greater importance and therefore encourages stricter adherence to laws stated to be either explicit or deduced from the Torah.
8. See Huntington and Metcalf 1980.
9. See for example Douglas 1975:249-275.
10. See Bird 1980.
11. See Hirschberg (1988) whose multivariate analysis of parental and educational factors in the development of Jewish identity included many of the same subjects as in this study. He concluded that on all measures, the most significant predictor of the children's ethnicity, was parental and family factors.
12. The translations are adapted from Lamm (1969:251-257).

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THE CHANGING PERCEPTION OF DEATH AND BURIAL: A LOOK AT THE NIGERIAN OBITUARIES

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Abstract: Lavish and expensive funerals, long delays before burial and elaborate death notices in national and local newspapers reflect a change in attitudes towards death and burial in Southern Nigeria. The author examines certain features which once characterized funerary practice among the peoples of Southern Nigeria in order to demonstrate the changes which have occurred as a result of economic affluence, technological innovation and foreign religions (Christianity). These changes are documented by means of a content analysis of Nigerian newspapers and data based on 179 personal interviews.

Résumé: Dans la Nigérie du Sud les funérailles somptueuses et coûteuses, les longs délais avant les enterrements, et les pompeux avis de décès dans les journaux locaux et nationaux reflètent une modification d'attitudes envers la mort et les obsèques. Afin de démontrer les changements survenus avec l'influence économique, les innovations technologiques et les religions d'hors-pays (c'est-à-dire les religions chrétiennes), l'auteur examine certains traits lesquels, auparavant, caractérisaient les rites funéraires parmi les peuples du Nigérie du Sud. Ces transformations sont ducumentées au moyen d'un analyse d'articles dans les journaux nigériens et au moyen des data de 179 entrevues personnelles.

Introduction

In Southern Nigeria, three or four decades ago, death was regarded as a mysterious, inevitable, grief-laden and calamitous event. Rarely (except in the case of very old or very sick people) was death perceived as a welcome event or one to be celebrated. When death occurred, the immediate relatives of the deceased showed visible signs of anguish and inner pain while most often the consolers indicated a distaste for elaborate feasting in the household.

However, in contemporary times, change can be observed in societal attitudes to death and burial. Although death is not regarded as a pleasant event, it seems nonetheless now to present, as Adedipe (1983) rightly observed, a rationale for showing off family wealth, influence, social status and prestige, which are manifested, among other ways, in the form of

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expensive newspaper announcements. It can also be observed that occurrences of death in many parts of Nigeria are now occasions for quite extraordinary expenditure. This is evidenced by (a) the length of stay of the corpse in the mortuary before burial, (b) the extravagant use of burial materials and (c) lavish entertainments before and after burial. All this imposes a heavy financial burden on the bereaved family.

It is no wonder that a certain dying man (whose name is being withheld to save the family any form of embarrassment) is reported to have given his wife a cheque of N15 000 for his burial arrangements. Recently too, a well-known Nigerian confessed he had spent about N300 000.00[1] burying his father when, many would argue, such money could have been better used for charity.

A number of questions naturally arise as to why this observable change in societal attitudes and reactions to death and burial occurred in Nigeria. One is constrained to ask what factors account for the change, and whether the new trend is a passing phase or one that has come to stay. In order to understand these changes one must examine a number of issues, such as societal expectations, economic affluence (especially of the elite), religion and technological innovation.

The research therefore examines the following hypotheses:

1. Societal expectations which rate a family's social status, prestige and wealth by the fanfare with which it buries its dead may have contributed enormously to the observed change in people's attitude to death and burial;
2. Foreign religion and influence (which destroyed the foundations of traditional religious beliefs) seem to have contributed to the observed change; and
3. Technological innovations, as in other spheres, have facilitated the change in Nigerians' attitude to death and burial.

In the first part of this paper, traditional Nigerian attitudes towards death and older burial practices are briefly examined, and a context for them is provided by a brief discussion of some relevant literature in sociology and anthropology. In the second half of the paper, survey data, based both on content analysis of obituary notices in newspapers and interviews with the kin of recently deceased persons, are introduced as a basis for a discussion of the nature and degree, causes and effects of recent changes in burial practices.

Ever since Hertz (1907) wrote in the early part of the century, social scientists have appreciated that the understanding many people have about death affects their acceptance of it and reactions to it. Concomitantly, variations in the rituals and practices surrounding death are linked to differences in such understanding. In the United States of America, Coleman and Cressey (1980)

indicate that death is regarded as "mysterious." Consequently "people respond to thoughts of it with fear and anxiety." This appears to be essentially so because, according to Merton and Nisbet (1976), for those who do not believe in life after death, death represents the giving up of "all roles with no new ones taken on. It is a grieving period since death will mean the end of all that one has achieved and all one's investment in the self." Such an evaluation of death may have a depressing or saddening effect on the dying person. On the other hand, a brighter and more hopeful picture is presented by the Judeo-Christian belief in God and in life after death. Although the religion recognizes death as "the wages of sin," it nonetheless provides a way out in the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour. With hope of a life after death, it can be envisaged that the dying person may have something to look forward to vis-à-vis the vision of "nothingness" for non-believers. The Moslems, who regard death as inevitable and nothing to be handled with fanfare, indicate their acceptance of death by the speed with which they bury their dead and the prayers said for the peaceful repose of the dead person's spirit.

Anthropologists, who have carried out some studies in Africa seem to come out with the observation that Africans believe that death does not mean the end of life but a transition from life on earth to another life beyond. In this regard, Talbot (1926, in Awolalu 1979:53) is quoted as saying that it is difficult for any one to understand the way the Black man feels and thinks about death unless one appreciates the fact that to him the dead are not "dead but living. . . ." In Nigeria generally, the traditional attitude to death is that it is a transition from one phase of life to another. Reasoning along this line Awolalu (1979:53) observes that the Yorubas ". . . believe in the active existence of the deceased ancestors. They know that death does not write *finis* to human life but that earthly life has been extended into the life beyond. . . ." Among the Igbos the same belief prevails. It is given expression at different ceremonial and social gatherings, especially on occasions when the ever-present, socially significant kola nut is broken and eaten. At such times, the ancestors are invoked to partake of the gifts and to bless the gathering.

Invariably the belief in death as a transition to another phase of life has several implications for the understanding of the cause of death, the handling of the dead body or corpse, its burial, and the follow-up ceremonies for the deceased in different societies. With regard to the cause of death, Middleton (1963) writing of the Lugbara of Uganda, notes that sickness or death can be attributed to the actions of God, the wrath of ancestors and the envy of other people expressed in magic or witchcraft. Underscoring this, Olson (1972:307) avers that "Primitive" peoples "attribute death to the agency of gods or demons who are jealous of human achievements." These observations tend to illustrate the fact that belief in the role of supernatural forces in causing death is widespread. Thus Beattie (1964:75) writes that in many

African societies "... all deaths are thought to be intentional, whether the intention is thought to be that of a living person practising sorcery or witchcraft, or that of a ghost or spirit."

Such an assertion may be off-handedly dismissed as useless or mere exaggeration. However, one can decipher some elements of truth in it. Among traditional Nigerians, the death of the young and middle-aged is rarely accepted as natural. There is the tendency for people to search for proper explanations for such "unusual" happenings. They often will look to human enemies, aggrieved ancestors or gods for an answer. Indeed, as Awolalu (1979:54) aptly suggests, children and young people who die prematurely are regarded as having died "a bad death." On the contrary, according to Meek (1931:passim) "the death of an old man may be regarded among some Northern Nigerian people as a natural event . . . ," an example being the Katab (ibid., vol. 2:72) among whom "premature death" may be ascribed to witchcraft. Bradbury (1973:213), writing about the Edos, adds that "the attitude of Edo people to death depends largely on their assessment of how well the individual has fulfilled his social destiny. To them the older a man is . . . , the more acceptable does his death become." Consequently, Bradbury argues that "the peaceful demise of an old chief . . . is as much an occasion for rejoicing in his life's achievement as for sorrow." We note from the above observations that, though Nigerians accept the inevitability of death, they seek explanations when such deaths are premature and therefore cannot easily be attributed to natural causes. Clear evidence of this fact is the appearance in obituaries put out by Christians of such expressions as "your mysterious death," or "the mystery of your death." This is in spite of the general philosophy of Nigerians that "death visits everybody—the rich, the blind, and the lame. [Besides] nobody owns the world."

Since there is the general belief in a continued existence of the dead in another world, the burial of the dead is most often handled with great care and relevant ceremonies or rituals. The proper performance of the rituals is considered very important to enable the dead person to peacefully move into the next world. Failure to do them properly may result in "misfortunes" or ill-luck. Thus Meek (1931) argued that among many of the Northern "Tribes" of Nigeria, everybody was entitled to a ceremonial burial in order that his soul might be finally dismissed to join the company of his forefathers, and that his living relatives might be cleansed from the pollution of death. For the Edos of Bendel State of Nigeria, burial ceremonies are very important. Bradbury (1973:213, 216) says that in Edo belief one who is not properly buried cannot enter the society of his dead kin and associates. His survival as a social being depends upon the performance of the mortuary ritual by his children. To this Awolalu (1979:56, 57) adds that, among the Yorubas, "it was the practice for the corpse of a deceased to be carefully prepared:

washed, dressed and buried in the grave dug in the family compound."

For the Igbos of Southeastern Nigeria, funerary rites are elaborate and are usually strictly observed. The rationale is similar to those of many other ethnic groups in Nigeria. Funerary rites are performed to enable the spirit of the dead person to travel safely to the world beyond, to establish a continued link between the dead person and his kin, and also to satisfy societal expectations that the family show how virtuous and successful (in terms of personal achievements, etc.) and well loved their deceased kinsman was.

Generally, in Nigeria as may be the case in other societies, mortuary ritual varies according to the social status and circumstances of the deceased (see Bradbury 1973:in particular 215, 216). In addition, as Awolalu remarks of the Yoruba, "circumstances surrounding the death of a person, the age, sex, and the social status of the dead are among important variables that determine the way corpses are treated and buried" (Bradbury 1979:55). Consequently commoners, children, women (especially barren women), suicides, people who die of "bad diseases" (leprosy, elephantiasis, etc.), criminals, slaves and people who die childless may in most cases be exempted from or denied elaborate burial rites.

The onus of burying a dead parent (especially a father) often lies with the first son. He is traditionally expected to step into his father's position and, if possible, status when the latter dies. Such a favoured position is expected to be reciprocated by according the father a befitting burial. This is one reason most Nigerian parents feel badly treated by fate if they do not have any male off-spring. The social expectations which rest upon the first son are so great that a son who fails to bury his father "well" may be regarded almost as a somewhat foolish, useless person and can be ostracized by members of the society. Besides, his failure will shame him for the rest of his life for he cannot participate fully in such activities when performed by others. Society thus looks down on him. In some cases, when the first son is not in any strong financial position to perform the ceremonies, his younger brothers do help out but he runs the risk of losing his respect and birth right. When it is financially impossible to handle the rituals adequately, the corpse can be buried while the sons set a time in the near future when such rituals can be performed. Until the societal expectations are satisfied, the family of the deceased feels the weight of an unfulfilled obligation. This weight and near public scorn are only overcome when the rituals are eventually performed.

In most cases the burial rites come in two phases. Among the Igbos, the first rites tend to be performed at the time of death and burial. This ensures that the corpse is properly disposed of usually by inhumation. However, the second burial is performed at the socially stipulated period which is usually within a few months, but may occur up to a year or more later. The idea is to give the family time to gather enough materials for the second burial ceremo-

nies. While the first burial rituals help in the proper disposal of the corpse and in ensuring that the spirit of the dead is peacefully sent on its journey, the second burial rites serve different purposes.

It is argued that the deceased soul wanders aimlessly, unwelcomed and unaccepted by the ancestors until the second burial rituals are completed. It therefore becomes a duty for the family, especially the children, to accord their dead parents this respect. Moreover, the children need to publicly confirm that their dead relation died a "good death" and so deserved to be helped to settle down in the world of the dead. It is envisaged that through such rituals the children re-establish a link with their dead father. Once the second burial rites are completed, the children feel relieved that their task has been properly accomplished, and from then on will expect protection, blessing as well as goodwill from their new ancestor. On the other hand, if the rites are not performed, the children might live in constant fear of the wrath or revenge of their ancestor.

Even in death, status distinctions are made. With regard to the elaborateness with which the corpse is buried, differences exist according to whether the deceased was a chief, or a commoner, a male or a female, an old person as opposed to a child or young person and so on. Chiefs, males and old people were accorded special rites (Awolalu 1979:56, 57; for chiefs among the Northern Tribes, Meek 1931, vol. 1: 1-90, 109, 119, 167, 170, 284 and passim).

Although males were treated specially, chiefs and divine kings were differentiated from the others. It was not unusual (especially in the recent past) for a divine king or royal personage to be buried with a retinue of servants or slaves, some of his wives and expensive personal belongings (Awolalu 1979:56, 57; Meek 1931, vol. 2:511 on the Jibu, vol. 2:545 on the Kam). Moreover, even ordinary men could have their wives buried with them. Thus women were not accorded very elaborate rites. Indeed, in the case of old women, many traditional peoples in Nigeria had them carried back to their original families for burial. Where women were elaborately buried, other human beings were not interred with them, but some jewelry, items of clothing, cooking utensils, etc. were allowed. It can be deduced from the items enclosed or buried with the dead that the people believed in a life after death that operated very much like life on earth, with the dead retaining their earthly social status and prestige.

The actual disposal of the corpse was usually by inhumation. Meek (1931, e.g. vol. 2:440 on the Jukun) talks about methods of preserving the dead body of special people for several weeks or months. However the general practice was to bury the dead body in a matter of hours or within a day or two. Perhaps one of the most important reasons for this haste in burial may be attributed to inability to preserve the body. Hospitals were few and could

not handle the deposition of the dead bodies for weeks or months as they now frequently do. In those days only a few well-to-do families could afford hand-made coffins for burials. In most cases, the bodies were wrapped with mats or plaited bamboo beds and buried in them. For young people and children, the mats were good enough. Criminals and people who died of infections and 'bad' diseases were quite often thrown into the "bad" bush and the kin purified by rituals of any association with them.

Most of these practices which were prevalent three or four decades ago seem in contemporary times to be obsolete. And although there are still some vestiges of them left, it is easily observed that methods of burying the dead have undergone tremendous transformations. The continued influence of foreign religions, economic affluence, societal expectations and technological innovations may all have contributed to the change.

Identification of Major Variables Used

For this study, the dependent variable is people's attitude to death and burial. Change in attitude will be measured by observable differences in methods of corpse preservation, length of stay before burial, amount of money spent in the announcement of death and quality and quantity of burial items. The independent variables include foreign religions, economic affluence and technological innovation.

The category "foreign religion" comprises the Christian and Moslem religions. Economic affluence will be measured by the amount of money spent on newspaper announcements and the number of times the announcement is made. Efforts will be made to estimate cost of burial wherever and whenever possible. Finally, techological innovation will be indicated by length of stay in the morgue, method of announcing death—the radio, television, the newspaper, etc.—and method of conveying the corpse to the burial site.

Method of Study

The primary source of data was newspapers published in Nigeria. Essentially, nationally based newspapers were perused. The latter included the *Daily Times*, *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Business Times*, *Business Concord*, *The Daily Sketch*, *Sunday Sketch*, *Nigerian Statesman*, *Daily Star*, and *The Guardian* will be used. These papers together cover most newsworthy items in the nation. They also contain a large sample of advertisements, notices and personal announcements. Other sources of information were the library and some personal interviews with people who had recently lost, buried and performed funerary rites for their relations.

In choosing the obituaries as a primary source of information, the researcher is aware of possible source bias. The sample is bound to reflect more the affairs of the elite, the educated and the economically affluent. It may also be biased toward the Yoruba ethnic group since most of the obituaries appear in the *Daily Times* which, though a national paper, has its head office in Lagos—a Yoruba dominated area of the country. However, similar obituary notices are to be found in newspapers throughout Southern Nigeria. Another source of bias may come from the fact that children and young people's deaths are not often advertised in the newspapers.

The obituaries could give the impression that mortality in Nigeria is largely an affair of the middle-aged and the old. However, since this study is dealing with change in attitude and not necessarily with demographic variables per se, the information gathered, in the view of the researcher, is quite adequate. In addition, as no effort was made to bias the sample in terms of its selection procedure, it is expected that selection errors may be randomly distributed. In this regard, the sample size is large enough to minimize possible errors.

A sample of 1342 notices were collected from the daily newspapers. Of this number, 981 (73.1%) were males and 361 (26.9%) were females. With regard to religion, there are more Moslems than Christians in the nation but this ratio is not reflected in the sample. The sample, carefully chosen and without any religious bias, includes 1119 (83.4%) Christians and 223 (16.6%) Moslems. The seeming lack of interest by Moslems as indicated by their number in the sample may be explained in terms of their religious ethics. Among all 40 Moslem respondents interviewed, the dead body is variously but similarly described as "a useless material, a covering or a coat" or "a waste matter." The occupant of the "coat" (the spirit) is gone, and therefore what is left is "useless," "mere earth."[2]

From the sample, it is observed that the deaths of older people (that is, those aged forty years and above) seem to be more often announced than the death of people below the age of forty years. The two groups constitute 84.5% and 15.5% respectively. As already mentioned, old age is venerated among Nigerians (Meek 1931; Bradbury 1973; and Awolalu 1979). Consequently, the deaths of the fairly old are more acceptable than the death of the children and young people. Therefore, there is the tendency to overlook or purposely decline to announce the death of such young people in the dailies. With respect to the ethnic distribution of the sample 743 (55.4%), 403 (30%), 43 (3.2%) and 153 (11.4%) are Yorubas, Igbos, Hausa/Fulani, and other ethnic groups respectively. That the Yorubas predominate can be explained in terms of various factors including their proximity to the sources of publication, their nationally observed propensity for elaborate ceremonies, and their widely assumed advantage in economic affluence over the rest of the country,

which tends to make them live more conspicuously than the other ethnic groups.

In estimating the cost of the obituary advertisements the standard price of the national daily newspaper is used. As at August 25, 1983, the cost of advertising in the national newspapers was as follows:

Table 1
Cost of Obituary Advertisements in the National Newspapers by Size of the Advertisement

Size	Cost of Advertisement (as at August 1983)		
	Daily Times	*National Concord*	*New Nigerian*
Full Page	N1333.50k	N1039.50k	N951.79k
Half Page	708.50k	635.25k	475.90k
Quarter Page	Ne	369.60k	226.44k
6 1/4 x 4 Column	436.80k	Ne	Ne

Source: *New Nigeria*, Thursday, August 25, 1983, p. 11.
Ne = None existent.

Other newspapers' prices fall within the range of *The New Nigerian.* It is worth noting that although *The New Nigerian* is a widely circulated paper, its readers are predominantly Moslem. Its lower prices may be viewed in the light of Islam's negative attitude towards obituaries and In Memoriams. It is not suprising that the *Daily Times* is the most expensive for it is also the most popular and often half the pages are filled with obituaries and In Memoriams.

From the above table it can be seen that Nigerians in 1983 spent on the average about N627.80 on advertising the death of their relatives in the newspapers. Generally a lot more money was spent on announcing the death of a man than on that of a woman (N661.81 and N535.30 respectively). This again appears to confirm the observation that women are generally accorded less respect and status in Nigerian society. Such treatment is not restricted to the living but extends beyond human existence, for even at death women are given negatively differential treatment. Not only were few female vis-à-vis male deaths advertised, but less money was spent on such announcements. This is particularly true of the Yorubas and the other ethnic groups except the Igbos.

Among the Yorubas in 1983 an average of N786.43 was spent on a newspaper announcement of a man's death whereas in that year only N574.16 was spent on the average on a woman's death advertisement. A similar situation is observed for the other ethnic groups except for the Igbos. It appears the Igbos show a departure from this. From the data under discussion, a slightly larger sum of money was on the average spent on announcing an Igbo woman's death (N486.64) than on an Igbo man's death (N441.60). The differential is however, small and may not be very important. Nonethe-

Table 2
Sex and Ethnic Origin of Incidents by Cost of Obituaries

Ethnic Origin/Sex	N	Total Amount Spent	Cost
All Nigerians	1342	842,476.69	627.80
All Nigerian Males	981	649,234.61	661.81
All Nigerian Females	361	193,242.08	535.30
All Igbos	403	182,916.20	453.89
All Igbo Males	293	129,385.32	441.60
All Igbo Females	110	53,530.88	486.64
All Yorubas	743	532,336.76	716.47
All Yoruba Males	498	391,642.66	786.43
All Yoruba Females	245	140,694.10	574.16
All Others	196	123,998.03	632.64
All Other Males	170	112,028.21	658.99
All Other Females	26	11,969.82	460.80
Total	1342	842,476.69	627.30

Source: Nigerian newspapers from January to December 1983.

less, it does point to the fact that among the Igbos, women have achieved a high level of social acceptance and recognition. They most often walk alongside their menfolk.

Aside from differentials along sex lines, a very obvious observation is the fact that the Yorubas far outspend the other ethnic groups in the country in the newspaper announcements of their dead, especially on male deaths. They spent (in 1983) on the average N124.62, N344.83, and N127.44 per case above the national, Igbo and other ethnic figures respectively. This is concordant with the general belief in Nigeria that the Yorubas "love" ceremonies and invest or spend a lot on them. Furthermore, this finding supports the common belief that the Yorubas are the most affluent population in Nigeria given their early exposure to outside influences, their longer and higher level of education vis-à-vis other ethnic groups and their geographical proximity to centres of governmental, business, and commercial powers.

On the question of length of stay in the morgue before burial, it is evident that a major difference exists along religious lines. Thus, the Moslems bury their dead in a matter of hours. Rarely do they keep bodies overnight. On the contrary, Christians have the freedom to bury their dead at their convenience. Consequently, if the effect of Moslem religion is controlled, it is found that generally the deceased, as represented in the sample, stay on the average of 20 days in the morgue before burial. Writing recently on expensive burials in Nigeria (Opara 1985) observes that as soon as a death is announced, the corpse is immediately removed to a hospital for preservation until the family, gathered at meetings organized for the "proper" burial of the relation, have completed the arrangements. This period of stay in the

morgue may be used to renovate old family homes or build new ones, sew family or village uniforms or tee-shirts, organize bands for the supply of music, reconstruct or widen village roads, repaint the church and re-organize the choir. Quite often, it is also partly intended as a waiting period for the return of other relations who may be living or working far away or studying abroad. However, this time is mainly and most importantly used for the acquisition of expensive burial items—laces, caskets (in the case of the rich, imported caskets), various kinds of liquor and of course food and other entertainment items.

It is the contention of this paper that the stay in the morgue for whatever reason is a definite departure from the tradition that obtained just three or four decades ago when corpses were disposed of in most areas within a matter of hours or a maximum of one or two days.

In contemporary Nigeria, knowledge and techniques of preservation have greatly improved. Formalin and other such preservatives are easily available, as are doctors and other medical personnel who render such services, more easily accessible than before. In addition, there is another important factor—the supply of energy. The National Electric Power Authority, although still erratic in its supply of power, has expanded and improved its services, thus making it possible for hospitals to keep dead bodies for long periods. A sad situation results when N.E.P.A. fails to supply power for a few days and owners of corpses have to rush to either remove them for immediate burial or transfer them to other facilities that have private power generators. Perhaps this is an area where technological innovation has been most manifest.

When we compare length of stay in the morgue among the ethnic groups, the Igbos seem to keep their dead a little longer (an average of 21.7 days) than the Yorubas (18.9 days average) and the other ethnic groups combined (16.4 days average).[3] Similarly, the sample reveals a sex-differential in terms of days spent in the morgue before burial. Female corpses stay, on the average 17.3 days whereas male corpses stay for 21 days on the average. We have at several stages in this work referred to the low status and esteem generally accorded to Nigerian women. This finding is further supporting evidence.

Returning to the question of technological innovation, one cannot fail to notice the change that has occurred in the mode of conveying corpses for burial. In the recent past, the remains of the dead were carried by a few people on their heads, if movement involved a few kilometres or miles. For longer distances, bicycles were used and occasionally big lorries (medium sized trucks) were hired for the purpose. These days the use of any of these modes will certainly publicize the poverty of the family and mar its public image. Most families, consequently, hire ambulances, whether or not they can conve-

niently afford them, to convey their dead from the hospital to their homes, from the homes to the church and to the final resting place. The obituaries stipulate stopping points where sympathizers should gather to give the dead a warm reception and to join the motorcade following the ambulance. Social recognition is given not only to the length of the motorcade but also to the make of the cars that form it. In addition to these and other measures which heighten social status differences, flag stops, complete with gun salutes, are included for those who are socially important and affluent.

Finally, another source of extravagant spending is the entertainment of visitors. From the vigil night to the day of burial and for weeks thereafter, the bereaved family must entertain people who call on them, especially representatives of any social groups to which the dead person may have belonged. If the entertainment were voluntarily given, perhaps the situation might be controlled but, unfortunately, these groups demand certain items in specified quantities which the bereaved do not really have much option but to give, unless of course they want to "dishonour" their dead.

As pointed out earlier, a few decades ago there was weeping and a show of sympathy (real or not) when somebody died but now, in the words of Opara (1985), "people open their mouths too wide demanding and quarrelling over food," instead of weeping and sympathizing. The author conducted personal interviews with 179 respondents.[4] More than half of them (people of lowly positions) had spent between N1500 and N5000 burying a relation who recently passed away. About five-sixths of the remainder (mostly salaried and medium range business people) had spent between N5001 and N15 000. The remaining one-twelfth of the respondents (mostly the affluent) had spent upwards of N15 001. Among this last group, some had spent over N50 000 for similar burial purposes.

These expensive burials have continued despite the fact that Nigeria's boom is over and hard times have arrived. Very noticeable, during our discussions with interviewees, was the fact that a lot of people are groaning under the weight of expensive burials, and yet no one seems able to put an end to them or to minimize them—probably because of fear that a social stigma would be placed on the deceased and their kin.

Summary

In this work we examined some of the beliefs about and practices relating to death and burials generally and in relation to Nigeria. It was noted that, although there are still some vestiges of past practices and beliefs, there has occurred a tremendous transformation in people's attitudes to death and burial. In the past there was a period of sombre mourning and reflection with little elaboration; nowadays, expectations of lavish entertainment and fanfare at the burial of the dead often strain the resources of the bereaved's family.

An effort was made to account for the change in terms of the influence of foreign religions, economic affluence and technological innovation. Using obituaries as the primary source of data, it was possible to demonstrate that religion has played a dual role. For Moslems, religion has most probably facilitated low burial expenses and promoted a very simple and non-frightening attitude to death. Thus, Moslems bury their dead with the utmost speed. Coffins are not used. They use the same carrier to convey the bodies of the rich and the poor in any one locality to the burial ground. As long as there is a Moslem group to conduct the burial, no relation may be waited for; the body is buried. For the Christians, however, the belief in life after death seems to require that the dead be *properly* buried. This has been extended so much that now it involves a lot of elaborate preparations.

The data tend to show that the rich (who have achieved social recognition) seem to be perpetuating this practice of displaying extravagance in burials. They also seem to be dictating the trend to most other classes and sectors in Nigerian society.

Overall the factor that appears to be most profound in its effects is techological innovation. It aids the preservation of the dead bodies for long periods, facilitates the conveyance of the bodies in modern air-conditioned ambulances and has greatly improved knowledge concerning the treatment and general handling of corpses.

Appendix A

A Note on Personal Interviews

The sample of 179 was selected on the basis of recency of bereavement, accessibility and apparent social status of the family in the community. It includes mostly people from the Southern part of Nigeria but covers people from varied walks of life. The deaths occurred between 1983 and 1984. Those classified as of "lowly position" (98 or 54.7% of all the respondents) are petty traders, farmers, junior workers in government and private establishments whose annual incomes do not exceed N5000.

The second set of respondents (68 or 34.1%) comprises mostly senior staff of government offices and private establishments (especially university professors), big traders as well as some local leaders who have annual incomes of not less than N5000 but which does not exceed N15 000 and those who have amassed some wealth. The third and last group is mainly made up of chief executives of public and private establishments, big-time contractors and business people. This group is considered to be the wealthy, influential and privileged or upper-class people in Nigerian society.

Aside from interviewing the respondents a few weeks (usually about three or four weeks) after the burial, (that is, when the activities have lessened but the expenditures made are still fresh in the bereaved's memory)

the researchers also attended at least 22 (12%) of the funerals in order to observe things personally. All but five of the funerals took place in the Southern part of Nigeria (where the accompanying fanfare is highest).

From the interviews and observations, one general fact emerged: all of the respondents complained of the heavy financial involvement that is deeply entrenched in the "modern" process of burying in Nigeria. Many (over 90%) of them talked about borrowing money from friends, relations, colleagues, banks and other lending houses to finance funerals for their dead ones. By implication, after burying a relation, the majority of the respondents spend the next few years repaying the debts incurred in the burial activities.

When asked why people would subject themselves to such hardships, respondents answered, "to maintain family prestige and class." In effect, a lot of people engage in such extravagance in order to look "good" before their friends, relations and workmates. Thus, social considerations tend to overshadow those of the future economic welfare of the individuals and their families.

Generally, funds that are raised for burial purposes are spent on embalming and mortuary facilities, the hiring of an ambulance, the purchase of an expensive bed in which the body will lie in state, and the purchase of lace materials and other trimmings for decorating the bed. Other areas of heavy expenditure include the purchase of a casket instead of a coffin; the decoration of the room where the body will lie in state; the hiring of entertainment bands, choirs, and other such groups; the building of a new house or the renovation of an old one where the corpse will be put for viewing and the purchase of a power generating plant if there is no electricity in the area. Whether chickens, goats or cows are chosen for the entertainment of guests depends upon the status of the family and how much of their wealth they want to show off. Even relations-in-law, especially those married to the daughters of the deceased, are summoned to a family meeting at which each person or group is or are told how much to contribute to the funeral activities.

Average burial expenses for the three categories of interviewees mentioned above are conservatively estimated at N1956.00, N9120.00 and N39 692.00 respectively. Differences according to social class are easily observed, especially in the quality and quantity of items used for the burial. When one considers that the per capita Gross National Product for Nigeria for the early 1980s was estimated at about US $560 (Population Reference Bureau Data Sheet, 1980) which would be about N470 at that time, it is not surprising that many people end the burial of their loved ones with heavy financial problems ahead of them.

At this point, we must hasten to add that those expenses are undertaken only if the dead relative had lived to a good age (that is, at least more than thirty years) and, most probably, had married and produced children. If the

dead person was young and unmarried, the death is considered a tragic one, especially if the parents are still alive. In such situations, there is no necessity to keep his body for a long time in the mortuary while burial arrangements are completed. Thus, in some cases, once the death is announced, the body is prepared for burial.

A few examples will suffice to support this point. In one instance, a young man, just graduated from a university, had a motor accident and died. Immediately news of his death reached the parents, they dispatched a team to convey the body home. When the team left, those at home were ordered to dig a grave for him. As soon as the corpse arrived, it was identified and interred. In another case, a young man who died while studying in the United States, was sent home in a casket. The parents could only open the casket to ensure that it contained their son's body which was then quickly carried to an isolated forest area for burial.

Such premature deaths cause a lot of pain and heartache to the parents who can no longer hope that they will be buried by their children. This type of death is seen as a bad death. The belief is that people who die prematurely should not be buried with fanfare so that such an event does not occur again in the family.

Another exception to the custom of elaborate burial occurs when the very old request that upon their death they be committed to mother earth without being subjected to freezing in the mortuary. They usually specify that they should be buried immediately they die. They reject the idea of their children ruining themselves financially because of expensive burial ceremonies.

Except for these two categories of deaths, burying in Nigeria has become an example par excellence of the extravagant display of individual wealth, "abilities," and social status. It has departed significantly from the deep ritualistic but much less expensive methods of yesteryear. People, instead of concentrating on sympathizing with the bereaved family, now seem to focus attention on the type of casket, the number of tiers of bed decorations, the type of lace materials used especially for room curtains and the extent to which the "death" show room is decorated with flashy and luxurious items which reflect the social class and distinction of the bereaved families.

Notes

1. As at August 6, 1985, the rate of exchange for the Naira was 1.1172 U.S. dollars and 0.8037 British Sterling (see *Business Times*, August 12, 1985, p. 20). Subsequently, the Naira has fallen to less than 15 cents U.S. The older values, however, give Westerners a better idea of cost relative to income.
2. A further illustration concerning Islamic attitudes is provided by a case the researcher observed. A certain young man, a few hours after returning from a visit to his young

undergraduate fiancée (who was studying some four hundred kilometres away from his work place), got a telephone call that informed him that she had been involved in an automobile accident. He quickly bought his ticket and some flowers, and rushed back to see her in the hospital where she was reportedly admitted. By the time he got there (a matter of a few hours) to his utmost chagrin, despair, and disappointment, she was dead and already buried.

With this kind of attitude, it should be evident that such extra expenditures as are incurred by some Christians are generally frowned at or condemned by the Moslems.

3. The Igbos are reputed to be highly competitive and enterprising. This spirit of competition manifests itself in different ways to meet varied situations. It is a matter of pride to show that one's dead stayed for such a long time while elaborate plans were being made for burial. Moreover, the Igbos are a highly mobile people. Therefore, they settle in different parts of the country and indeed outside it. It is usual to wait for the return of relatives before the dead person is buried. This may explain in part the length of time spent in the morgue before burial as shown in the sample for the Igbos.
4. See Appendix A, "A Note on Personal Interviews."

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FROM RITUAL TO THEATRE IN A NORTHERN MANITOBA CREE COMMUNITY

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Abstract: In two later works Victor Turner examines the transition from ritual to theatre. This article, which is based on a case study, elucidates that process. The locale is a Cree community in Northern Manitoba which is undergoing rapid social change. The society's adjustments are examined from the perspective of one individual who plays a key role in the redress phase of the social dramas which begin to dominate daily events as the conflict between traditional and modern systems intensifies. His role is interpreted as being transitional from that which characterizes the ritualized roles of shamans, storytellers and joking partners and that which obtains in the activities of sacred clowns and secular, experimental theatre. It is a self-aware, specialized role in which he uses public storytelling performances to admonish the people not to forget their tradition as they face the future.

Résumé: Cet article, basé sur une étude particulière, reflète les propos de Victor Turner sur la transition du rituel au théâtre. Une communauté Cree du nord du Manitoba, éprouvant de rapides changements sociaux, est le sujet d l'étude. Les adaptions de la société sont examineés en observant un individu lié à la phase de redressement des drames sociaux qui, de plus en plus, dominent la vie quotidienne pendant que le conflit entre systèmes traditionnels et moderenes s'intinsifie. Son rôle est interprété comme étant transitionnel; de ce qui caractérise les rôles ritualisés de chamans, conteurs et parents à plaisanteries à ce qui s'applique aux activités de clowns sacrés et du théâtre séculaire et expérimental. En donnant des représentations publiques, il raconte des histoires qui servent à avertir la communauté à ne pas oublier ses traditions alors qu'elle confronte l'avenir.

Introduction

The transition from ritual to theatre, according to Turner, is best understood as a facet of the larger process by which societies balance the formal and informal in a continuing effort to achieve the dual goals of order and security on the one hand and growth and flexibility on the other (1982:77-79; 1974:37, 56; 1969:129). He maintains that formal phenomena predominate in

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periods of stability while informal processes dominate in times of change (1982:84; 1974:163-164). Since industrialization introduces an accelerated climate of change, he perceives an evolution. Slow changing, more ritualized, more stable systems develop into faster changing systems as industrialization introduces greater social and economic complexity (1982:84-85). The process initiates a growing separation of formal and informal activity (1982:114-115) and as the separation advances, the informal becomes more and more dominant, freeing the critical and objectifying forces of society—the liminal and theatrical forces—so they may provide the fluidity of ideas needed for adapting to a faster pace of life.

Turner has employed numerous metaphors to elucidate the contrast between the formal and informal forces of society. These include indicative vs. subjunctive, work vs. play, structure vs. communitas, liminal vs. liminoid, bottle vs. wine, role vs. actor and, of course, ritual vs. theatre. He describes each pole elaborately and thoroughly, paying close attention to how theatre begins in the liminal activity of the redress phase of the social dramas of ritually dominated society (1982:108). But his enunciation of the transition process is less clear, leaving much room for speculation and conjecture.

The case study here reported takes up the question of the transition from ritual to theatre. It does so by examining some of the adjustments that take place when a band level society confronts the forces of change and takes some first steps toward freeing the liminal from structural supervision so that it may provide the society with a more flexible response to its faster paced existence.

The society's adjustments are explored in a concrete way by examining them from the perspective of one individual, an individual who plays a key role in the redress phase of the social dramas (Turner 1974:37-38) which begin to dominate daily events as the conflict between traditional and modern systems intensifies. His role is interpreted as being transitional from that which characterizes the ritualized roles of shamans, storytellers and joking partners and that which obtains in the activities of sacred clowns and secular, experimental theatre. It is a self-aware, specialized role in which he uses public storytelling performance to admonish the people not to forget their tradition as they face the future.

The Case Study

Sixteen years ago the author conducted an applied anthropology project in a Cree community of approximately 3000 individuals lying 500 miles north of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The community was historically a major trade centre and continues to be a vital link between northern and southern services.

It was a main centre for education, religious missions, and medical activity and, in recent years, spearheaded new communication services, new transportation facilities, and new self-government and Native awareness activities. The community is thus a centre where forces of modernization confront forces of tradition and where the two forces live in varying conditions of conflict or accommodation. Thus, while there are such modern facilities as an airport, hospital, new high school, and new television and radio station, there is also an active shamanic tradition and a continuing interest in the hunting and trapping baseline upon which traditions are mounted.

During the course of his study, the author met a man who plays a critical role in the clash between these modern and traditional forces. He is a man caught up in both worlds and who feels a strong need to resolve the resulting conflicts.

He has served his community in many ways. He is a shaman, an Elder, a storyteller, a translator, an influential figure in local TV and radio operations and, before his retirement, was a trapper, fire fighter, lay minister for the United Church, and a teacher, truant officer and janitor at the local school (being equally proud of all three of these school jobs).

The community has had several terms to describe him. During his truant officer days he was known as John Wayne. He's also been called Mr. Gusio (stranger, white man), crazy fool, and big liar.

Another name by which he's been known, a name which is a key to his identity, is Weesakayjuc, the Trickster of Cree mythology. He himself identifies with Weesakayjuc. When he listened to some Weesakayjuc tales on tape, which the author had sent to him for translation, he wrote back: "I came a long ways off. A strange land nobody knows. I sure found out that Weesakayjuc was my great grandfather. That's why I went to see the go-go girls when I arrived in Winnipeg."

He once told a tale of how, while travelling along his trapline, he discovered a place where they say Weesakayjuc sat.

> It's just like a chair. I went up to it and sat down and it fit me. I put my head back and it fit in the indentation behind me, and my buttocks fit in the depression under me. It was as if his body sort of sank or melted into the stone. Then I looked across as I sat there. And there I saw what they say Weesakayjuc saw. Across the creek there were some rocks and cracks in the rock. They say he saw spider woman there and that she spread herself out for him and he sent his penis across to her by means of a mink. He told the mink to put it right in where it was supposed to go. The mink said he would and he would shout when it was ready. But Weesakayjuc was too much in a hurry and gave a big push before the mink was ready. So he smashed the mink right in where his penis was supposed to go. That's why you will always find the mink among the cracks along the river. If you want to hunt the mink you set your traps right in the cracks.

He told of another incident that happened to him while he was on his trapline, an incident so central that it was repeated to the author no less than seven different times over the years. It is very revealing of the man's nature and, as well, of the nature of the Trickster symbol itself. The following is a composite version:

It was during the winter trapping season, he said, when he was visited one evening by a stranger. A little man walked in the door of his cabin and, as he walked in, he became bigger and bigger until he was the biggest man he ever saw. This man put his hands on the seven inch thick beam on top of the cabin and bent it. Then the man sat down and talked a little, but he couldn't be understood. After a while, the man got up and left saying the only thing that could be understood, "If you are in trouble and worried and if you want to do something, think of me." And then, as he left, he got smaller and smaller. After he left, upon investigation by lantern, no footprints could be found on any of the trails leading off from the cabin. Then, the next night, at the next cabin along the trapline, the visitor came again. He walked in and got bigger and bigger and sat down by the fire and warmed his hands. Again he couldn't be understood but the host had no fear of this man because he seemed not to want to do any harm. Then, when he departed, getting smaller and smaller, again no trail was left. This was the last he saw of him.

Gradually, over the years, he revealed some of the meanings. "It wasn't a dream," he said, "it was a visitor like you sitting right there." He said he asked the old people about it and they told him that it was a visitor from the earth. "The earth has parts, you know," he explained, "eyes, hands, feet. The old man said this was the earth's asshole." They told him, he said, that this was the spot that has never been defeated and that it was a gift to him and that now he will never be defeated. He said they told him a story of a boy who was visited by a bear who took the child and raised it and made it the most powerful person, one who could never be defeated. The bear told the boy, "Remember me if you are in need. Sound like the way I sound. I'll give you my strength. Cry out and say, 'Oh woods of the wild.' " And so the boy was able to defeat giants who had stolen the people's women. "And that's the way you will be," the old man told him.

This would appear to be an empowering experience not unlike that of the classic vision quest and it is entirely in keeping with the nature of the roles he has undertaken. These roles—translator, shaman, informant, story-teller, politician—are mediation roles. They are doorways to new ideas and new experiences and entail the powers of transformation, passage and mediation between inner and outer worlds. As Turner has remarked (1969:25-26), objects that possess properties that metaphorically reflect powers that humans would like to possess may become symbols for those powers and may be thought of as containing magical abilities to invoke those powers. The anus

possesses the properties of transformation, passage and mediation and is thus, in shamanic world view, an entirely suitable object to have empowered this man to undertake the transformational functions his roles entail.

Thus empowered with sacred sanctioning, the man serves his society as one of its main bridges between old and new worlds. He is their Bible translator. He is their envoy to the world of western education where he interprets the knowledge of the west to Cree school children by teaching them how to translate English into Cree syllabics, and where he interprets the knowledge of the Cree to university students by teaching them how to translate the symbols of Cree stories into current and practical lessons. He is a lay minister and represents the band at religious conferences. He is on the board which controls the band's usage of new radio and television facilities. And, at the same time, he is a key shaman for the band, responsible for finding lost bodies, foretelling the future, dealing with sorcery, and treating many forms of illness. In this latter capacity he also attends conferences where the interfacing of traditional and modern medical practices is discussed.

Living actively in modern and traditional worlds, and demonstrating a remarkable capacity to integrate those worlds, he is, perhaps above all, a model for forging a creative coalition of elements from those worlds. Thus, underlying everything he does, there is tacit teaching of how to deal with the conflicts between new and old ways of life. But this is also made explicit. For there is urgency in this matter as breaches of tradition arise in matters of alcoholism, child rearing, family life, subsistence and self-reliance. Factions debate the wisdom of old and new ways—trapping and hunting vs. wage labour, western education vs. traditional education, Christianity vs. shamanism, aggressive confrontation vs. moderation, modern medicine vs. traditional medicine, modern homes vs. traditional homes. Within these debates, his is a voice of mediation. Whatever the medium, be it radio or television, grade school or university, public conference or private conversation, his message is always the same. You cannot rush headlong into the future without taking the past along. The story is his favorite vehicle for expressing this. And he frequently ends his stories by revealing the fact that his name, in English, means "Mr. Turnaround."

Three of his stories will illustrate how he explicitly attempts to teach the manner of bridging worlds and healing breaches that he has achieved. These are "Frog and Rabbit," "Woman and the Raven," and "Seasons." They each express his belief that the Cree cannot leave their vision quest tradition behind if they wish to solve their crises and successfully face the future.

Three Stories

The Frog and Rabbit

(based upon an oral presentation by the man to his Cree students at the reserve school):

> Rabbit was looking for a wife and married frog. They were living with each other in a rabbit hole. The rabbit had taken a walk in the forest and came back to tell the frog he had seen some big footprints and was frightened. "They were sharp footprints," the rabbit told the frog. The frog told the rabbit it was a moose and to go kill it. Rabbit went out and followed the footprints but when he saw how big the moose was, he became even more frightened and ran back to the frog. This happened three times and finally the frog said that she would do it. So frog went out hunting and soon saw the moose lying down and resting. Rabbit was close behind, but frog told rabbit to stay back. The frog crept from behind the moose into the opening which is the behind. The frog searched for a blood vein and soon found it and chewed on it and killed the moose.
>
> But when it came time to feast, rabbit took all the meat and would only give frog the intestines. "I'm boss, I'm husband," the rabbit said. But frog called her brother, the owl, who frightened rabbit into giving some meat to the frog. "He's my enemy," said rabbit.
>
> Near sunset the rabbit said to the frog, "What would you do if the wolves came?" "Don't ask such questions, what if someone would hear," said frog. "I would run away," said rabbit. "You couldn't outrun the wolves," said frog, "you would get caught. But I would sing myself into the moose's blood and sink into the ground."
>
> So the wolves came. And rabbit ran here and there but couldn't get away. So he hid under the moose's bones, under the backbone. But the wolves found the rabbit and dragged him out by the feet and ate him. The frog, however, sang himself into the moose's blood and survived.

At the conclusion of this story the narrator told the class of Cree students that you can't always be seeking backbones to get out of trouble, you must rely upon your own powers to get by. He said that's the problem with children today, when they're in trouble they run to their parents, they don't help themselves.

Woman and the Raven

(taken verbatim from the man's own hand-written story as presented to the author):

> There was war against the Natives. When war was over there stood a woman and her child in a lonely home of teepee. Days passed and they lived all alone. Then the time came when she lost her child while doing her chores outdoors. Upon her return the child was gone. Days and nights of weeping ensued. There were no tracks or footprints. Kitchi Manitou (the Great Spirit) heard the cry of the lonely woman. He sent the fowl of the air, called Raven, with a piece of black cotton. "Why weep as thou?" asked Raven. She replied that she lost her

child and can't find her baby. "See this cotton, I'll make of it a dress," said Raven, "wear this, it will never wear out, even though you go in thick bush." When the rag was finished, she put it on. "If you obey, you will find it, but, if you don't believe, your child will be lost forever," she was told. "Pull one of the posts beside the doorway." She did this and there, under the posts, she found footprints. "Follow," said the Raven, "that's the answer. I will guide you wherever you go." The first day she found moss and little foot steps; the second day a bow-and-arrow; the third day, a campfire. The fourth day, late in the evening, she heard two people chopping wood. She went closer and saw her child, full grown in four days. She came back full of joy and courage.

This story, with accompanying pictograph, was brought to the university and explained to the students. The old people told it to him, he said, when he was looking for a way to understand what was happening to the Cree as Hydro was damming the rivers and flooding the land in its attempt to make electricity. It indicates, he explained, that the Cree's birthright has been stolen and their hope for the future. It tells of how the people can expose the secret plot against them and return their children and their birthright to health and strength.

Seasons

(taken verbatim from a hand-printed story given to the author after its presentation to the author's university class):

The story I am going to tell you is about Black Arrow and Red Arrow. Once upon a time there lived a boy named Iyas. He wants to circle the world within one year. So he decided to go out and leave his father and mother. Before he left he met an old woman who said, "Be careful son, you have to watch out and protect yourself." So he went out and he met many temptations. So he listened to the old woman as he passed every trial and temptation. And then he came back and stayed on a reef and he didn't know how he could get across the sea. Finally the snake came along. It was the biggest snake that he had ever seen, with horns. So he asked the snake to see if he would take him across the sea. The snake said he would if Iyas would tell the snake when Iyas hears the thunder. "If you see the black cloud tell me. I know how to protect you," said the snake. "All you have to do is hit my horns and away I go." (Iyas broke his promise.)

So he started to hit the horns of the snake. And finally he saw the black cloud from the West. So he hit the horn so fast the snake went swiftly through the water. The snake said, "I heard something." "It's only your horns. I hit them so hard it sound like thunder." Close to the shore the thunder struck the snake. The snake said, "That's what I told you, thunder would kill me and when you hear the thunder to tell me." So there was only bloodshed. Iyas created snakes from the blood, small snakes. Iyas said, "From this day there will be small snakes. You will be plenty." So off he went back to his home for one year's journey.

He saw his mother all scratched on the face. He went up to her and said, "What happened, Mother?" "Your father died when you went away and I had to get a stepfather. I had a baby and your stepfather was jealous and scratched me. It's somebody else's baby." So Iyas made the arrows, one black and one red. So he made a circle. So Iyas and his mother could stand in a circle. He told his mother to stand in the circle but first the mother had to go in the wigwam and throw the baby in the fire and he would stand by the door. As soon as the mother went in, she put the big fire on and threw the baby in the fire. The old man (stepfather) ran after her. He saw Iyas outside the door. He said to him, "Oh my son you have returned home." He got beaver skins and spread them out. "I know my son has tired feet." Iyas replied, "You will never get tired." So Iyas and the mother ran to the circle that Iyas had made. He shot the black arrow first. That's for darkness. It was the long winter season with North Wind. He shot the red arrow. As the arrow dropped to the ground, it started to burn. It burned the wigwam and the old man.

So then Iyas said, "From this time the years will be like this. There will be a hard long winter and a cold North Wind. But when the red arrow falls, all the snow will melt and this is spring." And after Iyas finished all the things that he had done, he said to his mother, "What would you like to be? A bird of some kind, or an animal?" He said, "I will be a crow." His mother said, "I will be a duck." And the first day of spring we have the crow. He comes first and then the snow begins to melt. And then the ducks come and it begins to be summer.

This is why we can't leave some of the old things behind. Although we become civilized people, we need the old things to guide us in our new way of life. I am very happy, my children, to teach the Cree. Use the language although you are taught English and read books in English. But you need your language. And I hope you understand what I am talking about in the legend. These people in the old times represent what you have and what has happened in the past. This was written in the old testament. The first and the last (Creation). And it is interesting what has happened. And tell us what is going to happen in the future. We will understand what has happened and what's going to happen in the future. You will understand in days before Jesus. People knew someone was teaching them. In Cree. When you are going with white children you must speak English so they understand.

This version of the famous Iyas cycle was written in abbreviated form largely for the children of his community. When it was brought to the university and told in class, sections were added detailing the temptations and obstacles Iyas faced in returning home (for these details see, for example, Stevens 1971:112-120). These included having to eat a continually resupplied plate of meat presented by a fox, having to get past a giant with a huge leg who had bones hanging along his path to warn of someone coming, and having to outsmart women who lure men to their lodge and then kill them with their sharp elbows and toothed vaginas.

After telling this story to the university class, he told them his Cree name and said that it meant "turn around." He said he and Iyas had the same message.

Traditionally, the symbolic content of stories was not explicitly interpreted. Normally it was left to the audience to gain understanding through gradually experiencing the world and hearing the stories told repeatedly in the context of particular events. And, indeed, the narrator of these three stories was reluctant to explicitly reveal their meanings. He would tell the university class to ask the instructor. Or he would just go silent after the telling, although prefacing the story (and there were many over a ten year span) with concrete narrative about current events in his northern community and in southern cities.

But sometimes he provided hints. These were in the form of questions or riddles that pointed out precisely where the student should be looking to obtain understanding. These were written out on separate pieces of paper. On one side were the questions and on the other side were answers. He told the author to hand out questions ahead of time but not to give out the answers until later.

For example, among the eight questions and answers that accompanied "Woman and the Raven" were:

Question What is the black cotton dress?
Answer "The education . . . wear it . . . trust and obey."
Question What are the footprints under ground?
Answer "There are many secret things [in] which the government has that we don't know even [by] the Department of Education and other business people even that we must discover."
Question What is the camp fire?
Answer "Stand on your own feet and live."

Among the ten questions and answers which accompanied "Seasons" were:

Question Who is the old man?
Answer "The old man is North Wind . . . Ke way tin."
Question The black arrow represents what?
Answer "Dark, cold winter."
Question Red arrow represents what?
Answer "Warm spring . . . away with snow."
Question The circle, what is it?
Answer "Stand in the circle you will feel the hot sun and the snow melted and gone . . . Old man deforced."

When the students pursued the answers in class by asking him questions, he replied. "I'm trying to bring back a new nation. We were lost and driven from town to town. We don't understand ourselves or each other. You have to feel the way I feel with these questions and then you will understand more."

Sometimes the class would cajole him into going deeper into the symbolism and being more explicit about meanings and then it would become evident that the meanings were encapsulated in the symbolism in many layers and that they needed to be peeled away layer by layer, each new layer exposing a less specific and more archetypal level of analysis.

The meanings came out in other settings as well. During an interview for a radio program broadcast into northern communities, he discussed his stories' symbolism with the author and with the radio show host. And a great amount was revealed during many years of private and casual conversation with the author.

The following, then, is an integration of all these various sources of information regarding the meanings of his stories.

Each story is a response to a crisis. "Frog and Rabbit" was originally told to Cree grade school children who were prone to be overly dependent on their parents for help whenever they got into trouble. "Woman and the Raven" was initially told to the man by Cree Elders to help him investigate a government project to divert and dam a river system in northern Manitoba and was later retold to the author who was interested in the Cree reaction to the project. And "Seasons" was initially told to Cree high school students who were losing their language and were balking at learning Cree syllabics.

The stories provide traditional meanings by which these difficulties may be interpreted and handled. These are meanings derived from the corpus of symbolism housed in traditional storytelling. The stories tap into these meanings by being direct cognates of classic and sacred Cree stories. "Frog and Rabbit" is cognate to "Rectum Snake" (Barnouw 1977:72-73). "Woman and the Raven" is reminiscent of "Rolling Head" (Ahenakew 1929; Bloomfield 1930:14-20; 1934:275-277; Jones 1917, part 2:45-103) and also "Oshkikive's Baby" (Barnouw 1977:112-117). And "Seasons" is explicitly drawn from the Iyas cycle (Stevens 1971:112-120 for example).

But they are freely rendered versions, shaped and altered according to two related forces: first, by the rapid pace of change which demands more immediate attention to crises; and second, by the growing separation of the formal and informal, of order and disorder and work and play, which accompanies a faster paced life and which often produces two kinds of Tricksters (Ricketts 1966:329), one more purely disorderly and immoral and the other more purely orderly and moral. This is seen in the two Tricksters of the Winnebago, Wakjunkaga and Hare (Radin 1956). It is seen in the two Maasaus of the Hopi (Malotki 1987 and personal communication). And it is seen, among

the Cree, in Weesacayjuk and Iyas, with the "Rolling Head" being perhaps a transitional myth. The three stories appear to reflect these three levels of transition from informal to formal and from disorderly to orderly in the character of the Cree Trickster. "Frog and Rabbit" may represent the classical disorderly bungling host Trickster (Jones, part 1:299-315, for example). "Woman and the Raven" reflects the "Rolling Head" tradition, and " Seasons" represents the Iyas cycle.

The basic, practical message of the stories is that a major problem in Cree life today is that youth are not achieving the traditional independence of action that is necessary for success. "Frog and Rabbit" defines this problem while the other two stories exhort remedial measures.

The essence of this teaching is that there has been a failure to employ the focal tradition of the vision quest. Four stages in that quest are seen in each story. But in "Frog and Rabbit" it is seen in its failure of execution while in the other two it is seen in its more positive mode which, at the end, provides balance and wholeness.

In "Frog and Rabbit," frog is a symbol of the powerful past with its powers of action and independence while rabbit is a symbol of the present with its lost youth and a lack of power and independence. Frog has a secret agent (owl) and a secret ability (hibernation and blood control). Rabbit has nothing but deluded confidence in surface phenomena like speed, hiding places and false bravado. Without real courage and knowhow, rabbit cannot hunt (relate to nature), cannot marry well or discharge his familial obligations (relate to people) and cannot survive in the face of what is coming (the wolves—the future).

Rabbit is reduced to seeking a backbone, for he has none of his own to stand on. But other people's backbones (dependency) are not good security. One never knows when they will be eaten away and when one will be left helpless.

The story thus outlines four stages of futility which begin with fear, dependency and lack of knowledge and then continue with inability to relate successfully to nature, inability to relate successfully to other people, and total defeat at the end.

In "Woman and the Raven," parents are told what they should do to retrieve their lost generation. They are told that they must overcome passive and futile self pity (weeping) and actively seek to repair damages that have been done to them—damages which they will discover if they believe in their traditions (raven) and use that knowledge (coat that never wears out) to grasp opportunity (teepee poles) and find the evidence of what the enemy has done to capture their children (hidden footprints under the ground). As they do this, they get closer and closer to recapturing their lost birthright of strong and powerful youth. This is accomplished in four stages. The first sees

youngsters obtain greater independence (moss diaper is discarded). The second sees them able to throw off their "yes man" status, assert strong feelings and fight back (bow and arrow). The third sees them establish security and independence (fire and hearth). And the fourth sees the next generation restored to full maturity and vitality with their strong mind and self-sufficient survival capacity restored (chopping wood side-by-side with the former enemy).

Parallel to these four stages in the myth, four stages in the community's development as self-sufficient parents able to feed and nourish and successfully rear their children are indicated. First there is subservience, crawling and weeping. Then the community begins to stand on its own two feet and begins to fight back, entering a rebellious and militant period (diaper discarded and bow and arrow taken up). Next the community obtains its land rights, language rights and self-sufficiency (fire and hearth). Finally, a sharing and equal partnership in nationhood is established with Whites which transforms the enemy to friend (chopping wood side-by-side). (See Granzberg 1978 for more detail.)

In "Seasons," the lost child's perspective is taken. His trials and tribulations as he tries to return to his mother are explored (symbolic of his vision quest for maturity). In overcoming the dilemma of an endless supply of food, Iyas stores and plans and digests all that is given to him. He honours and obeys and in so doing obtains knowledge, the great helper that is always by his side. In facing the huge man with one oversized leg, he is facing temptation and impulsiveness. He is facing tendencies to imbalance nature and destroy it (as the giant destroys everything in his path with his imbalanced construction). He overcomes these things through the knowledge he has gained and with the aid of his helpers, the fox and mink—helpers that come with honour and obedience. Able to live in balance with nature by tempering his impulses and controlling his emotions, Iyas confronts the devious females with their sharp elbows and toothed vaginas, symbols of dishonesty and disruption of human relations. He defeats them with his knowledge and impulse control and thereby achieves an ability not only to be in balance with nature but also to be able to relate honestly to others and to interact justly. This enables him to reunite with his loved ones and to reform the circle—the harmony.

Again there are four stages. First the child must gain knowledge and help (fox and meat), then he must overcome lack of emotional control and impulsiveness (defeating giant with huge leg), next he must learn to live in a sharing and friendly manner with the human world (defeats women with sharp elbows and toothed vaginas) and finally he is able to return trium-

phantly to adulthood as an active and balancing force (he returns to his mother and balances the world with red and black arrows).

Once the child accomplishes the vision quest, he can see things. He can see below the surface. He can identify the true nature of reality. He can perform transformations.

This is the "key" to success, the key to handling the acculturative conflicts the Cree are facing. There are symbols of it in each story. In "Frog and Rabbit," it is the ability of the frog to lie hidden underground and thus escape the wolves. The frog's essence is transformational. It consists of the ability to change from tadpole to frog, to live both in and out of water, and to hibernate.

In "Woman and the Raven," the key symbol of transformation and of hidden, below surface identity are the footprints that lie hidden underground and, once revealed, provide the road to recovery. And in "Seasons," it is the secret information and secret objects that Iyas has been given by the fox which enable him to identify the true nature of strangers he meets and to defeat those who are evil. One of the evils he defeats is the giant snake which, in other traditional stories, is part of the general class of beings who steal children (Jones 1917, part 2:259-261). These are the water monsters, the same who flooded the land in the Cree deluge story (Bloomfield 1930:8-20; Clay 1938:16-22) and the same who are the likely class to which the enemy of the "Woman and the Raven" story belongs and, as such, a particularly appropriate metaphor for hydroelectric projects.

Thus, by reference to traditional stories, but with creative and imaginative reformulation, this man translates the modern world into hidden, underlying and perennial factors that apply equally to the old and new and thereby unite them. The secrets of the enemy (his hidden, traditional face) are revealed and he is defeated. These secrets lay in the traditional stories. They lay there locked away until a transformer comes along to reveal them. They are the revelations of the stories—the eternally valid principles of life. Once unlocked, they are the means for breaking the code of the foreign and strange, for transforming the modern world, and for integrating different worlds with a minimum of conflict.

Discussion

What does this case study reveal about the transition from ritual to theatre? Our thesis is that it reveals an intermediate condition in that transition. It is a stage at which objective and critical commentary is just beginning to emerge from ritual and form into specialized genres which foreshadow such developments as sacred clowning and, at yet a higher stage of specialization, secular plays.

No clowns are reported for subarctic Algonkian bands except for the plains-Ojibwa where their presence is most likely an intrusive element from Siouxian speakers of the plains (Howard 1965:108-110, 115-116; Skinner 1914:500-505). Turner's theory provides an explanation. According to Turner (1982:28-29), movement from ritual to theatre is initiated by economic and social change. As society develops economically, work and play become increasingly independent resulting in the gradual emergence of theatre from forms of liminality less specialized and less separable from ritual context.

Algonkian society, in its traditional context, must therefore lack the level of economic and social development necessary for producing the amount of work and play detachment that would allow for the specialized play activity of clowns. However, in recent years, through acculturation influences, it appears that sufficient economic and social change has occurred to allow the development of liminal processes more specialized and independent than those traditionally present and which have a nascent character that reflects sacred clowning.

The prime mover in this may be new communication systems. Radio, television, VCR's, formal schools, universities, and intercultural conferences make it possible for people to become more self-aware and to begin to produce more objective and pointed commentary upon society—a commentary that is freeing itself from an unspecialized status within such ritual activity as shamanism, storytelling and joking and is achieving a more independent status which reflects the more specialized activities of preaching, clowning and writing plays. The essence of this movement is seen in the case study.

The central character of the case study engages in much traditional shamanic, storytelling and joking activity, but, in the redressive measures aimed at resolving the crises that arise in the social dramas of the acculturated life, his activities might better be characterized as preaching, satire and metacommentary, for they reveal a self-awareness and specialization not traditionally found. His storytelling, for example, is made more pointed and immediate by riddling and by questions and answers. It is done with a freer attitude of imaginative shaping and constructing to meet timely concerns. And it has a more public audience in mind, being instigated more by media opportunity and public consciousness than by the occasion of a grandchild's presentation of tobacco.

He doesn't belong to a specialized fraternity such as found among sacred clowns, but he does belong to boards that control radio and television communications in the north and which produce videos in which he and other Elders act and comment and tell stories and explain traditional and current culture. He doesn't specialize in taboo breaking and contrary behaviour, but he is empowered in his role by a very specialized vision which is a symbol of

reversibility, of opening and closing, of the end rather than the beginning, of doorways, and of the control of waste and filth and of that which is worthless. His stories are very critical of many aspects of current Cree life and he is not afraid to get on the local radio or TV and preach against decadence seen either in the activities of those in power (chief and council) or seen among ordinary people. And yet he himself is not immune from taboo breaking. He is a long time widower who has never remarried, he sometimes drinks to excess, and he carries on broad joking relationships with everyone (not just cross-cousins).

A prospect of what is to come as Algonkian bands continue to respond to acculturative pressures by giving critical commentary a freer reign and a more specialized status is seen in the recent works of Tomson Highway, a Cree playwright originally from northern Manitoba. In his plays (*The Rez Sisters* [1988] and "The Sage, The Dancer and The Fool" [1989]), the Trickster of mythology has achieved an acting out which permits the character even more flexibility and freedom than the para-mythological usages found in the case study. The Trickster now becomes a Falstaff-like clown flitting in and out of dramatic activity much like the satirical interventions of sacred clowns within ritual.

Whether this presages the development of institutionalized clowning, however, is a difficult question. We cannot presume a unilineal path from ritual to theatre. All we can do is summarize the transitions that we've detected in the case study and leave it for others to determine how widely these may be generalized.

With that caution, then, we may suggest that as band level society enters a more settled and acculturative environment, a nascent movement to theatrical performance begins. The instigation is a need to respond more immediately and concretely to disputes and issues that become more divisive and urgent as the pace of life accelerates. A first indication of change is the appearance of more pointed attempts to reveal mythological symbolism and to relate it to current conditions. In this regard, first steps are taken towards institutionalizing an office whose primary role is to manipulate the liminal within a theatrical format where it can remain finely tuned to on-going and immediate crises. This emerges in the form of more freely rendered stories presented with questions and answers and even riddles by individuals who are responding less to private and ritual cues than to opportunities made available through radio, television, literature, formal schools and conferences.

The individuals who spearhead these developments seem to be inspired by the Trickster of mythology and their activities parallel his behaviour in significant ways, especially in sharing the goal of providing meaning and identity in a world full of strange new phenomena. These people are taking to

heart the central message found in the three stories above and, as well, in Tomson Highway's work. This message, in its essence, is that the Weesacayjuk spirit must be awakened in the Cree. After all, in the final analysis, the power of transformation—the power to perceive two sides of an issue and bring them together, the power to play the middle ground—is the power the Cree have always been known for and it remains the power which may yet provide the best opportunity for the Cree to deal with their current conflicts. That power is the power of Weesacayjuc, and it is what the mother is seeking in "Woman and the Raven." It's what Iyas is after in "Seasons," and it's what rabbit lacks but frog possesses in "Frog and Rabbit."

That power is urgently needed now and specialized liminal/liminoid forces are arising to critique current conditions and prod the people to realize their transformational spirits. These are arising as the forces of order and disorder separate out and do battle and provide a fluidity of ideas that permit the faster paced adaptations that are needed for survival.

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BOOK REVIEWS/COMPTES RENDUS

The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion
Adam Kuper
London: Routledge, 1988. vii + 264 pp. $55.50 (cloth), $18.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Michael D. Levin
University of Toronto

Provocative and challenging as a history of an anthropological concept, Adam Kuper's *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion* starts "from the supremely unrelativist assumption that . . . the theory of primitive society is . . . about something which does not and never has existed." Kuper wishes to set the argument in its context, but also to judge it, rather than "to pretend that it cannot be rejected" (p. 8).

The idea of primitive society became established as thinkers sought a contrast, a form of society antithetical to their rapidly changing modern society. An answer was provided by *traditional society* behind which "they discerned a primitive or primeval society," but "in practice primitive society proved to be their own society . . . seen in a distorting mirror" (pp. 4-5). The persistence of this illusion is explained on material and ideal bases: it created a puzzle-solving discipline, i.e., a field of academic work; it was " 'good to think' [about] . . . the state, citizenship, the family," and the notion could be expressed in many variations and subjected to transformations "which could accommodate any special interests" (pp. 9, 241).

Kuper's task—to dismantle the interest in the literature on social relations in social anthropology and to eliminate the concept "primitive society" from scholarly writing—is perhaps too great for a relatively short book. In the effort, however, he addresses important questions and provides valuable interpretations of our scholarly past. Three kinds of evidence make his case. He traces the lines of thought which composed major topics; he describes lives of anthropologists and contexts in which they worked; and he outlines the intellectual motives (agendas) of these writers. Topics addressed include patriarchal theory, totemism, descent theory, and alliance theory. A chapter or more is devoted to three figures, Morgan, Rivers, and Boas, Morgan for the prominence of his *Ancient Society* and Rivers and Boas for their influence as theorists and teachers.

Although his goal is not relativist understanding of earlier anthropological thinking, Kuper's methods rests on the post-modern relativist philosophical notion that one cannot really know the past, another culture, or the Other, because all vision is merely a reflection of one's own history, culture, and self. His goal is to clear the way of these conceptual relics and to indicate their appropriate succession by an anthropology of culture, following Tylor and Frazer. His method, however, must give us pause. If our anthropological progenitors were bound by the perceptions of their own society, was this a special or general case? How can we be certain that our concepts, our ideas, are not mirror images of our concerns? This paradox of self-reflexivity is not a problem only for Kuper; it is central to contemporary debates in anthropology on fundamental questions of the relativism of cultural knowledge and the comparability of cultures.

The brief biographies Kuper uses to provide the context and sources of individual writers' ideas seem to deflect the force of his argument rather than build it. Tylor, for example, is noted as not having attended university, which is true, but we are not told that he was barred for being a nonconformist, a Quaker. Swanton's role in the Boas circle is also treated cynically, but without a supporting citation.

The rewards in this book are to be found in the writing on theory and its interpretations. Although the reader may remain skeptical about Kuper's purpose and conclusion, his chapters on Rivers, and in particular, his interpretation of Boas as a theorist are brilliant and original. As in his earlier *Anthropologists and Anthropology*, Kuper shows his mastery at weaving together the influence of ideas and personalities.

The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival
Peter Douglas Elias
Winnipeg, Manitoba: The University of Manitoba Press, 1988. xvii + 262 pp.

Reviewer: M.E. Stephens
University of Calgary

The book jacket of this work informs the reader that Peter Douglas Elias has worked as a consultant with the Canadian Dakota. Do not ignore this fact. This work is the written equivalent of a commissioned portrait, and the reader should not expect a candid and objective image. Despite the obvious bias, however, it presents a vivid picture of a native group's successful attempts to survive while trapped in a double-bind situation. These refugees from the United States were faced with the liabilities and restrictions placed on Canadian Indian groups but were allowed few of their rights and privileges. They were also confronted with the liabilities and responsibilities of white immigrants but denied the right to homestead or, in some cases, even to purchase land.

Elias records the skill and flexibility exhibited by the Dakota in varying economic environments. His detailed chronicling of each group's economic history is thorough, but such a format becomes mildly repetitious. The use of historic documents is well footnoted but Elias dismisses some documents (p. 146) and, in cases of contradictory evidence, accepts the account which is most positive to the Dakota (p. 162).

What is more frustrating is that there are important aspects of economic history which are not included. The arrival of the Dakota must have affected the Cree, Assiniboine, Ojibwa, and Métis occupying these areas. Elias indicates that these groups reluctantly accepted the presence of the Dakota (pp. 27-29). Some of his information such as the fact that *Tatankanaje*, the leader of one Dakota band, died while attacking the Crow (p. 27) causes one to wonder. How would an ethnohistorian hired by other Canadian Indians describe these relations?

Elias also neglects information about relationships with Dakota in the United States. He mentions that kinship is important—some families moved back to the United States, some families were joined by relatives from the United States—and that some Canadian Dakota subscribed to a Dakota-language newspaper published in the United States. These serve as hints that at least some aspects of Canadian life were influenced by developments south of the border.

The book is thorough in affirming what the Canadian Dakota "already knew" (p. xv). It is extremely well indexed, and information about specific groups of Canadian Dakota is easily located. The maps are helpful. Unfortunately, however, the archival photographs are poorly reproduced and are grouped at the front of the text rather than placed in the chapters which they illustrate.

Governments in Conflict? Provinces and Indian Nations in Canada
Edited by J. Anthony Long and Menno Boldt
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988. x + 296 pp.

Reviewer: Jean Elliott
Dalhousie University

Federal Indian policy has been synonymous with the Indian Act which places responsibility for status Indians exclusively in the hands of the federal government. *De facto* provincial Indian policies, however, have had extensive impact on the daily lives of native people. This contradiction is the impetus behind collection of original papers authored by native leaders, government officials, and academics. The result is to move provincial Indian policy from the shadows to center stage. To my knowledge, this is the first systematic attempt to examine the hitherto almost unacknowledged role of the provinces in a wide range of concerns from land claims and self-government to jurisdictional questions and financial responsibility.

Given the fact that "existing aboriginal rights" have been included in the Constitution, it may appear, at first glance, that tremendous strides have been taken in the 20 years since Prime Minister Trudeau floated the White Paper proposing to terminate the special relationship between status Indians and the federal government and, in effect, to extinguish all claim to aboriginal rights. Upon closer examination, however, the assimilationist agenda of the White Paper, as Long and Boldt point out (p. 47), is still present. They cite the current interest in self-government as an attempt at institutional assimilation. "By conforming Indian administrative, political, legal, and economic institutions to municipal-type structures that can be readily slotted into existing federal and provincial systems, the process of institutional assimilation of Indians will be greatly facilitated" (p. 48).

Models of self-government other than those featuring municipal status,while lacking in conceptual detail, tend to share the view that self-government flows from an inherent right to self-determination. The paper by Calder does an excellent job of spelling out divergent definitions and strategies of self-government which have been tried to date. For example, the 1983 Penner Report called for the Constitutional entrenchment of Indian self-government. The present administration has abandoned the concept of framework legislation, however, endorsing self-government arrangements suited to individual bands. The 1986 Sechelt Indian Band Self-Government Act is an example of the latter (p. 77). The Sechelt model, as Sanders notes, has been viewed with alarm by some natives because it "rejected the developed Indian rhetoric of an inherent aboriginal right to self-government" (p. 168) choosing instead what the critics term "municipal status" and "delegated powers" (p. 169). Where do we go from here? The provinces and the Indian nations participated in the Con-

ferences of First Ministers like reluctant brides and grooms distrustful of tying the knot. The series of Conferences ended without consensus in such areas as self-government. Before the on-again, off-again courtship can be ended between the provinces and the Indian nations, the pre-existing Gordian knot involving the federal and provincial governments must first be untied or at least loosened. To date there has not existed the political will to ease the knot. This volume contributes to the process of building that critical will. Taken as a whole, the selections pinpoint the issues and address the alternatives in a concise and forthright way. Useful appendices contain documents on Indian-provincial relations. Only the absence of an index prevents this volume from being an excellent overall reference work.

Malinowski Among the Magi: The Natives of Mailu
Bronislaw Malinowski
Edited with an introduction by Michael Young
London and New York: Routledge, 1988. vi + 355 pp. $73.00 (cloth)

Reviewer: John Barker
University of British Columbia

Mailu is a small island off the southeastern coast of Papua, situated almost midway between Port Moresby and Samarai. C.G. Seligman, the pioneer ethnologist, believed that Mailu fell into a transition zone between two widespread ethnic groups, and so he encouraged his student Bronislaw Malinowski to fill this blank in the ethnographic record. Malinowski worked in and around Mailu from September 1914 to January 1915. He then returned to Australia, where he rapidly wrote up a report of his findings, published in the *Transactions and Proceedings* of the Royal Society of South Australia in December 1915. Having served his apprenticeship and met the request of his mentor, Malinowski returned to Papua to take up his much more famous and influential work in the Trobriand Islands.

Although the Mailu expedition takes up the first part of Malinowski's Diary, it was never incorporated into the Malinowski myth. This was in part because *The Natives of Mailu* was published in an obscure journal and in part because Malinowski himself came to regard his Mailu work as something of a failure. Its republication as a monograph is doubly welcome, both for what it reveals of the early professionalization of anthropology and as a study of Magi society in the early part of the century.

Seligman like other experienced anthropologists of the day followed a strategy of survey ethnography. He travelled among communities, gathering information on preselected lists of topics from key informants using translators (often colonialists who had learned vernaculars). A few administrators and missionaries also served as informants and ethnographers. Malinowski followed essentially the same plan on Mailu. He drew heavily upon *Notes and Queries* for his topics, worked through the regional trade language, and made use of the knowledge of local Europeans. The report that resulted from this work is consequently rather schematic and dry—there are few anecdotes and almost none of the purple prose of Malinowski's Trobriands writings. Here and there, one can detect signs of the style that was to develop, when

Malinowski discusses something he witnessed or a topic that does not fit neatly into the *Notes and Queries* taxonomy.

The monograph packs in a lot of information. Under each section on geography, social divisions, tribal life, economics, magico-religious activities and beliefs, and art and knowledge, the report gives details of material culture, normative behaviour, social categories, and ritual activities. There are no embracing themes; the book serves rather as an encyclopedia. Because much of its information is true of other southern Papuan societies, the book provides a useful overview of the practical and mundane culture of the region. It also complements the more available later literature on Mailu (including a monograph by William Saville, the missionary in charge when Malinowski did his fieldwork). One of the best studied communities in Papua, Mailu possesses an ethnographic record of unusual historical depth.

Michael Young appears to have become Malinowski's modern editor—this is his second re-edition. It is hard to imagine a better choice. His introduction is excellent, providing a thorough and thoughtful commentary on the Mailu fieldwork, Malinowski's relations with colonial politicians and missionaries, the plan and style of the report, and the report's place in the total Mailu ethnographic corpus. Young reviewed Malinowski's fieldnotes and letters in preparing the text. He has wisely left the text as it originally appeared, helping the reader with occasional unobtrusive notes.

My only complaint about the book is its prohibitive price which will limit its availability to only the wealthiest of university libraries. Hopefully, the publishers or editor will donate copies to educational institutions in Papua New Guinea so that the Mailu themselves will have access to Malinowski's early work.

Cocaine: White Gold Rush in Peru
Edmundo Morales
Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989. xxii + 228 pp. $24.95 (cloth)

Reviewer: Jack M. Weatherford
Macalester College

Much has been written about cocaine in recent years, but to date Edmundo Morales' book is the most thorough ethnographic explanation of its production. Morales carefully unravels the many different social and cultural strands that combine to form the cocaine network in contemporary Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia.

Morales begins with a chapter on the traditional and contemporary role of the coca leaf among the Quechua-speaking natives of the Andes. He describes coca's focal position in native medicine, daily social interaction, and religion, and he sketches the ancient history of these uses. The second chapter examines the opening of the Peruvian frontier, the new zone where the coca, also known as "green ore," is produced. Ironically, the governmental development programs to build roads and open that area in the 1960s and 1970s greatly facilitated the growth in cocaine traffic over the past decade.

The heart of the book comes in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters which explain the organization and operation of the coca culture and economy. Morales divides the cocaine-production industry into a series of interrelated social scenes:

growing the leaves, marketing the leaves, making coca paste, selling and transporting the paste, and, finally, the production and sale of cocaine. Each of these involves a separate although overlapping set of actors and a different network of social relations. Each scene has its own cultural norms and its peculiar susceptibilities to government control.

Morales also explains a series of ancillary services and activities that make the business possible. Coca-paste producers, for example, require various chemicals which are mostly controlled substances and must therefore be obtained illegally through legal companies. They need large supplies of firewood and lime. The smugglers need transportation and people to guard the transportation. The mostly male workers desire entertainment and sports facilities as well as the services of prostitutes. Morales explores each of these scenes in turn and shows how each concentric ring of the business stretches farther into Peru, including ever more people in thousands of small ways. He shows how food merchants sell flour and sugar bags as containers for transporting illegal chemicals into the coca area. Peasants cook with wood in order to sell their kerosene rations to coca producers. Government officials, businessmen, and housewives are used to smuggle the final product.

Morales writes from a unique perspective. He has a doctorate in sociology from the United States, but he is also a native Quechua speaker, having been born in the Peruvian highlands near the region where he did most of his research. His language abilities and personal ties gave him access that few researchers would have. They also kept his study rooted in the personal relationships that make up the cocaine network rather than in mere abstractions.

Morales devotes the final two chapters to an analysis of the programs sponsored by the Peruvian and United States governments for the control of the cocaine industry. He shows how hard it is to stop the corruption of local officials in the face of such overwhelming monetary rewards and threats from the cocaine industry. Those who will not be bribed are simply killed. In the end the poor suffer the brunt of exploitation both by the cocaine industry and government efforts to fight it. It is easier for the government to attack the poor farmer than the rich and armed trafficker who already has the local law-enforcement officials in his pay. It is easier to prosecute the peasant mother found carrying a kilogram of cocaine paste than it is to prosecute the Air Force general found carrying a briefcase of refined cocaine.

Morales concludes that the United States' drug war cannot be won in South America; it must be won in the United States. As long as North Americans will pay astronomical prices for the drug, South Americans will provide it. The role of the American consumer is well understood by even the poorest segments of the cocaine-producing industry. It is not coincidence that in the boom towns of the Peruvian Amazon we find a squatter slum named "Chicago" or a three-star hotel named "New York." The people who make a living from the cocaine industry gladly recognize and identify with their affluent customers. Even the local brothel is named "Wonder Woman."

This book is written in a direct style that makes it easily read, and it is supplemented by Morales' own interesting photographs. This may be the best ethnographic report that we will ever get from the dangerous world of Peruvian cocaine production.

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William Rodman's publications include "Big Men and Middlemen: The Politics of Law in Longana" (1977) and " 'A Law Unto Themselves:' Legal Innovation in Ambae, Vanuatu" (1985), both in *The American Ethnologist*, and an edited volume (with Dorothy Counts) *Middlemen and Brokers in Oceania*. Margaret Rodman is the author of two books on Vanuatu, *Deep Water* (1989) and *Masters of Tradition* (1987). In addition, the Rodmans have jointly written several journal articles.

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