



CHAPTER NINE

Old and New Religions: The Changing Spiritual Landscape

Protective mask from the Sepik River region, New Guinea.

Anthropologists agree that all cultures experience continuous change. However, in the past, anthropology often emphasized cultural stasis among non-Western peoples and addressed change only as acculturation—the process by which populations adjust to life under a dominant power, usually colonial and Western. By the late 20th century, however, anthropologists had increasingly acknowledged cultural change as a continuous and universal process. Such change has accelerated and intensified on a global scale since the dawn of the industrial era, due to expanding economic structures, rapid innovations in technology, worldwide movements of populations, and new ways of relating to the natural environment. The end of the colonial era, around the mid 20th century for many countries, marked shifts in patterns of power as formerly colonized people gained political, though frequently not economic, independence. For the anthropologist interested in religion, these often interconnected social, economic, and environmental changes yield a wealth of fascinating subjects. This chapter includes articles addressing religious change and stability primarily within the confines of specific societies or communities.

Religion both shapes and is affected by larger changes, in a number of ways. As the articles here illustrate, in some cases religious practices are profoundly altered by radical, top-down transformations in politics, or the domination of one society by another (for example, in response to intrusive control by the state or under the persuasive influence of missionaries). In other cases, religion is a conservative force, such as when communities strive to maintain a lifestyle based on the past, validated by religious beliefs, or seek to reestablish a perceived golden age from the culture's past. Michael Lambek (2002) notes this contradictory pull of religious changes, commenting that, while the state and other powerful institutions may attempt to shape religion for their own ends, individuals and communities may use religion as a way to exercise power and control in their own lives; this may occur through intensified religious commitment—perhaps fundamentalism—or through various forms of ethical engagement, such as the human rights movement or environmentalism (p. 511).

One of the most dramatic examples of how a social group might actively attempt to transform its life through religious means is what, in a classic anthropological contribution, Anthony F. C. Wallace termed a revitalization movement: “a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of society to construct a more satisfying culture by rapid acceptance of a pattern of multiple innovations” (1956: 265). Wallace (1956) outlined several major types of revitalization movements that are clearly religious in nature and can coexist within a given society at any time. Key to the idea of revitalization movements is that they challenge what participants perceive as unacceptable conditions, such as poverty, disease, oppression, or, most commonly, the disruptive impact of a dominant, power-holding group. In Wallace’s view, revitalization movements initially spring up around the inspiration of charismatic leaders but, under the right conditions, may become established, routinized religions.

Wallace’s categories and definitions have been broadly accepted. Nativistic movements are characterized by a strong emphasis on the elimination of alien persons, customs, values, and material from the “mazeway,” which Wallace defined as the mental image an individual has of the society and its culture, as well as of his or her own body and its behavior regularities, in order to act in ways to reduce stress at all levels of the system. Revivalistic movements emphasize the readoption of customs, values, and even aspects of nature in the mazeway of previous generations. Cargo cults emphasize the importation of alien values, customs and material into the mazeway, these being expected to arrive, metaphorically, as a ship’s cargo. Vitalistic movements also emphasize the importation of alien elements into the mazeway, although not via a cargo mechanism. Millenarian movements emphasize changes in the mazeway through an apocalyptic world transformation engineered by the supernatural. Messianic movements emphasize the actual participation of a divine savior in human flesh in bringing about desired changes in the mazeway (1956: 267). (This categorization of revitalization movements, however, is only one of many schemes used by ethnographers, and, as John Collins has noted, “Any such scheme, basically, is merely a device to initiate thought and comparison” [1978: 137]).

The religious nature of revitalization in the non-Western world, particularly in Melanesia, is made clear not only by the expectation of a messiah and the millennium in some of the movements but also by the very structure of movement phenomena, in which prophets play an indispensable role. I. C. Jarvie maintains that the religious character of these movements can be explained by the fact that traditional institutions are not able to adopt and respond to social changes, and that the only new organizational system offered these societies by European colonialists is Christianity. Melanesians, for example, have learned more about organization from religion than from any other foreign institution, and it is logical for them to mold revitalization movements in religious form in order to accommodate, indeed combat, the impact of European society (1970: 412–13).

Revitalization in the broad sense of bringing new vigor and happiness to society is certainly not restricted to traditional groups or to the religious realm. Edward Sapir (1924), for example, spoke of cultures “genuine” and “spurious”: in the former, individuals felt well integrated into their culture, and in the latter they experienced alienation from the mainstream of society. Examples of attempts to change Western cultures abound. Political and economic conditions have frequently moved modern prophets to seek power to change, sometimes radically, the institutional structure and goals of society.

Throughout the readings in this chapter, reference is frequently made to *churches*, *cults*, and *sects*. These terms have been used by scholars as well as the lay public to describe particular types of religious organizations, particularly in the context of Christianity. Typically, the word *church* is applied to the larger community’s view of the acceptable type of religious organization, whereas the term *sect* is used to refer to a protest group. Sects represent

dissent from the established or mainstream form of a religion, and they generally involve smaller numbers of people. The word *cult* is not as clearly defined as *sect* and *church* and appears to refer to a more casual, loosely organized group. Cults seem to have a fluctuating membership whose allegiance can be shared with other religious organizations. Of the three, *cult* has taken on such a perjorative character that the term is almost useless (Barkun 1994: 43). What is a church to one person may be viewed as a sect or cult by outsiders.

During the last few decades, there has been an immense growth in the number of religious groups in the United States; many of these groups have received substantial attention in the media. The Children of God, the Hare Krishna movement, the followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, and the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church are a few examples of groups that have attracted thousands of adherents who apparently were disenchanted with more traditional religious options. Even within Christianity—the dominant religion of North America—countless organizations have arisen independently or splintered off from more established denominations, ranging from neighborhood storefront churches to such large, public relations- and media-savvy organizations as Vineyard Christian Fellowships and Promisekeepers. World history is replete with examples of new religious groups springing to life as people who are spiritually, politically, or economically dissatisfied seek alternatives to traditional religious organizations.

What is the appeal of these movements? What social forces underlie the development and rapid growth of religious movements? Many sociological and psychological analyses have attempted to answer these important questions (see especially Glock and Stark 1965; Eister 1972; Talmon 1969; Zaretsky and Leone 1974). Briefly, these studies draw a picture of people who have become attracted to new movements because of such lures as love, security, acceptance, and improved personal status.

Charles Y. Glock (1964) has listed five types of deprivation that may result in the establishment of a new sect or that may lead individuals to join one: (1) *economic deprivation*, which is suffered by people who make less money, have fewer material goods, and are financially beholden to others; (2) *organismic deprivation*, which applies to those who may exhibit physical, mental, and nutritional problems; (3) *ethical deprivation*, which grows out of a perceived discrepancy between the real and the ideal; (4) *psychic deprivation*, which can result in the search for meaning and new values (and which is related to the search for closure and simplicity); and (5) *social deprivation*, which results from a society's valuation of some individuals and their attributes over others. Established religions have tremendous staying power, and "it is certainly premature to conclude that religions as forces in the world and as forces in individual lives are a thing of the past" (Reynolds and Tanner 1994: 44). This is not to say that the so-called great faiths (such as Islam, Christianity, and Judaism) do not lose followers; they do. "It seems to be mainly in the northwest of Europe, in Scandinavia, and in parts of the United States that religion remains in the doldrums" (Reynolds and Tanner 1994: 44).

The first article in this chapter describes a religion under strong state control. Mervyn C. Goldstein documents life today in a Tibetan Buddhist monastery, where Chinese governmental policies have radically altered traditional religious practice. Goldstein stresses the ways in which Tibetan monks have actively carved out ways to revive their monastic traditions in this new context.

Taking a historical perspective that spans 1,000 years, James Steel Thayer shows how periodic pilgrimages to Mecca have shaped Islam as practiced by Muslims in West Africa.

In the third article, Anthony F. C. Wallace builds on his earlier analysis of revitalization movements, here emphasizing five distinct stages of such movements and some of the psychological aspects of participation.

The next two articles provide intriguing examples of revitalization movements. Alice Beck Kehoe discusses a short-lived movement that drew together Native Americans and

others during a time of profound hardship. Peter M. Worsley describes a form of revitalization movement found in the Pacific region. Such cults blossomed in response to the rapid intrusion of foreign military installations during World War II.

Just as revitalization movements can be interpreted as responses to oppression and deprivation, more established religious movements can also be forms of protest. Focusing on three men in Kingston, Jamaica, William F. Lewis brings to life some of the beliefs and practices of Rastafari, a faith that voices dissent against the status quo, including racial inequality.

In “Adoring the Father,” William Jankowiak and Emilie Allen write about a small community in the western United States whose residents model their lives on what they feel are the original Mormon practices of the 19th century, including polygamy.

In the final article, John Whitmore draws attention to the religious aspects of narratives about UFO abductions. Whitmore’s work helps us ponder how rapid changes in technology lead humans to reimagine their place in the universe and their relationship to the unfamiliar—quests that frequently take religious form.

References

- Barkun, Michael
1994 “Reflections After Waco: Millennialists and the State.” In James R. Lewis, ed., *From the Ashes: Making Sense of Waco*, pp. 41–49. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Collins, John J.
1978 *Primitive Religion*. Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Eister, Allen
1972 “An Outline of a Structural Theory of Cults.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 11: 319–33.
- Glock, Charles Y.
1964 “The Role of Deprivation in the Origin and Evolution of Religious Groups.” In R. Lee and M. E. Marty, eds., *Religion and Social Conflict*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Glock, Charles, Y., and Rodney Stark
1965 *Religion and Society in Tension*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Jarvie, I. C.
1970 “Cargo Cults.” In Richard Cavendish, ed., *Man, Myth and Magic*, pp. 409–12. New York: Marshall Cavendish.
- Lambek, Michael, ed.
2002 *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*. Boston: Blackwell.
- Reynolds, Vernon, and Ralph Tanner
1994 *The Social Ecology of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sapir, E.
1924 “Culture, Genuine and Spurious.” *American Journal of Sociology* 29: 401–29.
- Talmon, Yonina
1969 “Pursuit of the Millennium: The Relation Between Religious and Social Change.” In Norman Birnbaum and Gertrude Lenzer, eds., *Sociology and Religion: A Book of Readings*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Wallace, A. F. C.
1956 “Revitalization Movements.” *American Anthropologist* 58: 264–81.
- Zaretsky, Irving S., and Mark P. Leone, eds.
1974 *Religious Movements in Contemporary America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

The Revival of Monastic Life in Drepung Monastery

Melvyn C. Goldstein

In this article, abridged from a lengthier work, Melvyn C. Goldstein documents changes in the lives and experiences of Tibetan Buddhist monks since 1950, when China took control of Tibet. Prior to the Chinese occupation, monasteries were a central part of Tibetan culture, with perhaps 10 to 15 percent of the male population serving as monks. The largest monasteries were essentially towns with important cultural, economic, and political functions, and they were lifelong homes to males who became monks as children. After describing traditional Tibetan monasticism, Professor Goldstein traces the effects of Chinese control by examining a series of policy changes and subsequent accommodations at Drepung, which was the largest monastery in Tibet before the imposition of communist rule. The number of monks at the Drepung monastery plummeted from 10,000 in 1959 to 306 in 1976. Beginning in the late 1970s, however, liberalization in China allowed a revival of monastic activities. Drepung has faced the challenge of reinterpreting traditional practices under continuing state supervision and new economic conditions, and with a smaller community of monks.

Since the 1980s, the struggle over the political status of Tibet and its relationship to China—often referred to as the Tibet Question—has provoked international attention. The head of state of Tibet’s government in exile, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, is an active leader whose tours and speeches have gained the attention of many in the United States and Europe. In Lhasa, the capital of the traditional Tibetan state, monks and nuns have led a campaign of political dissidence since 1987. The place of Buddhism in Tibet and China raises significant issues regarding the interplay of religion, human rights, and the state.

Melvyn C. Goldstein is one of very few anthropologists to have carried out extensive research in the Tibetan region of China. He has authored more than eighty books and articles on Tibetan history, society, and language. He is the John Reynolds Harkness Professor, and directs the Center for Research on Tibet, at Case Western Reserve University.

Religion in Tibet played a role that went beyond its universal functions as an explanation of suffering and a template for salvation. Tibetans saw religion as

a symbol of their country’s identity and of the superiority of their civilization.

At the heart of Tibetan Buddhism in the traditional society was the monastery and the institution of the monk. Monasteries were (ideally) collectivities of individuals who had renounced attachments to materialism and family and had made a commitment to devote their lives to the pursuit of Buddhist

From Melvyn C. Goldstein and Matthew Kapstein, eds., BUDDHISM IN CONTEMPORARY TIBET, pp. 15–52. Copyright © 1998 by the University of California Press. Reprinted by permission of the publisher. Endnotes have been omitted.

teachings, including a vow of celibacy. Their presence was both the concrete manifestation and the validation of Tibetans' belief in their society's religiosity. In this chapter I examine the revival of Drepung, Tibet's largest monastery in the precommunist period.

Tibetan monasticism shared many features with its Buddhist counterparts in South, Southeast, and East Asia but also differed in several important ways. First, the overwhelming majority of monks were placed in monasteries by their parents as young children, generally between the ages of six and twelve. They were chosen without particular regard to their inclination or personality and were expected to remain celibate monks for their entire lives. Tibetans articulate a straightforward rationale for a system of child enrollment: it is better to enroll candidates at a young age before they have had much exposure to secular life (in particular, to girls).

Second, monasticism in Tibet was pursued with an implicit ideology of "mass monasticism" in that it enrolled as many monks as sought entrance and expelled very few. Size rather than quality became the objective measure of the success of monasticism (and Buddhism) in Tibet, and there were a staggering number of monks. In 1951, at the time of the Lhasa uprising, there were approximately 2,500 monasteries and 115,000 monks in Tibet proper, comprising roughly 10 to 15 percent of Tibet's male population. The magnitude of this can be appreciated by comparing it with Thailand, another prominent Buddhist society, where only 1 to 2 percent of the total number of males were monks. Monasticism in Tibet, therefore, was not the otherworldly domain of a minute elite but a mass phenomenon.

There were many reasons why parents sent their sons to become monks in traditional Tibet. For many, it was a deep religious belief that this bestowed a great privilege on the child and brought good merit and esteem to the parents. For others, it was a culturally valued way to reduce the number of mouths to feed while also ensuring that the child would avoid the hardships of village life. Parents sometimes also committed a son to monkhood to fulfill a solemn promise to a deity to dedicate a sick boy to a religious life if the deity spared the boy. Occasionally, an older monk asked a brother or a sister to send a son to the monastery to live with him, and in yet other cases, recruitment was simply the result of a corvée tax obligation (*grwa-khral*) that some monasteries were entitled to collect from their subjects.

Parents occasionally broached the topic with the child before making him a monk but usually simply told him of their decision. In theory the monastery asked the young candidates whether they wanted to join, but in reality this was pro forma. For example, if a new child monk ran away from the monastery, he was inevitably returned by his parents and welcomed by the monastic administration. There was no thought of dismissing him on the grounds that he obviously did not want to be a monk. Tibetans feel that young boys cannot comprehend the value of being a monk and that it is up to their elders to see to it that they have the right opportunities.

In addition to the high prestige of being a monk, the emphasis on mass monasticism can be seen in the manner in which monasteries made it easy for monks to find a niche within the monastic community by allowing all sorts of personalities to coexist. The monastery did not place severe restrictions on comportment, nor did it require rigorous educational or spiritual achievement. New monks had no exams to pass in order to remain in the monastery, and monks who had no interest in studying or meditating were as welcome as the dedicated scholar monks. Even illiterate monks were accommodated and could remain part of the monastic community. In fact, rather than diligently weed out young monks who seemed temperamentally unsuited for a rigorous life of prayer, study, and meditation, the Tibetan monastic system allowed all sorts of deviance to exist, including a type of "punk monk" (*ldab-ldob*) who fought, engaged in sports competition, and was notorious for stealing young boys for use as homosexual partners. Monks were expelled only if they committed murder or major theft or engaged in heterosexual intercourse.

The lofty status of monasteries was reflected in their position as semiautonomous units within the Tibetan state. Drepung, for example, had the right to judge and discipline its monks for all crimes except murder and treason and to own land and peasants. The three great monastic seats around Lhasa, Drepung, Ganden, and Sera, moreover, exercised an almost vetolike power over major government policy. They believed that the political and economic system in Tibet existed to further Buddhism and that they, not the government, could best judge what was in religion's short- and long-term interests. Thus, although they were not involved in the day-to-day ruling process, when the monastic leadership felt

strongly on some issue, their views could not easily be ignored by the Dalai Lama's government. The 20,000 monks resident in Drepung and its two sister monastic seats dwarfed numerically the small military contingent maintained by the government in Lhasa and represented a genuine physical threat that on occasion has been used. For example, in 1947 Sera Monastery's Che College rebelled against the Regent, and in 1912–13 Drepung's Loseling College together with (Lhasa's) Tengyeling Monastery supported the Chinese Amban against the Dalai Lama. Drepung and its two sister monastic seats also had an important political role by virtue of the presence of their abbots (and former abbots) in Tibet's National Assembly where they had an often-pivotal say on major issues.

The power and influence of monasteries like Drepung also extended to the economic sphere. Economic support for monasteries in the "old society" was extensive, and many owned large tracts of productive land in the form of estates that had been obtained from the state and individual donors. Between 37 and 50 percent of the arable land in Tibet, in fact, was held by monasteries and incarnate lamas. By contrast, only 25 percent of the land was in the hands of the lay aristocracy and about the same was held by the government. The state also provided generous subsidies to select monasteries, funding religious rites such as the annual Great Prayer Festival in Lhasa and the daily morning prayer chanting assemblies in the three monastic seats.

Monasteries and monks, therefore, were integral to Tibetan Buddhism and to Tibetan's perception of the glory of their civilization and state. And as a result of the ideology of mass monasticism, Tibet contained thousands of monasteries and monks. These monasteries, however, varied considerably in size and scope. Some held only five or ten village monks; others contained thousands of monks from all over Tibet as well as Mongolia and India. The focus of this [article], Drepung, exemplifies the latter category.

Drepung in Traditional Tibetan Society: Overview

The largest monastic institution in traditional Tibet was Drepung. Founded in 1416 by Jamyang Chöje and located about five miles west of Lhasa, it was a virtual town housing about ten thousand monks at

the time of the Chinese invasion in 1950–51. It epitomized the institutionalization of mass monasticism in Tibet and was at that time the world's largest monastery.

Drepung was organized in a manner that resembled the segmentary structure of classic British universities like Oxford in that the overall entity, the monastery, was a combination of semiautonomous subunits known as *tratsang*. These are conventionally called "colleges" in the English literature, although there were no schools (with teaching faculties) in the Western sense. In 1959 Drepung consisted of four functioning colleges: Loseling, Gomang, Deyang, and Ngagba. Each was a mini-monastery with thousands of monks, an administrative structure headed by an abbot, and its own rules and traditions. Each was a corporate entity in the sense that it had an identity (a name), owned property and wealth, and had its own internal organization and leadership. The monks came and went over the decades, but the entity and its property endured. A monk's loyalties, in fact, were primarily rooted in his college.

The highest official of a college was the abbot. He held his office for a term of six years and could be renewed for another six-year term. He was appointed by the ruler (the Dalai Lama or in his minority, the regent) from a list containing six or seven ranked nominees submitted by the college in question. The ruler had the final authority over the appointment and could select someone not on the list, although this was rarely done. Nevertheless, power to choose the administrative leadership of colleges was one of the main ways that the Tibetan government maintained control over powerful and potentially unruly monasteries like Drepung. Under the abbot, various officials such as the *gegö* (disciplinary officer) and *nyerba* (economic manager) oversaw specific aspects of monastic life. Also, an "assembly" of the more senior monks periodically met to discuss collegewide issues.

Large monastic colleges were normally subdivided into smaller, named residential units known as *khamtsen*, or residence halls as I shall refer to them. These units, similar to the colleges in terms of administrative structure, consisted of one or more buildings divided into apartments (*shag*) where the monks lived. Residence halls had a strong regional flavor since each *khamtsen* held rights to recruit monks from a specific geographic area or areas. Because great monasteries like Drepung recruited

monks from all over the Tibetan cultural world as well as from non-Tibetan areas such as Mongolia, this system helped to facilitate the initial period of acculturation by situating a new monk in a residence together with others who spoke his dialect or language.

Drepung as a whole functioned as an alliance of colleges. There was no single abbot at the helm. Instead, monasterywide issues were decided by a council made up sometimes by the abbots of the different colleges and sometimes by the current and the former abbots. The monastery as a whole also owned property, and there were several important monasterywide monk stewards whose responsibility was to manage these. There were also monasterywide disciplinary officers.

At the level of the individual monk, Drepung's ten thousand members were divided into two broad categories—those who studied a formal curriculum of Buddhist theology and philosophy and those who did not. The former, known as *pechawa*, or bookish ones, were a small minority, amounting to only about 10 percent of the total monk population. These “scholar monks,” as I shall refer to them, pursued a fixed curriculum that involved approximately fifteen classes or levels (*'dzin-grwa*), each of which took a year to complete (Anon. 1986). This curriculum emphasized learning Buddhist theology by means of extensive formal debating. Like much else in Drepung Monastery, the theological study program was conducted at the college rather than the monastic level. Three of Drepung's four colleges offered such a curriculum (Gomang, Loseling, and Deyang); the other, Ngagba, taught tantric rituals. The scholar monks in Gomang, Loseling, and Deyang met three times a day to practice debating in their respective college's outdoor walled park called a *chöra*, or dharma grove. The curriculum in each college used a slightly different set of texts, although in the end they all covered the same material. Monks pursuing this trajectory started in the lowest class and worked their way up until they were awarded one of several titles or degrees of *geshe* by their college's abbot. The title of *geshe* was sought by both monks and incarnate lamas of the Dalai Lama's Gelugpa sect, including the Dalai Lama himself. Monks came to Drepung from all over the Tibetan Buddhist world to see if they could master the difficult curriculum and obtain the degree of *geshe*. The intellectual greatness

of the Gelugpa sect's monastic tradition was measured by the brilliance of these scholar monks.

The overwhelming majority of common monks—the *tramang* or *tragyü*—however, did not pursue this arduous course and were not involved in formal study. Many could not read much more than one or two prayer books, and some, in fact, were functionally illiterate, having memorized only a few basic prayers. These monks had some intermittent monastic work obligations in their early years but otherwise were free to do what they liked. However, because Drepung did not provide its monks with either meals via a communal kitchen or payments in kind and money sufficient to satisfy their needs, they had to spend a considerable amount of time in income-producing activities. Some monks, therefore, practiced trades like tailoring and medicine, some worked as servants for other monks, some engaged in trade, and still others left the monastery at peak agricultural times to work for farmers.

The reason for the monastery's financial shortfall was not a lack of resources. Drepung, for example, owned 151 agricultural estates and 540 pastoral areas, each of which had a population of hereditarily bound peasant families who worked the monastery's (or college's) land without wages as a *corvée* obligation. Drepung also was heavily involved in money- and grain lending and had huge capital funds with thousands of loans outstanding at any given time. The monastery's inability to fund its monks, therefore, derived primarily from its decisions on how to utilize its income *vis-à-vis* its monks. On the one hand, Drepung allocated a substantial portion of monastic income to rituals and prayer chanting assemblies rather than to monks' salaries; on the other, it did not attempt to restrict the number of monks to the income it had available. Rather, it allowed all to join. Despite a traditional government-set ceiling of 7,700 monks, monasteries like Drepung made no attempt to determine how many monks they could realistically support and then admit only that many. How monks financed their monastic status was, by and large, their own problem.

The monks most affected by the insufficient funding were those who had made a commitment to study Buddhist theology full-time, that is, the scholar monks. They were sorely disadvantaged since they had no time to engage in trade or other income-producing activities because of their heavy

academic burdens. Consequently, they typically were forced to lead extremely frugal lives unless they were able to find wealthy patrons to supplement their income or were themselves wealthy, as in the case of the incarnate lamas. Tales abound in Drepung of famous scholar monks so poor that they had to eat the staple food—*tsamba* (parched barley flour)—with water rather than tea, or worse, who had to eat the leftover dough from ritual offerings (*torma*).

Consequently, in the traditional society monasteries like Drepung (and Sera and Ganden) were full of monks who spent a large part of their time engaged in moneymaking activities. Periodically, some monastic leaders sought to reform this situation and return the monastery to a more otherworldly orientation, but this was not the dominant point of view. The karma-grounded ideology of Tibetan Buddhism saw the enforcement of morality and values as an individual rather than an institutional responsibility. Individuals, monks or otherwise, were responsible for their actions. Depending on the morality of their behavior, actors reaped quantities of “merit” or “demerit,” which in the end interacted to determine the nature of their future rebirths. Monks, by virtue of their commitment to monastic life, especially their forsaking of the binding “this-world” attachment to sex and family life, had elevated themselves to a higher moral-spiritual plane than laymen, and the need of many to engage in secular work to secure subsistence was viewed as secondary in comparison to the extraordinary merit-producing behavioral commitment they had made. Thus it was only in the most serious cases such as heterosexual intercourse that the monastery as an institution felt the need to enforce morality and eliminate those who lapsed.

Consequently, at the time Mao Zedong incorporated Tibet into the new Chinese state in 1951, the ideology and practice of mass monasticism were in full play in Drepung.

Incorporation into the People’s Republic of China

During the first phase of the new Sino-Tibetan relationship—the years from 1951 until the abortive Tibetan uprising of 1959—China’s strategy in political Tibet, today’s Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), focused on gradually winning over the majority of

the Tibetan elite rather than on immediately trying to implement socialist reforms.

Instructions sent by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to the Chinese leaders in Lhasa in mid-1952 regarding the Three Monastic Seats convey the gist of this gradualist policy:

The united front work of the three main monasteries is like other united front work in Tibet. The emphasis should be on the upper hierarchy. We should try to win any of those close to the top of the hierarchy, provided that they are not stubborn running dogs of imperialists, or even bigger bandits and spies. Therefore, you should try patiently to win support among those upper level lamas whom you referred to as those full of hatred to the Hans and to our government. *Our present policy is not to organize people at the bottom level to isolate those at the top.* We should try to work on the top, get their support, and achieve the purpose of building harmony between the masses and us.

The arrival of the Chinese communists in Tibet, therefore, did not change monastic life or the monastery’s ownership of estates and peasants/serfs during the initial period. The abortive uprising in 1959 ended Beijing’s gradualist policy in Tibet, changing overnight all facets of monastic life in Drepung. Beijing now moved to destroy the political, economic, and ideological dominance of the estate-holding elite, including the monasteries.

The overwhelming majority of Drepung monks were not active participants in the Lhasa uprising, although certainly all had great faith in and support for the Dalai Lama. However, a number of monks from Drepung had defended the Dalai Lama’s summer palace and fought in Lhasa. Because of that, Drepung was classified as a rebellious monastery and had all its estates and granaries confiscated without compensation. Similarly, all the loans it had made which were still outstanding were canceled. Chinese accounts state that Drepung at this time had 140,000 tons of grain and 10 million yuan in cash (equal then to U.S. \$5 million) outstanding in such loans. The flow of income to Drepung (in kind and cash) totally ceased.

Monastic life and monastic administrative structure were also fundamentally altered. In the initial months following the uprising, a group of officials called a work team (*las-don ru-khag*) was sent from

Lhasa to take charge of the monastery. They ended up staying continuously in the monastery until the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. These officials immediately terminated the power and authority of the traditional leadership and appointed a new administrative committee selected from among the poorer and “progressive” monks in a manner analogous to what was done in the rest of China years earlier. The new administration was called the Democratic Management Committee (*dmangs-gtso bdag-gnyer u-yon lhan-khang*, henceforth DMC). It has continued to the present.

One of the main initial tasks of the work team (and the new DMC) was determining how monks should be grouped into the various class categories used by the state. Monks involved in the uprising and virtually all the monastery administrators/leaders were classified as “exploiters” and imprisoned or sent to labor camps. The rest of the monks were given several months of “education” in the new socialist ideology, including the need to engage in productive labor. At this time all the monks, and especially the young ones, were encouraged to leave the monastery—to return to their home areas or to join nonmonk work units. The number of monks in Drepung decreased sharply, and by the end of 1959 there were only about four thousand remaining. A Drepung monk described this period: “At first, at this time there was [political] education all day. We were taught things we never heard before like the ‘three antis’ and the ‘two exemptions’ and the ‘three great mountains.’ . . . [How we got food] depended on the wealth of the monks. The poor monks ate together using the food the monastery had amassed in its storerooms, while the better off monks ate in their apartments using their own food supplies. I was among the latter.” After a few months of this political reeducation and reorganization, the remaining monks began to engage in manual labor projects, initially as “volunteers” and then as part of work units. Another monk recalled,

At first we ate the monastery’s food in our own residence halls, but then after many monks were sent off and the total number of monks became much less, the remaining monks gathered together in Loseling College where we ate food together. After about 5–6 months, the monastery’s food stores ran out. However, by then we were all engaged in productive labor so we got food through that work.

At this time only the old monks were [regularly] left in the monastery. All the younger monks were out working on projects. How often we returned to the monastery varied; some returned once a week, some daily. These jobs weren’t permanent postings.

After communal dining at Loseling broke up, we divided into smaller production units that worked and ate together; for example, there was a sewing unit, a masonry unit, a construction unit, a carpentry unit and a firewood collecting unit. Later some of these were again divided into two units. Each unit, therefore, had its own livelihood [i.e., was organized as a collective] and ate together. The *tsamba* was divided among the monks, and the butter was kept jointly and used to make tea for all. The monks ate their *tsamba* separately and took tea together. The older monks who couldn’t work and wouldn’t go home were organized as an “old people’s unit” (*gensogang*) and lived off subsidies from the government.

In 1965, six years after the uprising, one foreign visitor to Drepung reported that only 715 of the 10,000 monks present in Drepung in 1959 remained. The physical shell of Drepung stood and those monks who remained had vows and prayed in their rooms when not working, but the defining institutional religious activities—joint prayer chanting sessions and the *dharma grove* theology curriculum—had ended. The monastery ceased to function as an institution where religious study, debate, and ritual were practiced. But the worst was still to come.

The third, and most devastating, period for Drepung began with the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. It brought an end to the religion practiced by individual laypersons and monks alike. Drepung remained “open” in the sense that monks continued to live there, but the monks were no longer allowed to wear their robes or maintain private altars in their rooms, and all religious acts were now prohibited. At the same time, political struggle sessions attacked religious beliefs and practices as well as former leaders. Lay and monk Tibetans were encouraged and pressured to ridicule and deride religious laws and gods as well as despoil sacred sites. And although Drepung was fortunate in that most of its building were not destroyed during this period (as were so many other Tibetan monasteries), it was no longer a monastery: those who remained were simply former monks living and working in what

used to be a monastery. By the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, the number of monks in Drepung had decreased to only 306, and a number of these were married.

The fourth, or current, period began with the liberalizing decisions made in Beijing in 1978 at the Eleventh Party Plenum. In Lhasa the new policy quickly resulted in the reemergence of “individual” religion, that is, the religious practices performed by individuals. At the same time, a number of temples and shrine rooms were reopened so the public could make religious visits and offerings to deities as in the past. Tibetans responded enthusiastically to the new opportunities and began a host of traditional practices such as circumambulating holy sites. By 1980–81 the shrine rooms in Drepung Monastery were receiving religious visitors from Central Tibet as well as from the ethnic Tibetan areas in Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan provinces daily. However, the revival of monasticism per se did not progress as rapidly as did that of individual religion. . . .

When Drepung’s DMC finally decided in 1981 that the time was right to revive monastic life in an active sense, they also understood that this would be neither easy nor straightforward. It would need the agreement of the government of the TAR. Many officials in Tibet were hostile to this, believing that Tibetan monasteries were an anachronism, that they were unnecessary or even worse, a threat to socialism and the domination of the Communist party. Nothing should be done, they felt, to allow monasteries and lamas to once again function as unifying institutions for the Tibetan masses since this would inevitably give new hope to those most reactionary and hostile to Beijing and foster nationalistic, pro-independence dissidence.

Moreover, the laws governing religious freedom included a number of important limitations to which a “new” Drepung would have to conform. For example, the 1982 Chinese constitution’s definition of religious freedom specifies, “In our country, citizens may believe in religion or disbelieve, but politically they have one thing in common, that is, they are all patriotic and support socialism. . . . The State protects legitimate religious activities, but no one may use religion to carry out counter-revolutionary activities or activities that disrupt public order, harm the health of citizens, or obstruct the educational system of the State . . . [and] no religious affairs may be

controlled by any foreign power.” And there were other important caveats. Because religious freedom was part of the more basic freedom to believe or *not to believe*, the state sought to create a level playing field by prohibiting religious education and recruitment of individuals into the priesthood who were under the age of eighteen.

Religious freedom in China, therefore, was predicated on religious practitioners and organizations accepting the principle of the unity of the nation, eschewing any activities that foster separatism, remaining completely free from foreign control, and not engaging in activities the government deemed “exploitive.” However, whether Tibetan monasteries would actually abide by these rules was uncertain and, given the history of the monks’ opposition to communism and their likely sympathy with the exiled Dalai Lama, entailed a considerable risk.

Despite such dangers, China’s new policy toward Tibet compelled it to permit the process of revival to begin. In 1978–79 Beijing had set out to improve conditions in Tibet and if possible induce the Dalai Lama to return from exile. In particular, it sought to reverse the cultural assimilationist policies of the Cultural Revolution period. . . .

The new Chinese policy made a revival of monastic life feasible but, as mentioned above, did not eliminate the need for the monastery’s leaders (the DMC) to proceed carefully. Drepung’s DMC, as they contemplated how to transform the new Chinese policy into practice, had to make difficult decisions regarding what functioning as a monastery meant in the context of the ideology and values of both the old and the new society. They had to prioritize and structure the revival so as to restore an institution that would both be accepted by Tibetans as authentic and at the same time fall within the purview of China’s definition of religious freedom, that is, would avoid precipitating a government crackdown and renewed suppression. Drepung’s leaders focused initially on two essential aspects of the monastic way of life: collective prayer assemblies and the recruitment and education of new monks.

Unlike tightly structured Christian monasteries, Drepung traditionally had no activities that required the participation of all monks. Whether a monk spent his time praying or studying or sitting in the sun was his own decision. In Tibetan Buddhism, as indicated earlier, individuals were responsible for

their own religious behavior and, via karmic cause and effect, reaped rewards or punishments in their next life based on their decisions in this one. Nevertheless, there were large-scale joint activities that symbolized the monastery as a collectivity. The most important of these were the meetings at which large numbers of monks assembled to chant prayers for the benefit of all sentient beings. Collective chanting sessions lasted several hours, including a break during which the monks were served tea (and sometimes food). These prayer assembly meetings also had direct economic importance traditionally because they were the time when patrons distributed alms to the assembled monks.

In 1980–81, the DMC sought and received permission from the Lhasa Religious Affairs Bureau to begin to hold these prayer chanting sessions on a regular basis. One old monk recalled the first assembly meeting in 1982:

When we got permission, we immediately tried to get the stoves in the monastic kitchen back in shape so we could have the first prayer chanting assembly on the 30th of the fifth lunar month. However, we couldn't manage this so we had to be satisfied with a "dry" assembly [i.e., a prayer assembly at which tea was not served]. We kept on working and quickly got the kitchen operating again so on the festival that commemorates the first sermon of the Buddha on the 4th of the sixth lunar month (Trugpa tsheshi), we held our first full prayer assembly with tea. On that day the DMC sponsored [financed] the tea and gave each of us a small torma religious offering made from tsamba.

From then on, Drepung held prayer chanting assemblies regularly, at first three times a month and then five times a month. In addition, special sessions were held on holidays such as the Great Prayer Festival of the first lunar month.

While this was going on, Drepung sought and received permission to revive a second critical monastic activity—enrolling new (young) monks. It is not surprising, given the energetic revival of individual religion in 1979–81, that there was a revival of interest among some parents, their motives involving the old mix of economic and religious reasons but also a strong new religionationalistic belief that Tibetan religion, the basis of the greatness of the Tibetan nationality, should be revived to its former greatness. Demographically, this was not problematic since the

Chinese government's "one-child policy" had not been implemented in Tibet and rural Tibetans had large families.

Parents seeking to make a son a monk went about this in accordance with the customs of the old society; they sought an older monk (usually a relative or family friend) to serve as the boy's sponsor-guardian (*kegya gegen*) and take the boy in to live with him. Since a foundation of traditional Tibetan monasticism was that monkhood should be available to as many people as possible, it was difficult for older monks to refuse such requests, especially since parents assured them they would provide all the food and clothes their boys needed. Consequently, by 1981 a number of the older monks in Drepung had young boys living in their monastic apartments. These boys took monastic vows. But they were monks without a monastery, for although they were living in Drepung, they were not officially accepted in its monastic rolls.

In the old society, when a guardian monk took a young ward to the abbot of his college, he was invariably admitted and immediately became a "legal" monk in the monastery. In the new society, the situation was different. The DMC, like the college's abbot in the old society, had the authority to select applicants, but now this decision was not final. It had to seek approval from the government, which was reluctant to permit the reemergence of monasteries housing many thousands of monks and thus did not readily give such approval. While the government wanted to try to meet the religious aspirations of Tibetans by permitting Drepung and other formerly great monasteries to reopen, it did not want them to become too large or powerful. Consequently, the young boys who went to live with guardian monks in Drepung did not immediately obtain official status and thus were not eligible to participate in prayer assemblies or to receive alms from patrons. Only official monks could partake of these. They were, therefore, novice monks living in Drepung waiting to be formally admitted.

In 1982 the government gave approval to officially enroll the first such monks and fifteen to twenty of those who were already in residence were entered into the monastic roll. This occurred at the same time that Drepung received permission to begin regular prayer chanting sessions. The "new" Drepung, therefore, emerged at this time.

These successes raised the question of what sort of rules should be established for the new monks. Should all monks be forced either to work for the monastery or to study religious theology, or should monks be permitted to work or not work according to their own wishes? And should monks be allowed to engage in private business as in the old society, or must they only work for the monastery? Basic to such questions was the underlying issue of whether the focus of the monastery should be quantity or quality. Was it better for Drepung to try to maximize the number of monks even if most of these would primarily be engaged in manual labor or business, or should Drepung support fewer monks, most of whom would be engaged in the rigorous study of Buddhist theology?

In the traditional society, the answer to this question was clearly quantity. The ideology of mass monasticism dominated. In the new society, Drepung, as I shall show below, had difficulty supporting even a small number of monks financially, and the new political and social climate opposed allowing monasteries to fill up with monks who neither studied nor worked, or worse, became private businessmen as was typical of pre-1959 Tibet. The issue of shifting the monastic emphasis from quantity to quality, however, was not merely a response to the values of the new society or financial constraints. It also had deep roots in the old society and . . . it was a contentious issue.

. . .

Drepung and Political Dissidence

Like much else in contemporary Tibet, it is difficult to divorce the revival of Buddhism and monasticism from the struggle over the political status of Tibet vis-à-vis China, that is, from what is often referred to as the Tibet Question. This nationalistic conflict is being played out in two major arenas. Abroad, there is the vocal and active independence movement led by the Dalai Lama and his exile government. In Tibet, the center of Tibetan political consciousness is Lhasa (and its environs), the capital of the traditional Tibetan state. There, monks and nuns launched a very visible campaign of active political dissidence beginning in 1987. From Drepung alone, ninety-two monks were arrested for participating in ten antigovernment political demonstrations between 1987 and 1993.

However, at the time the Chinese government liberalized its policy on religion in 1978–80, resolution of the Tibet conflict seemed promising. Beijing had invited the Dalai Lama to send fact-finding delegations to visit Tibet, and the exiles had begun discussions with China aimed at reaching a mutually acceptable solution to the Tibet Question. But this was not to be. The talks stalemated when the gap between the Chinese position emphasizing enhanced cultural autonomy and the exiles' position emphasizing real political autonomy could not be bridged. By the mid-1980s, therefore, the momentum for reconciliation had collapsed and both sides unilaterally pursued policies aimed at improving their position relative to the other.

For the Dalai Lama and his government-in-exile, this meant launching a new political offensive that sought to persuade the United States and Europe to use their economic and political leverage to force concessions from Beijing. At the same time, they sought to counter China's policies aimed at winning over Tibetans within Tibet by conveying to Tibetans there not only that the Dalai Lama was actively working on their behalf in the West but also that his endeavors were successful—that he represented a realistic hope for securing Western assistance to settle the Tibet Question in Tibet's favor.

The key innovation in this strategy was having the Dalai Lama himself carry the exile's political message to the United States and Europe. Prior to this, the Dalai Lama traveled as a religious leader and did not make overtly political speeches. In 1987 there were several important breakthroughs. In June the U.S. House of Representatives adopted a bill that condemned human rights abuses in Tibet, instructed the president to express sympathy for Tibet, and urged China to establish a constructive dialogue with the Dalai Lama. Then, in September, the Dalai Lama made a major visit to the United States during which he presented his first political speech to the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (on 21 September). It was a carefully crafted talk arguing that Tibet had been independent when China invaded it. Specifically, he said, "though Tibetans lost their freedom, under international law Tibet today is still an independent state under illegal occupation." The speech also raised serious human rights charges, referring twice to a "holocaust" inflicted by the Chinese on the Tibetan people.

The Dalai Lama's activities in the United States were widely known and eagerly followed in Lhasa where Tibetans regularly listen to the Chinese-language broadcasts of the Voice of America and the BBC. The Chinese government's media also covered this trip on radio and television, making vitriolic attacks on his visit and views. Among Tibetans in Lhasa the visit was widely taken as confirmation that the tide of history was shifting in Tibet's favor and that the Dalai Lama was on the verge of achieving victory.

At this juncture, a group of about twenty Drepung monks staged an overt political demonstration in Lhasa—the first political demonstration of its type. They did not demonstrate to protest any particular problem Drepung was facing at the time but rather to show Beijing and the West that Tibetans in Tibet support the Dalai Lama and independence. On the morning of 27 September, while the Dalai Lama was still in the United States, they met in Lhasa's central marketplace, the Bargor, unfurled signs that included a handmade Tibetan national flag, and walked around the circular "Bargor" road three times. When nothing happened to them, they marched about a mile down one of the main east-west streets and continued their protest in front of the headquarters of the Tibet Autonomous Region government. At this point they were detained by security forces. Their arrest made news throughout the Western world.

A few days later, on the morning of 1 October, a group of monks from several other monasteries in the area staged a demonstration to show support for the Dalai Lama and the previous monk demonstrators and to demand the latter's release from jail. Police quickly took them into custody in the Bargor and allegedly started beating them. A crowd of Tibetans demanded the release of these monks, and before long this escalated into a full-scale riot. In the end, a number of vehicles and buildings were burned, and anywhere from six to twenty Tibetans were killed when police (including ethnic Tibetan police) fired at the rioters.

Over the next year and a half scores of monk- and nun-led demonstrations occurred, three more of which ended in bloody riots. Martial law was finally declared in 1989 and was not lifted until 1990. In the eight years since then, monk and nun demonstrations have continued, although tight security

measures have prevented them from turning into riots. The political atmosphere is volatile, however, and the danger that some monk- or nun-led incident or protest will precipitate a new riot remains ever-present.

These events rocked Drepung, creating a serious crisis that threatens its viability and future. One of the key negative consequences of the political activism was its inadvertent decimation of Drepung's nascent theological study program. Not only were many of the young monk demonstrators part of the dharma grove program, but the most gifted of Drepung's young scholar monks were involved, arrested, and thus lost to the monastery. Still other young monks have fled to India to join the Dalai Lama and the exile community. For a time, Drepung's dharma grove actually ceased to be used.

The political conflict also negatively affected the government's attitude toward Drepung and other similarly involved monasteries. The risk Beijing took in allowing a monastic revival in Tibet has turned out poorly as monks have become, as many hard-liners in China predicted at the outset of the liberalization, leaders in the nationalistic opposition to Chinese rule in Tibet. Although the principle of religious freedom continued to be espoused, with, of course, the inherent caveats mentioned earlier, and although the government claims it does not hold the monastery responsible for the political protests of individual monks, in reality the government's attitude toward Drepung hardened demonstrably. Monastic requests from Drepung's DMC on a range of issues, such as assistance in renovating the main prayer assembly hall, payments for teachers, and, critically, permission to increase the number of monks, were denied or approved only on a limited basis. At the same time, the government instituted much closer security scrutiny and supervision over Drepung. Moreover, with regard to Tibet in general, these dissident activities have led Beijing to implement a more hard-line policy that minimizes the importance of meeting Tibetans' cultural and religious expectations and maximizes Tibet's economic and political integration with the rest of China.

Equally significant is the negative effect the political activism has had on the morale and purpose of the monks themselves. As the monastery's revitalization gained momentum in the early 1980s there was hope among the older monks that a serious

monastic community could be restored, despite Tibet's presence as part of communist China. There was even hope that regular contact with the Drepung Monastery in exile (in India) would ultimately be possible and that lamas from India could participate in Drepung's revival. The initial focus of their attention, therefore, was on how to operationalize a high-quality revitalization—i.e., how to structure finances, education, recruitment, discipline, and so forth—not politics or nationalism. The major escalation of political activity in the mid-1980s challenged this orientation by thrusting nationalistic and political issues onto center stage where they competed head to head with solely religious interests.

Traditionally a monk's primary loyalty was to his monastery/college and Buddhism rather than the state and nation, and great monasteries like Drepung (or even colleges within them) were not reluctant to oppose the Tibetan government. As mentioned earlier, Tengyeling Monastery and Drepung's Loseling College gave support to the Manchu/Chinese Ambans and troops in Lhasa after the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911–12.

The Chinese invasion and incorporation of Tibet into the People's Republic of China in 1951 changed this in important ways. It created a heightened sense of national identity and political purpose among Tibetans, including the monks. Tibetans, whether rich or poor, monk or layman, Easterner or Westerner, now more than ever before defined their identity primarily in terms of political nationalism, as Tibetan *vis-à-vis* the Han Chinese. Defending the religious interests of one's monastery (and religion in general) now was projected to a larger arena where defending Tibet as a nation-state was seen as synonymous with defending and preserving Buddhism against an atheistic enemy. Such feelings intensified after the abortive Tibetan uprising of 1959 when the Chinese government devastated Tibet's proud monastic tradition. Communism and the Chinese state became a hated enemy for all monks.

But history does not stand still, and China's dramatic shift in policy in 1978 ushered in a new chapter in the relations between Tibetan Buddhism and the Chinese state. In Drepung this revival process started in the early 1980s and had begun to gain momentum by the middle of the decade when political issues exploded on the scene. Once some Drepung monks began political dissidence in 1987, all monks

were forced to reassess whether their primary loyalty was to Buddhism and their monastery as in the past or to their nationality and the Dalai Lama. The question facing monks, in essence, was whether the restoration of monasticism and the study of Buddhist theology took precedence over the political struggle to wrest Tibet from Chinese control, and in particular, to support the Dalai Lama.

Every Drepung monk believes in the sanctity of the Dalai Lama and wants him to return to Tibet, and virtually all support his efforts to secure Tibetan independence. Nevertheless, some monks believe these efforts are not only unrealistic but also harmful to the monastery and the revival of religion. The DMC, for example, has repeatedly tried to persuade the monks that Drepung's interests are best served by focusing their efforts on religious study and eschewing political activism. Some senior monks have similarly tried to persuade their young wards to reject political activism because of the personal and monastic dangers. However, by and large, such efforts were not successful. Most Drepung monks believed that the Dalai Lama was moving to free Tibet with U.S. assistance, and there was a broad consensus that this was a time for monks—who have no wives and children to worry about—to sacrifice themselves for the good of the Dalai Lama, religion, and Tibet. The intense distrust of the motives of the atheistic communist state toward Buddhism and the caveats and constraints Drepung operates under made it easy for some monks to conclude that Buddhism cannot flourish in China despite the new liberalism. Accepting the risks entailed in openly demonstrating against the Chinese state, therefore, for some monks became not only a nationalistic-political activity but also, by extrapolation, a religious one. Moreover, for the young monk activists, the traditional notion of acceptable political action to defend religion was infused with new meanings from the West in the form of the incorporation of notions of universal human rights. Such new constructs, however, were not shared by all monks, some of whom, as mentioned above, value the efflorescence of Buddhism in Tibet above abstract universal values such as democracy and human rights, neither of which, of course, existed in the traditional society.

In any case, Beijing has chosen not to close the monastery, and monastic life goes on with the leaders of Drepung trying to make the best of the situation,

despite deep-seated frustration at their inability to control the events in which they are mired.

...

Conclusion

The central place of monks and monasteries in Tibetan society made it inevitable that the new era of religious freedom in China would produce powerful pressures to revive Tibet's monastic tradition. The freedom to practice religion as individuals was clearly not enough for Tibetans, and local communities throughout Tibet have rebuilt or repaired traditional monasteries, usually without government financial help. In Lhasa the desire to restore famous monastic centers like Drepung to their former greatness was especially strong. By representing the sophistication of Tibetan culture, monasteries like Drepung bolstered Tibetans' cultural identity and fostered ethnic pride vis-à-vis that of the politically dominant Chinese. And so, as the changes implicit in China's new rules became understood and believed in Drepung, a slow monastic revival commenced. The first major step in this process occurred in 1982 when new youths were admitted and regular collective prayer chanting assemblies started.

The five years following those events were characterized by a period of "institutional revival." The DMC and senior monks set out to operationalize a new monastic community and culture, making difficult decisions about how to finance, educate, and discipline the new monks. Through a delicate, and not entirely conscious, process of adaptation, traditional values, customs, and beliefs were restored, in some cases intact and in other cases with modifications and innovations. The result was an emergent monastic social matrix that was sociopolitically compatible with the realities of the current socialist society yet culturally authentic. From a baseline of zero religion at the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, Drepung was able to revive a practicing monastic community with new young monks, regular prayer chanting sessions, and a large theological study program.

This process of institutional reconstruction changed dramatically in the fall of 1987 when open political demonstrations by monks ushered in a new era—the period of "religiopolitical confrontation." Monks (and nuns) suddenly leaped to the forefront

of active political opposition and received world-wide attention and plaudits. The monastic revival had become politicized, at least in the regions in and around Lhasa.

This new religious militancy challenged all monks and nuns, confronting them with an emotionally powerful alternative to quietly (apolitically) working within China to rebuild their monastic tradition; that is, it presented them the emotionally compelling alternative of participating in the nationalistic struggle to free Tibet from Chinese rule. Feelings of anger and hatred toward the Communist party and the Chinese, of course, were present before the first demonstration, but after it, Drepung's monks consciously had to choose between conflicting loyalties—Buddhism or the Tibetan nation—or, as some who chose the latter course did, to eliminate the cognitive dissonance by trying to redefine the interests of Buddhism as being best served by political activism.

All of this placed Beijing in a very difficult situation. Although it is still committed to a policy of religious freedom in Tibet (so long as its political caveats are adhered to) and does not officially hold Drepung responsible for the acts of individual monks, it is also committed to stop monks from continuing to fan the flames of political dissidence. Since intensified "political education" in Drepung has heretofore not succeeded in stopping activism, how Beijing will move to ensure this without simply closing down the monastery is not at all clear. It is reasonable to assume that the government's tolerance of monasteries like Drepung will decrease in the coming years if monastic leaders do not work out some way to stop the political protests of the monks.

This scenario is understood by Drepung's leaders and is creating an underlying atmosphere of frustration and depression. Despite the laudatory objective gains in reviving their monastic community, most of Drepung's leaders are disheartened about the future. Cut off from fellow monks and lamas in India, under scrutiny from a government they consider hostile (or at best unfriendly), unable to convince current monks to eschew political militancy (or prevent them from doing so), they find themselves embroiled in constant political tension and conflict they cannot control. And some, undoubtedly, have doubts whether they should be trying to control this. Their successes, no matter how impressive, are always just

a demonstration away from disaster. There is a gnawing fear, moreover, that the continued involvement of monks in demonstrations is setting the stage for the worst of all outcomes—that the Tibet Question will not be settled in Tibet’s favor and the monastery will be destroyed.

The revival of Drepung Monastery seventeen years after liberalization, therefore, has been somewhat mixed. On one level, the progress has been impressive; yet on another, the gains seem very unstable. At the heart of this contradiction, like so much else in contemporary Tibet, is the Tibet Question.

The older monks love their monastery and want to see it thrive again as a great center of Tibetan religion. Most laypersons feel the same. Consequently, despite their pessimism and apprehension, the monastery’s leaders will certainly continue to work to adapt the basic elements of the monastic way of life to whatever obstacles the unpredictable national and international sociopolitical environments throw in its way. But, whatever happens, Drepung’s leaders are unlikely to be able to return to the more placid times of the period of institutional revival unless some major breakthrough in the struggle over the Tibet Question occurs. With the monks, especially the younger monks, torn between nationalistic and religious ideals and loyalties, the future of Drepung is uncertain and unpredictable. Only time will tell whether Drepung will move into a third, more positive phase of revival in which it regains most of its former greatness, or whether monk-led confrontations will escalate and the state will decide to crack down harshly on the monastery and reverse most of the gains of the past decade and a half. The leaders of Drepung, therefore, find themselves trapped between two forces they cannot control, and while they hope that Drepung can weather the storm, they are far from optimistic.

Epilogue

The political fears mentioned above materialized in the summer of 1996 when Beijing launched a major new “patriotism education” campaign aimed at enhancing its control over the most visible source of opposition—the monasteries. As part of its general “get tough” policy in Tibet, this campaign sought not merely to educate monks on the “proper,” apolitical, role of religion in China, but more important, to

demonstrate to monks that if they did not adhere to these rules they could not remain in the monastery. The campaign sought to take steps to reduce the danger that monasteries like Drepung would continue to function as breeding grounds for political opposition. The vehicle for enforcement was what is known in China as a “work team,” that is, a group of officials pulled together from various government offices and sent to carry out a political campaign. In Drepung’s case, more than a hundred officials arrived there in summer 1996 and remained in residence until roughly the end of that year.

The ideological brief of the work team is illustrated by a document handed out to the monks of Drepung’s sister monastery, Sera, at the start of the parallel campaign there:

The time has arrived for patriotic education to take place in Sera monastery by means of Comprehensive Propaganda Education [*gcig sdud kyis dril bsgrags slab gso*]. The purpose of carrying out this education session is to implement the Party’s policy on religion totally and correctly, to stress the management of religious affairs according to law, and to initiate efforts for the harmonious coexistence between the religious and socialist societies. It is also aimed at creating the thought of patriotism and implanting in the masses of the monks the view of the government, the political view and the legal view. The campaign is also for the purpose of educating [monks] to oppose completely any activities aimed at splitting the motherland.

Work teams had been sent to Drepung on a number of occasions in the past so the presence of this one in Drepung itself was not exceptional. However, the task of the 1996 work team differed from previous ones in that its brief included vetting each monk with respect to his political views and his future acceptability as a monk.

The work team sent to Drepung interviewed monks and led sessions on topics such as Chinese law, Tibetan history, patriotism, and the government’s view that the Dalai Lama and his Western supporters were playing a negative role in trying to split Tibet from China. All monks were required to study political education materials that spelled out these views, attend classes that went over the official positions, and convey their attitudes about these issues verbally and in writing.

In keeping with the strident rhetoric of the new hard-line policy in Tibet, the work team directly attacked the Dalai Lama, removing his photographs from the monastery's chapels and temples (and other public venues) while asserting that the monks must denounce the Dalai Lama as a duplicitous "splittist." The harsh personal attacks on the Dalai Lama, however, assaulted Tibetan ethnic and religious sensibilities and precipitated a major test of wills in Drepung (and in many other monasteries).

Faced with the necessity of attacking the Dalai Lama by name and agreeing to historical views and "facts" they considered untrue, many monks dug in their heels and, in a variety of ways, refused to participate in what was commonly perceived as a throwback to the mass political campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s, even if this stance meant having to leave the monastery. A few monks expressed their protest by openly challenging the veracity of the work team's facts at public sessions. Four such monks, it is said, ultimately were sent to reform-though-labor camps when they repeatedly refused to recant. A larger number of Drepung monks—about sixty—adopted a less confrontational method to protest. They chose to leave the monastery on their own accord rather than accept the campaign's demands. Some of these quietly fled to India, producing the first reports of the campaign abroad. One very old monk, it is said, became so distraught by the thought of either leaving the monastery or denouncing the Dalai Lama that he committed suicide.

Most monks, however, were willing to accept—at least on the surface—the basic ideological "points" of the campaign to remain in the monastery, but they drew a line with regard to the demand that they comment negatively about the Dalai Lama's political persona. A meeting of work team members with Drepung's elderly monks illustrates the depth of this opposition. At this meeting, three or four monks rose and said emotionally, tears in their eyes, that as simple monks they knew nothing of the Dalai Lama's politics but only his religious stature, and this they could not oppose. Consequently, if the work team insisted that they speak against the Dalai Lama, they would have to leave Drepung and go begging in the streets of Lhasa. Comments like this coming from monks who were basically nonpolitical and had lived most of their lives in the monastery had a powerful impact on the work team's thinking, leading to

a reconsideration of the campaign's anti-Dalai Lama component. The campaign had sought to cleanse the monastery of politically unreliable monks and convince the rest that it was in their and their monastery's best interests to dissociate themselves from political dissidence, not purge Drepung of virtually all senior monks. Consequently, it was decided that trying to force monks to criticize the Dalai Lama directly would be counterproductive, and this was removed from the list of "conditions" the monks had to accept publicly, leaving only the following items: to cherish the nation and cherish religion; to oppose separatism/splittism; to accept the correct ideology of the Chinese Communist party; to respect the motherland's unity; to work to continue the socialist system and to obey the orders of one's superior officials. Monks who "passed" the political education program by stating their acceptance of these conditions were reaffirmed as official Drepung monks and issued a new registration document (in the form of a red handbook with their name, photo, birthdate, etc.).

Although it is easy to dismiss the rhetorical "parroting" the Socialist Education campaign generated as a kind of political charade that changed no one's views, the 1996 campaign was not limited to rhetoric. It also initiated a number of real structural changes. One such "reform" was the addition of a new criterion for official membership as a Drepung monk—proper age. As mentioned earlier, the laws of the People's Republic of China prohibited the recruitment of monks and priests under the age of eighteen. Religious freedom in Chinese law meant the freedom to believe or not to believe, and the party from early on felt it was important to prevent young children from being indoctrinated into a religious life before they had the maturity to make an informed judgment. Nevertheless, exceptions were made, most notably in Tibet where the great emphasis Tibetans placed on child recruitment was tacitly respected by not enforcing the minimum age rule. The 1996 campaign reversed that policy, the government announcing that Tibetan monks must now be at least eighteen. And it implemented this standard, albeit with a few concessions, the most important of which were that for the duration of the campaign the minimum age for the monks already present in Drepung would be reduced to fifteen, and even younger monks were admitted in a few hardship

cases involving those who were orphans with no home to return to or child monks whose coresident guardian monk was so old or infirm that he depended on the young monk. In the future, however, the government decreed that new monks would have to be at least eighteen years of age.

The work team also eliminated the hundreds of unofficial monks who had been residing in Drepung at the start of the campaign “waiting” to be admitted officially. These youths, frustrated and angry at the government’s refusal to allow them to become official Drepung monks, were clearly a fertile breeding ground for political dissent. They were eliminated in two ways. The underage monks (numbering between 80 and 100) were sent home with no political prejudice or stigma attached to this expulsion. They were told to enter secular schools and reapply for admission if they wished when they reached the age of eighteen. The remainder of the older “waiting” monks (numbering more than 160) were officially admitted into the monastery, increasing Drepung’s size by about 30 percent to 706 official monks. This number constituted Drepung’s new official maximum size, although the number of resident monks was actually higher since about eighty unofficial “visiting” monks from outside the TAR continued to live and study in Drepung as in the past. To prevent the reemergence of a new cohort of “waiting” monks, older monks were warned not to allow nonofficial monks to live with them regardless of their age.

Equally significant were changes made in the administration of Drepung. The government tightened its supervision over the monks by replacing the monk-staffed Democratic Management Committee with a new committee called the “Management Committee” (*do dam u yon lhan khang*), which included secular cadres who lived in the monastery along with monks. The presence of these lay cadres in the monastery has given the government important firsthand control over the monastery’s day-to-day operational decisions. Some changes were also made in monk administrative personnel; the former monk head of the Democratic Management Committee, for example, was replaced with another monk, as was the former disciplinary official, the *gegö*.

The 1996 campaign also brought about a series of lesser changes in the life of Drepung. A number of the major monastic economic enterprises were

converted to the “responsibility” system, the monks working for these having to guarantee the monastery a fixed annual “lease fee.” For example, the monastery’s store has to guarantee to pay 90,000¥ a year to the monastery, and the restaurant, 80,000¥. Anything these enterprises earn above this key can keep, but it is interesting to note that the monks operating these have pledged that they will only take a salary equal to the salary of other working monks (regardless of how much profit they generate) since as monks they have no desire to become rich.

From another direction, Drepung’s income suffered a severe blow in 1997 when its most revered spiritual leader, Gen Lamrim, died. Overnight the monks lost the several hundred thousand yuan that his biannual public religious teachings generated, as well as his spiritual leadership. The increases in income from implementing the “responsibility” system will not make up for this loss.

Changes were also made in Drepung’s school for younger monks. In 1996 the curriculum was expanded to include Chinese and English, and the school was established as a full six-year primary school. In July 1997 the school enrolled 178 monks. The content of the dharma grove educational program was not altered, but a formal ceiling was set at 230 full-time monks (i.e., 33% of the total number of Drepung monks). These scholar monks continued to receive salaries to support themselves while they studied; the advanced scholar monks receive 7¥ per day, the middle level 5¥ per day, and the newer ones (those admitted in 1996) 2.5¥ per day. Monks from outside the TAR were still permitted to study in the dharma grove, although they did not receive salaries from the monastery.

The 1996 monastery rectification campaign reflects the government’s new hard-line strategy in Tibet, one characteristic of which is less conciliation toward ethnic culture, as well as its frustration with the monks’ hostility and political activism. However, although the campaign was launched with a torrent of tough rhetoric and initially seemed likely to marginalize monasteries like Drepung, in the end its results were somewhat equivocal. Rather than drastically scale back the number of monks, the government again offered up its standard religious compromise—if you concentrate on religion and eschew political dissidence, we will permit you to stay as monks and allow monasticism to develop—and

it actually allowed Drepung to increase by more than 30 percent despite the fact that the monks would not denounce the Dalai Lama. However, the campaign also revealed clearly to the monks that the government will no longer tolerate monasteries like Drepung functioning as centers of political and nationalistic opposition and that this was more than empty rhetoric—it was now ready to intervene and forcibly alter elements of monastic life to prevent this.

The future of monasteries like Drepung, therefore, more than ever depends on the monks' acceptance of the government's separation of religion and political dissidence, that is, the government's demand that monks devote themselves to their religion and eschew all antigovernment political activity. So

while Drepung can continue to try to train a new generation of scholar monks, the government has made it clear that it will not tolerate the monastery being used as a breeding ground for political dissidence and, of course, that resistance is futile and counterproductive.

Drepung's future, therefore, remains uncertain and precarious since it is impossible to predict how its monks will respond to future vagaries of the Tibet Question, in particular, to events outside of China. The Chinese government's attempt to persuade (and/or intimidate) Drepung's monks to delink religion from nationalistic politics reached a new plateau of intensity in 1996 but did not truly resolve the fundamental conflict of many at Drepung between their political aspirations and their religious loyalties.

Pilgrimage and Its Influence on West African Islam

James Steel Thayer

Travel to sacred places has been a key feature of many religions, and it serves a variety of functions. In many ways akin to ritual, pilgrimage is spiritually fulfilling to individuals but also can unite participants, renew and solidify their beliefs, and—as Thayer shows—bring pilgrims into contact with new ideas from far away, with profound effects. One of the most significant examples of pilgrimage is the hajj, the journey to Mecca that is required of every Muslim at least once in his or her life. Until recently, the hajj required long and difficult travel, yet the pilgrimage has been an important way of disseminating Islamic learning.

In this article, anthropologist James Steel Thayer takes a historical perspective to show how Muslims in West Africa have been affected by participation in the hajj over the past 1,000 years. Because during certain historical periods West Africa was isolated from the Middle East, the region was often cut off from Islam as it was practiced closer to its origins and its most holy sites. Thayer argues that the pilgrimage allowed periodic renewal and reform in West African approaches to Islam, as pilgrims took back ideas from the Maghrib (North Africa), Egypt, and the Hijaz (the region of Saudi Arabia where the cities of Mecca and Medina are located). Today, more people than ever are able to take part in the pilgrimage, with stays of perhaps just a couple of weeks in Saudi Arabia. To Thayer, this suggests a changing function for the pilgrimage, with more emphasis on the fulfillment of individual religious obligations and a lessening of the pedagogical functions, which have been taken up instead by educational institutions.

Note that, in this article, “the Sudan” refers to the region of sub-Saharan West Africa, not the modern Republic of Sudan.

Islam is a religion that encourages and even requires certain forms of wandering or travel. The best known is the *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca that takes place every year and is required of every Muslim

once in his life if he is financially and physically capable of it.

The Islamic pilgrimage is a religious practice central to Islam but has its origin in pre-Islamic Arabia. The city of Mecca and its environs (especially the plain of ‘Arafat) had served as the sites of shrines and pilgrimage long before the lifetime of Muhammad the Prophet (c. A.D. 570–632). During the traditional month of pilgrimage in pre-Islamic times, many different tribal groups came from all over the Arabian peninsula to participate in religious rituals in the western part of the peninsula (called

“Pilgrimage and Its Influence on West African Islam,” by James Steel Thayer, in *SACRED JOURNEYS: THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF PILGRIMAGE*, ed. by Alan Morinis, 1992, pp. 170–187. Copyright © 1992 by Alan Morinis. Reproduced with permission of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., Westport, CT.

the Hijaz). This assemblage was possible only if these warlike and often feuding tribes could come and go in peace, so the month of pilgrimage (along with the months preceding and following it) was a month of peace. Warring, feuding, and violence were proscribed during this time, and no weapons could be carried in the pilgrimage territory. In addition to the religious activities of the Hijaz, large fairs were associated with the pilgrimages, and merchants from all over the peninsula assembled to sell their wares to the pilgrims in Mecca.

The pilgrimage was continued in an altered state under the leadership of Muhammad. Muhammad himself, after the submission of Mecca to his rule and to the religion of Islam (A.D. 628), purified the Meccan shrines of their pagan elements and consecrated the sites to Allah, the one true God of Islam. Many of the ancient customs were banned, and other pre-Islamic rituals and peregrinations were given new Islamic interpretations. For example, the *Ka'ba* was now interpreted as the structure built by Abraham. The Prophet led the pilgrimage several times, thus publicly instituting and validating the rituals of the Islamic pilgrimage for all time. The genius of the institution of the *hajj* can be seen not only in the fact that it occurs at a specific time every year but also in the fact that the ritual actions of the pilgrims, from the donning of the pilgrim robes to the final circumambulations of the *Ka'ba*, are carefully laid down and specified from the life of the founder himself. This exactness provides a rich sense of historical continuity and a concrete expression of the unity of Muslims the world over.

The *hajj* is one of the so-called five pillars of Islam (the others being the confession of faith, fasting during the month of Ramadan, prayer, and alms-giving). The *hajj*, because of the personal sacrifice and traditional difficulty involved in making the journey, has always been regarded as an honor and the high point in the life of any Muslim who succeeds in this venture. Any Muslim who has made the *hajj* has the right to bear the title *hajji* (pilgrim). In many parts of the Muslim world, the departure to, and return from, the pilgrimage are marked by special services and celebrations by the pilgrim's family and community.

One aspect of the importance of the *hajj* is reflected in the numbers of people who participate.

Before the modern era of widespread air travel, the numbers of pilgrims were usually in the tens of thousands. Besides the arduous and often lengthy journey to Mecca, epidemics among the pilgrims often reduced their number and discouraged others from undertaking the *hajj*. Today, however, with better conditions and organization, over a million Muslims travel every year to Saudi Arabia to participate in the annual pilgrimage.

The spiritual and intellectual impact of the *hajj* is realized in different ways. Through participation in the pilgrimage rituals, the pilgrim increases his piety or devotion to God and his fidelity to the teachings and practices of Islam. Further, by coming into contact with Muslims from all over the world, his sense of participation in, and belonging to, the *'ummah* (community of the faithful) is increased and strengthened. In some cases the pilgrim may be fired with zeal to preach Islam in his native country, which might be noted for the imperfection of the practice of Islam or the half-hearted commitment of the believers.

The thesis of this chapter deals with the impact of the *hajj* for the Muslims who made the pilgrimage to Mecca from West Africa. Islam was brought to West Africa by means of the Arab and Berber traders who came south across the Sahara Desert from North Africa. The new religion became the cult of the royal and noble classes, and from the twelfth century onward there are records of Muslims (both rich nobles and their Muslim *'ulama*, scholars) making the pilgrimage to Mecca. Except for these pilgrims, there was almost no contact between the great centers of Islam in Egypt, Arabia, and the Middle East with the territories of the Western Sudan, separated as they were by that sea of sand, the Sahara Desert, a desert approximately the size of the continental United States. These pilgrims served throughout history as the vehicles for communicating the ethos and teachings of the Arabian and North African theological, spiritual, and reform movements. Because of their prestige as pilgrims and their strong relationship to the secular powers, these pilgrims were in a position to institute religious reforms in West African societies on their return from the *hajj*. With the loss of political cohesion in the savannah area after 1591, the relationship of the pilgrim to the general society was altered. The function of pilgrims was altered

once again during the era of the *jihads*¹ (1700–1885) and the colonial era. A further, significant change in the role of the pilgrim has occurred during the modern, post-colonial era. In other words, the pilgrimage and the pilgrim have served different functions for West African Islam over time, and this chapter investigates these different functions and the reasons for them.

Because of the time depth involved, this chapter is necessarily historical in nature. To many people it still comes as something of a surprise to learn that the history of many peoples in sub-Saharan Africa can be traced to the tenth or eleventh centuries. Arab historians took a lively interest in West Africa, and the writings of al-Bakri, ibn Battuta, and others provide a rich and informative narrative. In time, some African Muslims became fluent in Arabic, and their writings, such as those of the schools at Timbuktu or of the *jihadist* Uthman dan Fodio, provide insights into the nature of Islam throughout the centuries. My own field research among the Susu people of Sierra Leone and Guinea focused on problems of religion and social organization, but the recent increase in the number of people making the pilgrimage to Mecca drew my attention to the whole subject of the pilgrimage, particularly to its forms and influence in West Africa.

The interest in pilgrimage as a theoretical problem has been increasing in recent times. Victor Turner (1979) and others (Geertz 1968; Eickelman and Piscatori 1990) have greatly expanded our understanding of pilgrimage, particularly with regard to its symbolic dimensions and the ways in which its rituals and symbols affect and transform the pilgrim. While fully appreciating the contributions of writers like Turner, I have a somewhat different emphasis. In researching this chapter, I saw clearly that, beyond whatever effects the pilgrimage may have had on individuals, it had far-reaching consequences for the Muslim societies of West Africa. Inasmuch as

pilgrims came into prolonged contact with Arabic society in Egypt and Arabia, they were influenced sufficiently by developments in Arabian Islamic society, thought, or spirituality that many of them sought to reform West African Islam to make it conform more closely to the Arabian model. The pilgrimage, then, served primarily a didactic or reformative function within the context of West African Islam, and the reader is invited to compare and contrast the evidence and conclusions of this chapter with other ethnographic or historical examples of pilgrimage, either within Islam or within other religious traditions.

West Africa, unlike North Africa or East Africa, is isolated from the Middle East. There was an unbroken line of conquest that united Arabia with North Africa, from Egypt to Morocco and up into Spain. Even with initial difficulties from the fickle Berbers and political differences with the indigenous peoples (Cooley 1972: Chapters 1, 2), Islam took root among these people as Christianity, apparently, never did. More significantly, there was a slow “arabization” of the peoples and cultures of North Africa. Not only did many of the native peoples adopt Arabic as their native language (including the Moors—who speak the Hassani dialect of Arabic—as far west and south as Mauritania), but some Arab tribes contributed to this cultural transformation by actual immigration into North Africa and the Sahara—Arab tribes migrated as far south as southern Chad,² and parts of Algeria, Tunis, Libya, Morocco, and the northern part of the present-day Republic of the Sudan have substantial populations of Arabs.

In East Africa, the situation was slightly different. Because of the existence of Christian Nubian kingdoms until the fourteenth century, the expansion of Islam southward (overland) from Egypt was blocked (Trimingham 1964: 37). The Arabs, however, had a navy and a sizable merchant marine fleet, and exploration, trade, and settlement soon began to take place from Somalia all the way south to Tanzania and Madagascar. For various reasons, Islam did not spread inland but remained the religion of the coastal peoples. Arab and Persian traders plied their

1. *Jihad*, derived from the Arabic word meaning to strive for, means, in its religious context, to strive or struggle for the cause of God and Islam. Although *jihad* can be interpreted in moral, political, or economic terms, it has most frequently been understood as a military campaign waged to defend the borders of the *dar al-Islam* or to propagate Islam among unbelievers who refuse to accept it.

2. These were the Shuwa Arabs of the southern Chad–northern Nigeria region.

trade up and down the coast. Occasionally traders would settle and marry native women and live the rest of their lives in one of these trading ports (this hybrid race along the coast was called in the local dialect *Swahili*, coastal dwellers), but they were in no sense cut off from Arabia and Persia. Ships traveled to and fro constantly, and even when these Afro-Arab settlements coalesced into city-states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, just as often as not they requested their rulers to come from Arabia or Persia (Trimingham 1964: 52).

In any study of the spread of Islam, the influence of traders as missionaries of Islam is crucial, from the earliest days up to the present. Any number of well-known authors (Trimingham 1962 and 1964; Kaba 1974; Levzion 1980) have pointed out the influence that Muslim traders have had in the spread of Islam throughout West Africa, principally through the influence they exerted on (and often through alliances subsequently formed with) the local ruling houses. With regard to this chapter, it is clear that pilgrimage would hardly have been possible without the routes and caravans of traders. My contention, however, is that, during much of the history of Islam in West Africa, the pilgrims themselves, by virtue of their royal or religious status, transmitted from Egypt and Arabia much of the thought, spirituality, or spirit of reform that they learned during their travels or their stay in the Middle East. While traders may have been the carriers of popular Islam, these pilgrims—kings or nobles or religious savants—were often those who were strongly impressed by the example or reforms of Islam in its “pure” form, that is, as found among Muslims in the Holy Places. Further, because of the pilgrims’ high social status, they were able to bring about changes in Islamic belief and practice in their homelands in ways that traders never could.

The history of Islam in West Africa is entirely different from that in other parts of Africa because of the great sea of sand that separates North Africa from the Sudan.³ The Sahara is one of the world’s

largest and most awesome deserts. Even with pack animals like camels, well-adapted to the climate, it has been estimated that the trip from northern Nigeria to the nearest seaport on the Mediterranean took from seventy to ninety days (Boahen 1963: 356), and this estimate assumes that there were no calamities such as sickness among the animals or humans. There has always been a high mortality rate among those who travel the Sahara. For Africans, the great fluctuations in temperature between the heat of the day and the cold of the night often brought on fever or cough. Also, the unpredictable and fierce sandstorms of the Sahara have literally buried caravans. Besides these dangers, many people and even whole caravans perished because well-known water holes and oases dried up periodically and unpredictably (Boahen 1963: 354–55).

In spite of these hazards and hardships, trade between North Africa and West Africa has been going on at least since 1000 B.C. (Boahen 1963: 350–51). With the introduction of the camel into the region around the beginning of the Christian era, trade to and from North Africa increased steadily, reaching its height from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries (Boahen 1963: 349–50). Gold, ivory, slaves, salt, dyes, and kola nuts were taken from the Sudan. Indeed, by the fourteenth century ibn Khaldun reports that in one caravan 12,000 camels went forth from Cairo and were bound for the kingdom of Mali in West Africa (Trimingham 1962: 72).

In the latter part of the seventh century of the Christian era, the Arab Muslims had brought all of the Maghrib under their domination. Within a short time Arab and Berber Muslims also took over the caravan trade from the Maghrib to the Sudan. Because the traders were few in number, they did not effect much in the way of islamization of the Sudanese. In 1076, however, the Muslim Almoravids of Morocco subdued the kingdom of Ghana (not to be confused with the present state of Ghana, but rather a kingdom in the Senegal-Mauritania region). Two things are noteworthy of this conquest. The first is that when the Almoravids arrived in the capital of Ghana, they found that Islam was already present there as the religion of the traders (Trimingham 1962: 27–28, also 31, 53). In fact, reserved for the Muslims was a quarter of the city, complete with mosque, *madrassa* (school), and *imams* (prayer leaders). The

3. The word *Sudan* in this sense is not to be understood as the modern Republic of the Sudan but rather to the area south of the Sahara and, unless otherwise noted, to the area north of the tropical forest zone. Primarily, in this chapter the word will be used to mean sub-Saharan West Africa.

second fact is that the royal family of Ghana, along with some of the nobles, accepted Islam at the time of the conquest. In Ghana and in succeeding empires members of the ruling class came to embrace Islam as their own religion (although, in their official capacity, they often had to perform other non-Islamic rites, such as rites of veneration for the royal ancestors), but Islam did not become the religion of the masses. Specialists were trained who ran the schools and observed the Islamic rituals, but besides this “clerical” class and the nobility, Islam did not make much of an impact on the religious beliefs or practices of the masses (Works 1976: 6).

This elitist character of West African Islam continued into the following centuries, and the pattern of Islamic allegiance and practice was followed by the empire of Mali, which succeeded Ghana as the principal power of West Africa in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. J. Spencer Trimingham quotes ibn Khaldun, who writes, “The first of their Mali kings to join Islam was Baramandana who made the pilgrimage, an example followed by his successors” (1962: 62). The most famous Malian ruler to make the pilgrimage was Mansa Musa, who went to Mecca in 1324 with a retinue of 6,000 slaves, servants, and followers. According to historical sources and contemporary accounts, he was fabulously rich, carrying with him so much gold that when his party arrived in Cairo, they created a fiscal crisis by flooding the market and thus devaluing the price of gold throughout the city. The Egyptian merchants were quick to seize the advantage, however, and inflated their prices so that the Africans spent more than even they could afford. Mansa Musa and his retinue ran up large debts, and on the return trip they were accompanied by a good number of merchants who went with them to collect on the king’s debts from him back in Mali. On his return trip Mansa Musa also brought with him Arab poets and adventurers (Trimingham 1962: 65). In addition, this pilgrimage apparently involved serious discussions for Mansa Musa, for he learned in Cairo that Islam does not allow the taking of free Muslim women as concubines. His pilgrimage took almost three years to complete, and it is noteworthy that Arabs were interested enough in this remote area of the Islamic world that a good number of writers

and adventurers accompanied Mansa Musa back to his kingdom. Besides Baramandana and Mansa Musa, two other emperors of Mali made the *hajj*—Mansa Ule (reigned c. 1260–1270) and Sakura (reigned c. 1290–1300). The latter was murdered on his return from Arabia.

The early period of Islam in West Africa culminated with the rise of the Songhay Empire (1493–1591). As in Mali, one of the emperors, Askia Muhammad, made a pilgrimage well-known to Arab chroniclers. The founder of the Songhay Askia dynasty (*askiya* is a title), Muhammad Ture ibn Abu Bakr, went to Mecca accompanied by a large number of important people from the administrative and scholarly “classes” of his empire, gave 1,000 gold dinars as alms in the holy city, and built a hostel for African pilgrims (Trimingham 1962: 98). It might be mentioned that he was not the only West African monarch to build hostels for his countrymen on pilgrimage. One monarch of the kingdom of Kanem-Bornu (in the northern Nigeria–southern Chad region) built, as early as 1242, a Maliki *madrasa*-hotel in Cairo for the comfort and instruction of Kanembu pilgrims (Trimingham 1962: 115).

There is every indication that these pilgrims, although a mere trickle of the population of West Africa, came into contact with important and influential Muslims in Arabia and Egypt. Muhammad Ture ibn Abu Bakr, mentioned above, is said to have met and talked with prominent reformers in Mecca such as Abd al-Rahman al-Suyuti and al-Majhili; this latter savant initiated one pilgrim, ‘Umar ibn al’Bakka’i of the Kunta tribe, who was to become, in Trimingham’s words, “the propagator of Qadiriyya in the Sahel” (Trimingham 1962: 98n).⁴ He himself is said to have met with the caliph and to have been installed as caliph(?) (*amil? wakil?*) of Songhay by the sharif of Mecca, but this story is highly suspect (al-Naqar 1972: 21–25). On the basis of his conversations with the jurist al-Siyuti, he instituted reforms regarding slaving within the empire after he returned to West Africa. Indeed, Sufism spread rapidly into the Sudanic region because of the pilgrims and the traders who came from the Maghrib. Many Sufis,

4. Qadiriyya is one of the largest of the Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqa*) in Africa.

in the pre-Wahhabi period,⁵ chose to settle in Mecca or Medina, and they undoubtedly came into contact with many West African pilgrims. “The mystics have spiritualized the *hajj*, and spoken of the importance of the ‘inner pilgrimage,’ but most of them have performed this duty not only once, but many times. Some of them lived for a certain period in the sacred environment, so that Mecca was always a center where scholars from every part of the Islamic world would meet” (Schimmel n.d.: 155). It must be remembered that the people who went on the *hajj* in this early period were nobility and royalty, but the religious class that served them as scholars and *imams* also accompanied them on the pilgrimage, and this latter group was particularly sensitive to the intellectual and spiritual currents flowing through the Islamic world, and these people, with their royal patrons, were most often the agents of religious revivalistic or reform movement in their native lands (Levtzion 1979: 84). Many of the early royal pilgrims were among the most enthusiastic reformers. In 1048, Yahya b. Ibrahim recruited the Maliki scholar Abdullahi b. Yasin to instruct his people in the true religion. His rigorous instruction was not well received by Yahya b. Ibrahim’s people, the Juddala, but the point here is that reform was prompted and facilitated by the combined forces of pilgrim kings and scholars (Levtzion 1979: 91).

Besides the religious activity in central West Africa (i.e., the empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay), the areas of Kanem-Bornu, territories loosely bordering what is now Lake Chad, were very active Muslim centers. The earliest recorded pilgrimage is that of *Mai* (a royal title) Dunama b. Umme, who between

1098 and 1150 made the pilgrimage two times and died while making his third. Over the next four centuries over twenty kings or *mai* made the pilgrimage from Kanem-Bornu to Arabia. One of the kings of Kanem-Bornu, Idris ibn Ali, did a great deal to further Islam in his kingdom and not only built a pilgrim hostel in Mecca for his countrymen but also instituted *shari’a* and *shari’a* courts in his native land. His learning was not entirely spiritual and theological, however, for we learn that on his pilgrimage to Mecca, c. 1575, he “discovered the value of firearms. He imported Turkish musketeers. Another innovation was his employment of Arab camelry” (Trimingham 1962: 122). My point here is to show that the Maghrib and the Hijaz were the focal points in the dissemination of different kinds of innovations and reforms from the Islamic heartland and that the pilgrims from the western Sudan were the agents of their dissemination. In fact, they were probably the only carriers of such ideas to the Western Sudan (although we must not overlook the influence of traders) and were, because of their high status or relation to royalty, the very agents capable of implementing change in West Africa.⁶

In 1591 Morocco sacked the capital of the Songhay empire and brought it to an end. In retrospect, this event marks the end of the first, early period of Islam and the beginning of what I shall call the middle period of Islam in West Africa, a period of decline and stagnation. To recapitulate the main features of the early period, Islam in the Sudan was characterized by its isolation from other centers of the Islamic world because of geographical factors, by its non-Arabic character, and by its confinement to the ruling elite and a clerical class. In spite of these factors, the royal and clerical pilgrims to Mecca

5. The Wahhabi movement was founded in Arabia by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703–1787). This is a reform movement, puritanical in the sense that it attempted to remove all innovations after the third century of Islam from Muslim belief and practice. The movement was extremely anti-Sufi, and Wahhab’s polemics were aimed at the cult of the saints and all that that implied (mentioning the name of a saint in prayer, asking the saint to intercede on behalf of the suppliant, making vows to the saint in return for favors, and making pilgrimages to the tombs of saints). Wahhabism became the reigning orthodoxy on the Arabian peninsula (under the patronage of the royal house of Sa’ud), and Sufi shrines were destroyed and their practices outlawed (cf. *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1953: 618).

6. An observer might well point out that historical records focus on the powerful and wealthy, not on the common people. While it certainly is true that historiography is traditionally elitist in its focus. I do not feel that the emphasis is misplaced in the study of West African Islam. The aristocratic class was the Muslim population during much of this period (witness the mass conversions that occurred only after the *jihads*). Also, because of the expense involved, it would be highly unlikely that commoners could afford to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, unless as a servant or companion to a noble patron.

established hostels in the Maghrib and the Hijaz and met many Muslim religious leaders whose ideas and reforms they took back with them and instituted among Muslims in their homelands.

What caused the decline of Islam in the ensuing era? Several factors can be noted, each of which had some effect. A. Adu Boahen (1963: 350) points out that political conditions in the Sudan deteriorated after the fall of Songhay. The Sudanic region was rent asunder by wars, and no central power came forward to assert itself in the midst of this chaos. With the region in a continual state of flux and unrest, the trade routes that had connected the Sudan with the Maghrib were disrupted. After all, much of the glory of the empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay had had its basis in the fact that these empires all served as the centers of trade routes. The empires not only were the beneficiaries of these trade routes but provided security for the caravans against bandits and opposing armies. Now there was no central authority capable of providing such security, and the trade routes dwindled and the caravans were greatly reduced in number. This last fact bears directly on pilgrimage, for many nobles and clerics accompanied trade caravans through the Sahara, not only because the traders knew the route and the oases but also because there was safety in numbers against thieves or marauders. Besides these advantages, the existence of a caravan meant that the pilgrim was spared the cost of raising a retinue to serve as his personal guard. Also, Boahen points out that the loose federation of tribes generally known as the Bambara, who had always resisted islamization and were generally hostile to Islamic kingdoms, now held sway over much of the Sudan, with no Islamic power to counteract their aggression (Boahen 1963: 350–51).

Another reason for the decline of the caravan trade was the increase of the coastal trade. The Portuguese had first appeared along the coast toward the middle of the fifteenth century, and by the sixteenth century, English, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and French ships were dropping anchor off the coast and negotiating with local Africans for gold, ivory, indigo, and, most importantly, slaves. Trade that had formerly gone inland to the great trading centers in the Sudan now turned away from the savannah regions and headed, instead, to the coast. It might be added, parenthetically, that the American Indian indirectly participated in a population explo-

sion in West Africa, for many of the traders introduced New World foodstuffs into the tropical forest areas of West Africa and made those areas much more attractive for permanent settlement. Among other things, yams, maize, sweet potatoes, mangoes, beans, cassava, pineapples, tomatoes, and new forms of peppers were introduced here, creating a plentiful food supply and enticing savannah peoples to this tropical region. All of the above reasons contributed to the general decline of Islam in West Africa.

It must not be thought, however, that Islam died out at this time. To the contrary, it continued to exist, but it lacked the political base necessary for expansion, and its ties with the Islamic fatherland in Egypt and Arabia grew more and more tenuous as fewer and fewer pilgrims made the pilgrimage because of the dangers involved, to say nothing of the time and expense.

J. S. Birks makes the point that Muslim savants of this period also concocted theological formulations that denigrated the *hajj* and sometimes even claimed that it was not one of the five pillars of the faith (Birks 1978: 10). Too much, however, can be made of this theological polemic against the necessity of the *hajj*—after all, few people could read such works, and the traditional Muslim reverence for the *hajj* had certainly taken hold among the Muslims in West Africa, particularly under the influence of the Maliki school of Muslim law, which states unequivocally that it is the duty of all Muslims in good health and of proper age to make the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Furthermore, as M. Hiskett makes clear, there were centers of Islamic learning and piety that did continue in this age. Indeed, his article relating to the state of learning among the Fulani before the era of the *jihads* shows that, while the quantity of Arabic scholarship may have been small, the quality of the works of these Muslim Fulani savants was often of a high caliber. The schools continued to exist, even expand—it was the political basis of the Islamic societies that had disappeared. Other aspects of the religion continued as before. Hiskett makes the point that wandering, learned men contributed, even in this age, to the propagation of Islam and that their peregrinations were directly linked to the *hajj*: “The teaching of religious sciences was in the hands of a number of famous scholars. Sometimes these teachers were peripatetic; at other times they taught in the mosques and the schools. The peripatetic system

was bound up with the pilgrimage, for the teacher passed up and down the country on his way to and from the East; and with him went his students” (1957: 573–74).

The era of the *jihads*, which started around the end of the eighteenth century, marks a significant change in the nature and form of Islam in West Africa and can be said to initiate the modern period of Islam in West Africa. There is every reason to believe that the *jihadi* reformers, both those from Futa Toro (in northern Senegal) and those from the Hausa states (in northern Nigeria), were influenced either directly or indirectly by the pilgrimage to Mecca. One of the *jihadi* leaders, a well-known reformer and Sufi, was Al-Haji ‘Umar ibn Said (known more popularly as Al-Haji ‘Umar Tal), who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca (1827–1830) and in Mecca or Egypt was initiated into the Tijaniyya order of Sufism. In fact, much of his subsequent activity in the western Sudan has been ascribed to his desire to overcome the influence of the Qadiriyya brotherhood (Trimingham 1962: 181); however, another famous *jihadi*, Uthman dan Fodio, had as his teacher Al-Haji Jibril ibn ‘Umar, a well-known pilgrim and reformer who had spent many years in the Middle East (Levtzion 1980: 84). Other *jihadi* pilgrims deserve mention. Muhammad al-Min al-Kanimi, ruler of Bornu from 1808 to 1837, made the pilgrimage before becoming ruler and later was a leader, with Uthman dan Fodio, of the *jihads* in this eastern section of West Africa. A later figure, named Muhammad al-Amin al-Sarakole, a ruler in Senegal, also made the pilgrimage and was a follower of Al-Haji ‘Umar Tal and a member of the Tijaniyya. He led a short-lived *jihadi* in 1885 but was defeated and killed in 1887.

The *jihads* were widespread from 1780 to 1890 throughout the entire Sudan. Although the focus in this chapter is on the western Sudan, it must not be forgotten that the Mahdist movement in the eastern Sudan (in what is today the Republic of the Sudan) in the 1880s was also an example of a *jihadi*, so one can rightly say that all of the Sudan experienced this form of religious and political upheaval.

The causes of the *jihadi* are difficult to determine. Hiskett seems to give primacy to religious revivalism inspired, in part, by the ferment that was moving the whole Islamic world. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the time of the Sufi revival, and the founding of the influential Sanusi brotherhood

had repercussions all through the Sudan. Also, the *tariqa* (Sufi orders) known as Rashidiyya and Amirghaniyya were formed at this time under the influence of the general “neo-Sufi revival” (Rahman 1966: 206–7) and had great influence in North and Sudanic Africa. Further, the Wahhabi movement, founded in the eighteenth century, began at this time to exert influence beyond Arabia, especially via the pilgrims (Kaba 1974: 48).⁷ There may certainly have been other factors that contributed to the rise of the *jihads*. Hiskett, although he favors the more religiously oriented explanations, does concede that the *jihadic* conflicts did often pit different classes and occupations on opposite sides of the conflict. For example, Al-Haji ‘Umar Tal’s movement attracted many escaped slaves who flocked to his cause, and the Tijaniyya brotherhood in West Africa (which Al-Haji ‘Umar Tal espoused) became allied with the poorer classes in open opposition to the more aristocratic Qadiriyya brotherhood. Finally, many of the *jihads* involved different classes in opposition throughout these wars: nomads versus peasants, slaves versus enslavers, commoners versus aristocrats, and provincials versus urban intellectuals (Hiskett 1977: 166–67). Thus, under the influence of a pilgrim reformer like Al-Haji ‘Umar Tal, the *jihadi* was not simply a method for spreading Islam or the Tijaniyya brotherhood but the means for the most rapid and far-reaching reordering of society and social life in general that West Africa had ever before witnessed.

The consequences of the *jihads* were enormous. Not only were ruling families, classes, and states upset over the western Sudan, but Islam was enjoined on the native population as it had never been before. For the first time since it was introduced into West Africa in the tenth century, Islam was not simply the cult of the noble or clerical classes but now became, through the medium of the *jihadi*, a mass religion. Islam was purified of many pagan elements that had been heretofore permitted, particularly in the Futa Toro, Futa Jallon, and Kanem-Bornu-Hausa regions, and millions of the indigenous peoples were

7. Also, G. S. Rentz (1969: 283) writes, “In Africa the great *jihads* of the nineteenth century, led by Uthman dan Fodio, Al-Haji ‘Umar Tal, and others, were marked by striking similarities to their Arabian counterparts [i.e., the Wahhabis].”

converted to Islam. Islamic institutions and schools, the Arabic language, and the daily practice of the religion spread to almost all parts of the western Sudan.

As pointed out above, in the period prior to the time of the *jihads* the number of people going on pilgrimage had declined, a fact attributable both to the decline of Islam itself and to the decline of the caravan trade, a decline justified by new revisionist tendencies in West African Muslim theology that denigrated the *hajj*. With the revival and spread of Islam through the medium of the *jihads*, however, the institution of the *hajj* was slow to assert or reestablish itself.

The question of why the pilgrimage to Mecca did not also revive in popularity along with the revival of Islam is a difficult one. To begin with, travel conditions throughout the region were still unsettled and precarious. Not only was the western Sudan in chaos because of the *jihads* that periodically swept over large areas, but North Africa itself was experiencing a great deal of trouble and interference from European powers. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Europeans began occupying areas along the coast of Africa, usually under the pretext of pacifying the Barbary pirates or of protecting their commercial interests. From Egypt to Morocco, Christian Europeans were making their economic and political presence felt in a way that proved most unsettling to the traditional economic and political patterns of the area. Given the rise of trade along the African coast and the turbulence in the northern countries along the Maghrib, caravan trade almost ceased to exist. Route after route closed because of the impossibility of making a profit and because of the danger involved in such expeditions. This abandonment of the caravan routes further discouraged would-be pilgrims from making the dangerous and arduous journey.

There was also a theological reason, which, like the theological reasoning of the pre-*jihadic* era, provided even normally pious Muslims with a perfectly acceptable excuse for not going on the *hajj*, namely, that waging the *jihad* was more efficacious in God's eyes than the *hajj*. Birks makes the following comment: "The *jihad* did not oust the view of abstention from pilgrimage prevailing in West Africa and, in fact, devalued the *hajj* still further: the deed of the Holy War gave heavenly rewards equal to, if not

greater than, those accruing from a visit to the Holy Places" (1978: 11). As Lansine Kaba (1974: 47) points out, there had long been an equivalence in West African Muslim thought between the *hajj* and the *jihad*, whereby it was reckoned that the sufferings and privations of the *hajj* were equivalent to the *jihad*, a striving in the way or cause of Allah.

The pilgrimage, however, certainly did not cease altogether at this time. In fact, in comparison with the pre-*jihadic* period, the number of pilgrims increased somewhat. As the desert routes closed, more and more pilgrims made the trek across the savannah from west to east and went from the area of northern Nigeria eastward to the Red Sea through southern Chad and through the northern part of what is now the country of Sudan. Birks makes the point that those who went on the pilgrimage were not the kings or nobility of yesteryear but were, rather, "religious extremists" (1978: 11). What Birks means by this phrase is unclear, but what is clear is that the *jihads* did not stop the movement of pilgrims to Mecca. The *jihadists* did not promote or encourage the use of the traditional trans-Saharan routes of pilgrimage, and because of the incorporation of many peoples as practicing Muslims, the *jihads* did have the effect of altering the types of pilgrims who now went to Mecca.

As in times past, the movement of pilgrims, even during this difficult period, facilitated the dissemination of Islamic learning from the Hijaz to West Africa. Ivor Wilks notes that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the number of pilgrims from the eastern Guinea-northern Ivory Coast increased considerably and that the Dyula towns (i.e., of the Muslim people he was studying) were prosperous enough to support many teachers "[whose] passage to and from the Hijaz would create an intellectual climate within which learning could flourish" (1978: 176). As mentioned above, some of the *jihadists* themselves, notably Al-Haji 'Umar Tal in 1827, went on the pilgrimage and returned from that experience profoundly affected by what they had seen and heard in the Holy Places.

One work from this period has recently been translated from Arabic and narrates the pilgrimage of a Moor from Mauritania who set off for the Hijaz in 1838, the middle of the *jihadic* era. The work, which has the charming title of *The Pilgrimage of Ahmed, Son of the Little Bird of Paradise*, is a journal of

the pilgrim's progress through North Africa and Arabia. Being a Moor, Ahmed spoke the Hassani dialect of Arabic and thus had an immense advantage over many of his Sudanese fellow Muslims who did not speak Arabic as their mother tongue. He was both a pious and a learned man (and apparently quite rich, because on his return from Arabia he founded and endowed a *zawiya* in Fez). On his way to Arabia he passed through Fez (where he swore allegiance to Mawlay 'Abd al-Rahman, a Moroccan *shaykh* and a *sharif*, d. 1859) and Marakesh and went by sea from Morocco to Egypt. His journey was interrupted repeatedly by the French, who by now controlled the area and placed travelers in quarantine as a matter of course to control cholera and other diseases; the fact that the French thought that diseases were caused and controlled through natural means rather than through the power of God alone, noted Ahmed rather sourly, just proves that they are *kaffar* (pagan). He entered Alexandria, where he visited shrines and local *shaykhs*. After the fast during Ramadan he proceeded to Cairo, where he again visited the shrines of dead saints and talked with the scholars, *qadi*, and *mufti* in that city. Having made the pilgrimage, he made his way homeward through many of the same towns, and also visited Tripoli, Tunis "the verdant" (he skipped Algiers "because it was in the hands of the Christians"), and Gibraltar, before returning to Morocco. He was well received everywhere, even by the Christian authorities in Gibraltar, and stayed for long periods of time with each of his hosts, various *shaykhs* and *muftis*. Since he was a scholar, many of his hosts gave him books (he returned with over 400 books, all acquired on his travels, either as gifts or by purchase—and in the days before many Arabic books were produced by movable type). In all, the pilgrimage took just about six years. My point here is that Ahmed's account was probably fairly typical for many pilgrims at that time and a typical pattern of pilgrimage experienced by Africans for centuries. Not only did he deepen his faith, but he came into close and intimate contact with these cognoscenti of the Islamic world, a familiarity with them and their works that he would otherwise never have had in his out-of-the-way homeland in Mauritania. Through the pilgrimage and the contacts he made throughout North Africa and the Middle East, his intellectual and spiritual world was greatly expanded, and although the journal ends

with his return to his homeland, we may assume that his tribal group and his students became the immediate beneficiaries of this *'ilm* (knowledge).

But all of West Africa was in a great state of flux. Not only were the *jihads* raging through the area at this time (the first half of the nineteenth century), but European powers were establishing permanent colonial bases where, before, there had been only trading posts or coastal enclaves. By the extension of their influence or through military means, the European powers slowly encroached on the African continent throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Although the whole of West Africa was not pacified from the colonial point of view until almost the beginning of the Great War, by the 1880s the Europeans were confident enough of their general hegemony and respective spheres of influence that an amicable agreement could be reached at the Conference of Berlin in 1884 concerning the partition of the continent.

With regard to Islam, colonialism had several immediate and far-reaching consequences. First of all, it stopped the *jihads*. Samori, Al-Haji 'Umar Tal, and their followers were all discouraged from continuing the *jihads*, and their empires were dismantled. In a sense, then, the natural evolution of Islamic history in this area was halted. With the imposition of the colonial Pax, however, Islam spread more rapidly than ever, far faster than it had even under the impetus of the *jihads*. Muslim traders and clerics in the colonized areas had access to territories and peoples that were once closed or off-limits to them. Movement across West Africa was freer than ever, particularly into the forest zone along the coast, and as Muslims came to settle there, they made converts in greater and greater numbers. Another reason for the increase of Islam may also be laid to the fact that Muslims no longer came among "pagan" peoples as *jihadists* or as slave traders but as missionaries and as fellow Africans. People like the Bambara, who had resisted Islam for centuries, now converted rapidly in great numbers. Lastly, Africans may have felt drawn to Islam at this time as a covert protest against European domination—Islam offered literacy, a historical tradition, and a world religion that could confound European notions of African "primitiveness" and that served as a rebuke to the hordes of white missionaries swarming throughout the colonies of West Africa.

The *hajj* continued to draw increasing numbers to Mecca, albeit along slightly different routes. The colonial era witnessed the complete demise of the trans-Saharan caravan trade. The coastal cities were now the trading centers (as well as serving as the capital cities for colonial administration), and all commerce went south and west toward the coast. Birks points out that more and more desert routes were closed so that by 1911 the route from Mauritania to Fez was closed due to lack of traders (1978: 13) (along which pilgrims like Ahmed and many others had gone to Mecca, via Fez, where they could venerate the tomb of al-Tijani, founder of the Tijaniyya brotherhood). The French were so alarmed at the decrease in caravan trade (and the imminent pauperization of the Bedouins) that they forbade the transport of salt by lorries; that is, they insisted that it be transported by camel to the coastal cities. Pilgrims, then, were left with no alternative but to cross the continent from west to east along the savannah and proceed on to the Hijaz by crossing the Red Sea in boats. The British, trying to ingratiate themselves with the Muslim population under their control, sponsored pilgrimages for the members of the Muslim nobility.

All in all, the colonial powers left Islam to itself during this period. While the French were in some ways hostile to Islam (they expected that the more advanced natives would adopt Catholicism as a matter of course), the British were quite supportive of Islam, permitted *shari'a* courts in northern Nigeria to continue to rule on matters pertaining to family law in cases involving Muslims, and forbade Christian missionaries from establishing mission stations in these Muslim territories. Among Africans, the colonial presence brought about a situation in which it became a title of distinction to be called a Muslim, and many formerly oppressed classes in African society realized a new status by becoming Muslim. Elliott Skinner writing at the end of the colonial era, notes: "Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; besides such tangible ones as getting wives and children, there are intangible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as Hadji" (1958: 1108).

With the withdrawal of the colonial powers and the coming of independence, African peoples and states entered a new era. The consequences for Islam were no less momentous than they had been during the three previous eras. Although it is still too early to discern all the forms and features of Islam in post-independence Africa, it is possible to say that the new states are very conscious of Islam and of the Muslim populations within their borders, although, no matter how strong Islam may be, it does not prevent states from trying to manipulate Islamic institutions and peoples in such ways as to promote the interests of the secular powers. In other words, many of the new African states attempt to pacify and please their Muslim subjects and to manipulate them through good and even favored treatment in much the same way that the colonial powers before them had used Islam and Muslims to their advantage. Among other things, many states encourage the Muslim majorities within their borders. Not only does this action bring a certain stability to the government, but it encourages an inter-ethnic solidarity among disparate peoples within one nation-state. Even radical socialists, such as Ahmed Sekou Toure, president of Guinea, committed their countries to a brand of socialism that they consider to be compatible with, or supportive of, a vision of Islamic socialism or an Islamic society.

One concrete way in which states show their support of Islam and their Islamic populations is to support pilgrimage flights to Mecca. Guinea, Nigeria, and Senegal all subsidize air travel to and from Jidda for those who wish to go during the month of pilgrimage. One result of this policy has been that many thousands can go to Mecca who in the past would have lacked the means or the stamina to make this demanding trip. In 1978, 135,326 pilgrims made the pilgrimage from black (non-Arab) Africa, of whom all but 47 arrived by air. From Senegal, 4,825 pilgrims went to Mecca, all but 7 of whom went by air. From Mauritania, 1,084 went on the *hajj*, and all but 8 went by air (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, *Statistical Yearbook* 1978).

Besides the fact that many more people now go on the pilgrimage, I believe that air travel on these subsidized flights has even more profound consequences for Islam in West Africa. These trips to and from Jidda encompass a time span between two and four weeks (depending on the day the pilgrim

departs from his homeland and the day that he is put aboard the plane for the return trip after the pilgrimage). The pilgrim disembarks in Jidda and, after processing by the Saudi government, is shuttled to Mecca to begin the pilgrimage, after which he is brought back to Jidda to be taken home. Without too much thought, one can see how different this type of pilgrimage is from one made by Ahmed over 150 years ago. Not only does this pilgrimage not take six years, but the intimate contacts that Ahmed made with scholars, *shaykhs*, *mufti*, and *qadi* in the Hijaz and North Africa are entirely absent. In days gone by, pilgrims lingered in the Holy Places and often made lesser pilgrimages to Medina and Jerusalem, besides living in the Holy Places and meeting their fellow Muslims from all over the world. Ahmed relates that, after the pilgrimage itself, he visited the graves of 'Aisha and Khadijah, wives of the Prophet, besides visiting Medina "the illumined" and praying in the Mosque of the Prophet. Such lesser pilgrimages in the Hijaz made a profound impression upon him, as did all the shrines of saints (as well as living teachers) he visited in Cairo, Alexandria, Tunis, and Fez. In short, what was once a pious peregrination through the sacred places of Islam has now been reduced to a shuttle flight from a West African entrepot to Jidda with just enough time to perform the pilgrimage rites before being shunted onto a return flight to West Africa.

As we have seen throughout this chapter, the pilgrimage to Mecca has provided Muslims in West Africa with contact with the heartland of Islam for 1,000 years, and the great revival and reform movements of the Islamic world were brought back and incorporated into West African Islam through the medium of pilgrims. In short, the function of the pilgrimage was pedagogical as well as pious, and this pedagogical aspect or function is the one that has been lost under the present circumstances. In the eighteenth century the influence of the Wahhabi movement had been felt by many of the pilgrims who had lingered in the Hijaz and had been influenced or instructed by the Wahhabi *'ulama*; in turn, they had gone back to West Africa with a burning desire to reform Islam. Today, however, such influences and pedagogy would be lost on pilgrims who do not remain in Arabia long enough to perfect their spoken Arabic and who must subdue their educational and pious interests to the exigencies of airline schedules.

The centers of Islam, however, have not relinquished their self-imposed duty to foster and propagate Islam. To the contrary. But it is no longer the pilgrimage or the pilgrim who is the focus or medium of propaganda. No longer do pilgrims return to the western Sudan with a newfound familiarity with Islamic trends or thought that they gleaned from Saudi Arabia, nor do pilgrims inspire the reform movements in the Western Sudan as they once did. The pedagogical function of the pilgrimage has ceased to exist among the pilgrims from West Africa (and from many other parts of the world).

Instead, as Tareq Ismael and others have pointed out, in the post-colonial period various Islamic countries have taken upon themselves the duty of propagating Islam south of the Sahara by different means. The leader in this field was Egypt, and its effort was initiated after Nasser's coup. Shortly after Nasser became president of Egypt, he, along with King Saud of Arabia and Ghulan Muhammed of Pakistan, established Egypt's leadership in Muslim affairs in Africa (Ismael 1971: 147–48). More specifically, the educational institutions of Egypt were used to promote Islamic religion and Arabic culture south of the Sahara. In the law of the Reorganization of Al-Azhar University, one of the oldest in the Islamic world, it states that Al-Azhar "carries the burden of Islamic missions to all nations and works to expose the truth of Islam" (Ismael 1971: 149). The rector of that university, Sheik Hassan Ma'amun, declared that "the most prominent role of Al-Azhar is the international call to Islam, its propagation of the Holy Koran, the Arabic language and religious jurisprudence among people who do not speak the language of the Holy Book" (Ismael 1971: 151). Under the direction of Nasser, Egypt greatly increased its commitment to educating students at Al-Azhar and at secular universities. In 1952–1953, the last year of the old regime, 15,000 Egyptian pounds were expended for scholarships for foreign students. By 1963–1964, this sum had risen to 375,000 Egyptian pounds (Ismael 1971: 151). Saudi Arabia also expanded its number of foreign students, and although the records of Libya are not open to the public, I would guess that Colonel Qadaffi's expenditure for foreign students to study Islam in Libya far exceeds Saudi Arabia's and Egypt's earlier contributions.

Besides encouraging students to come to Egypt to study, Al-Azhar established in 1963 Islamic Arab

missions throughout Africa. These were complexes consisting of grammar and secondary schools, a mosque, and a small infirmary run by qualified *'ulama* from Al-Azhar. In other words, Egypt under Nasser undertook an ambitious program of missionary activity throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In interviews I conducted with various leaders of the Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood, it was reported to me that during the sixties several hundred Egyptian teachers came to teach in the Brotherhood schools throughout Sierra Leone (note that this Muslim Brotherhood has no relation to the militant Egyptian organization but is, rather, an educational and missionary society founded by Sierra Leone. At the present time there are about a dozen Egyptian teachers still in Sierra Leone.⁸

Thus, while the convenience of modern transportation has effectively ruined the pilgrimage as a vehicle for teaching pilgrims about the nature of Islam in the Middle East, this function has been taken over, with the help of oil money and an increased consciousness of the *dar al-Islam*, by the countries of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Libya. Because of the need to limit the scope of this chapter, I have not even mentioned the educational activities of such movements as the Ahmadiyyah movement,⁹ but they are of increasing importance in their role of informing Islamic consciousness in West Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. For almost 1,000 years the pilgrim transmitted currents of Islamic teaching, spiritual life, legal interpretation, and reform from Egypt and Arabia back to West Africa. What was once the function of pilgrims returning from the *hajj*—to teach, to institute reforms, to spread Islam throughout West Africa—has now been taken over by foreign Muslim missionaries or by African Muslim students who have returned from their formal studies in Egypt, Arabia, or North Africa.

In conclusion, I think that it is now clear that the *hajj* has served different functions in the life of West African Muslims. Its primary function, which occupied the place of paramount importance until the

modern era, was the diffusion or dissemination of Islam from its intellectual and spiritual capitals in North Africa and the Middle East back to West Africa. Because the pilgrimage was, in effect, a migration of an elite, they were capable of reorganizing their society and religious practices so that they conformed to what they had learned or seen on pilgrimage. For much of the history of West Africa, the pilgrimage was the medium by which these African Muslim elites (both clerical and aristocratic) were informed of movements and developments in the *dar al-Islam*, and they, in turn, were the media for the dissemination of such ideas throughout West Africa.

It is significant that the post-colonial era has greatly changed the nature and function of the Islamic pilgrimage for West Africa. No longer is the *hajj* restricted to aristocrats and their cleric escorts. Masses of West Africans are flown to and from Jidda and spend only the month of pilgrimage in Arabia. Clearly, the mode of transportation and the almost unseemly haste with which the Saudi government processes the pilgrims in, through, and out of the country have also radically changed the experience and importance of pilgrimage for West African Islam. What was once the great source of education and inspiration for Islam in the western Sudan has been replaced by the education of Muslim students in North Africa and Near Eastern countries. I would predict that these young students will be the agents of the dissemination of Islamic thought and practice as the pilgrims once were in West Africa.

In general, the *hajj* in the context of West African Islam can be seen as a vehicle for the diffusion of religious and cultural concepts and practices. Thus, while the pilgrimage always served a religious end for those who participated in it, because of the knowledge, books, Sufi initiation, or whatever else they acquired in the Holy Places, the pilgrims themselves served as the conduit through which these were spread throughout West Africa. Thus, the emphasis in this chapter has been on the pedagogical function of pilgrimage in the spread of religion and culture. One crucial factor in this study of pilgrimage is the participation of elites. West African Islamic elites made the pilgrimage to Mecca for a variety of reasons, most of them probably rooted in their Muslim piety, but the pilgrimage itself greatly enhanced their status and prestige. In addition, as

8. This information is from my research in Sierra Leone, 1979–1980.

9. A good discussion of the Ahmadiyyah movement in West Africa can be found in H. J. Fisher, *Ahmadiyyah: A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast*.

mentioned before, because of their aristocratic status, whatever may have inspired them in the Hijaz might be instituted in their homelands. The migration of elites via pilgrimage can be seen in historical perspective as the thread that has tied together the Islamic world north and south of the Sahara. Without it West African Islam would have had a very different history and character.

Finally, I would like to suggest that the discussion of the *hajj* presented in this chapter may be of some interest in the wider context of the anthropology of pilgrimage. Perhaps the most interesting point in that light might refer to the functions that the *hajj*

has played over time. Although it served originally as the means for the diffusion of Islamic religion and culture, it now serves different, more individual functions. Yet the *hajj* continues, its popularity unabated. The institution has persevered regardless of the function it has served or serves, collectively or individually. To be sure, the attraction of the *hajj* may ultimately lie beyond any social benefits that accrue to the participants. It may rest instead in the fundamental religious sensibility of the pilgrims, who sing as they approach the Sacred Mosque at the start of the *hajj*: "I am here, O God, I am here; at Thy command, I am here."

Revitalization Movements

Anthony F. C. Wallace

Wallace's article shows how people use religious principles to cope with a cultural crisis that has prevented them from achieving a more satisfying culture. Revitalization movements have been witnessed frequently in diverse geographic regions, and each displays variation of expression that may be explained by the culturally specific conditions under which they are formed. As a social process, they have the goal of reconstituting a way of life that has been destroyed for one reason or another. Wallace helps us understand the phenomenon of revitalization by describing five overlapping but distinct stages. A revitalization movement, unlike cultural evolution and historical change, is a relatively abrupt culture change that frequently completes itself in the span of a few years.

*During the middle decades of the 20th century, Wallace was one of the most prominent anthropologists working in the areas of cognition and psychology. He was particularly interested in the psychological effects of acculturation and rapid technological change. These interests are clearly apparent in the present article when he discusses "mazeway resynthesis" and "hysterical conversion," concepts that highlight the psychological aspects of abrupt social change. Wallace (b. 1923) has been a prolific author. His most acclaimed book is *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1978).*

During periods of stable moving equilibrium, the sociocultural system is subject to mild but measurable oscillations in degree of organization. From time to time, however, most societies undergo more violent fluctuations in this regard. Such fluctuation is of peculiar importance in culture change because it often culminates in relatively sudden change in cultural *Gestalt*. We refer, here, to revitalization movements, which we define as deliberate and organized attempts by some members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture by rapid acceptance of a pattern of multiple innovations (Wallace 1956b; Mead 1956).

The severe disorganization of a sociocultural system may be caused by the impact of any one or combination of a variety of forces that push the system

beyond the limits of equilibrium. Some of these forces are climatic or faunal changes, which destroy the economic basis of its existence; epidemic disease, which grossly alters the population structure; wars, which exhaust the society's resources of manpower or result in defeat or invasion; internal conflict among interest groups, which results in extreme disadvantage for at least one group; and, very commonly, a position of perceived subordination and inferiority with respect to an adjacent society. The latter, by the use of more or less coercion (or even no coercion at all, as in situations where the mere example set by the dominant society raises too-high levels of aspiration), brings about uncoordinated cultural changes. Under conditions of disorganization, the system, from the standpoint of at least some of its members, is unable to make possible the reliable satisfaction of certain values that are held to be essential to continued well-being and self-respect. The mazeway of a culturally disillusioned person,

Reprinted from Anthony F. C. Wallace, CULTURE AND PERSONALITY, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 188–99, by permission of the publisher and the author.

accordingly, is an image of a world that is unpredictable, or barren in its simplicity, or both, and is apt to contain severe identity conflict. His mood (depending on the precise nature of the disorganization) will be one of panic-stricken anxiety, shame, guilt, depression, or apathy.

An example of the kind of disorganization to which we refer is given by the two thousand or so Seneca Indians of New York at the close of the eighteenth century. Among these people, a supreme value attached to the conception of the absolutely free and autonomous individual, unconstrained by and indifferent to his own and alien others' pain and hardship. This individual was capable of free indulgence of emotional impulses but, in crisis, freely subordinated his own wishes to the needs of his community. Among the men, especially, this ego-ideal was central in personality organization. Men defined the roles of hunting, of warfare, and of statesmanship as the conditions of achievement of this value; thus the stereotypes of "the good hunter," "the brave warrior," and "the forest statesman" were the images of masculine success. But the forty-three years from 1754, when the French and Indian War began, to 1797, when the Seneca sold their last hunting grounds and became largely confined to tiny, isolated reservations, brought with them changes in their situation that made achievement of these ideals virtually impossible. The good hunter could no longer hunt: the game was scarce, and it was almost suicidally dangerous to stray far from the reservation among the numerous hostile white men. The brave warrior could no longer fight, being undersupplied, abandoned by his allies, and his women and children threatened by growing military might of the United States. The forest statesman was an object of contempt, and this disillusionment was perhaps more shattering than the rest. The Iroquois chiefs, for nearly a century, had been able to play off British and French, then Americans and British, against one another, extorting supplies and guarantees of territorial immunity from both sides. They had maintained an extensive system of alliances and hegemonies among surrounding tribal groups. Suddenly they were shorn of their power. White men no longer spoke of the League of the Iroquois with respect; their western Indian dependents and allies regarded them as cowards for having made peace with the Americans.

The initial Seneca response to the progress of sociocultural disorganization was quasipathological: many became drunkards; the fear of witches increased; squabbling factions were unable to achieve a common policy. But a revitalization movement developed in 1799, based on the religious revelations reported by one of the disillusioned forest statesmen, one Handsome Lake, who preached a code of patterned religious and cultural reform. The drinking of whiskey was proscribed; witchcraft was to be stamped out; various outmoded rituals and prevalent sins were to be abandoned. In addition, various syncretic cultural reforms, amounting to a reorientation of the socioeconomic system, were to be undertaken, including the adoption of agriculture (hitherto a feminine calling) by the men, and the focusing of kinship responsibilities within the nuclear family (rather than in the clan and lineage). The general acceptance of Handsome Lake's Code, within a few years, wrought seemingly miraculous changes. A group of sober, devout, partly literate, and technologically up-to-date farming communities suddenly replaced the demoralized slums in the wilderness (Wallace 1970).

Such dramatic transformations are, as a matter of historical fact, very common in human history, and probably have been the medium of as much culture change as the slower equilibrium processes. Furthermore, because they compress into such a short space of time such extensive changes in pattern, they are somewhat easier to record than the quiet serial changes during periods of equilibrium. In general, revitalization processes share a common process structure that can be conceptualized as a pattern of temporally overlapping, but functionally distinct, stages:

I. *Steady State*. This is a period of moving equilibrium of the kind discussed in the preceding section. Culture change occurs during the steady state, but is of the relatively slow and chainlike kind. Stress levels vary among interest groups, and there is some oscillation in organization level, but disorganization and stress remain within limits tolerable to most individuals. Occasional incidents of intolerable stress may stimulate a limited "correction" of the system, but some incidence of individual ill-health and criminality are accepted as a price society must pay.

II. *The Period of Increased Individual Stress.* The sociocultural system is being “pushed” progressively out of equilibrium by the forces described earlier: climatic and biotic change, epidemic disease, war and conquest, social subordination, acculturation, internally generated decay, and so forth. Increasingly large numbers of individuals are placed under what is to them intolerable stress by the failure of the system to accommodate the satisfaction of their needs. Anomie and disillusionment become widespread, as the culture is perceived to be disorganized and inadequate; crime and illness increase sharply in frequency as individualistic asocial responses. But the situation is still generally defined as one of fluctuation within the steady state.

III. *The Period of Cultural Distortion.* Some members of the society attempt, piecemeal and ineffectively, to restore personal equilibrium by adopting socially dysfunctional expedients. Alcoholism, venality in public officials, the “black market,” breaches of sexual and kinship mores, hoarding, gambling for gain, “scapegoating,” and similar behaviors that, in the preceding period, were still defined as individual deviances, in effect become institutionalized efforts to circumvent the evil effects of “the system.” Interest groups, losing confidence in the advantages of maintaining mutually acceptable interrelationships, may resort to violence in order to coerce others into unilaterally advantageous behavior. Because of the malcoordination of cultural changes during this period, they are rarely able to reduce the impact of the forces that have pushed the society out of equilibrium, and in fact lead to a continuous decline in organization.

IV. *The Period of Revitalization.* Once severe cultural distortion has occurred, the society can with difficulty return to steady state without the institution of a revitalization process. Without revitalization, indeed, the society is apt to disintegrate as a system: the population will either die off, splinter into autonomous groups, or be absorbed into another, more stable, society. Revitalization depends on the successful completion of the following functions:

1. Formulation of a code. An individual, or a group of individuals, constructs a new, utopian image of sociocultural organization. This model is a

blueprint of an ideal society or “goal culture.” Contrasted with the goal culture is the existing culture, which is presented as inadequate or evil in certain respects. Connecting the existing culture and the goal culture is a transfer culture: a system of operations that, if faithfully carried out, will transform the existing culture into the goal culture. Failure to institute the transfer operations will, according to the code, result in either the perpetuation of the existing misery or the ultimate destruction of the society (if not of the whole world). Not infrequently in primitive societies the code, or the core of it, is formulated by one individual in the course of a hallucinatory revelation; such prophetic experiences are apt to launch religiously oriented movements, since the source of the revelation is apt to be regarded as a supernatural being. Nonhallucinatory formulations usually are found in politically oriented movements. In either case, the formulation of the code constitutes a reformulation of the author’s own mazeway and often brings to him a renewed confidence in the future and a remission of the complaints he experienced before. It may be suggested that such mazeway resynthesis processes are merely extreme forms of the reorganizing dream processes that seem to be associated with REM (rapid-eye-movement) sleep, which are necessary to normal health.

2. Communication. The formulators of the code preach the code to other people in an evangelistic spirit. The aim of the communication is to make converts. The code is offered as the means of spiritual salvation for the individual and of cultural salvation for the society. Promises of benefit to the target population need not be immediate or materialistic, for the basis of the code’s appeal is the attractiveness of identification with a more highly organized system, with all that this implies in the way of self-respect. Indeed, in view of the extensiveness of the changes in values often implicit in such codes, appeal to currently held values would often be pointless. Religious codes offer spiritual salvation, identification with God, elect status; political codes offer honor, fame, the respect of society for sacrifices made in its interest. But refusal to accept the code is usually defined as placing the listener in immediate spiritual, as well as material, peril with respect to his existing values. In small societies, the target population may be the entire community; but in more complex societies, the message may be aimed only at certain

groups deemed eligible for participation in the transfer and goal cultures.

3. Organization. The code attracts converts. The motivations that are satisfied by conversion, and the psychodynamics of the conversion experience itself, are likely to be highly diverse, ranging from the maze-like resynthesis characteristic of the prophet, and the hysterical conviction of the "true believer," to the calculating expediency of the opportunist. As the group of converts expands, it differentiates into two parts: a set of disciples and a set of mass followers. The disciples increasingly become the executive organization, responsible for administering the evangelistic program, protecting the formulator, combatting heresy, and so on. In this role, the disciples increasingly become full-time specialists in the work of the movement. The tri-cornered relationship between the formulators, the disciples, and the mass followers is given an authoritarian structure, even without the formalities of older organizations, by the charismatic quality of the formulator's image. The formulator is regarded as a man to whom, from a supernatural being or from some other source of wisdom unavailable to the mass, a superior knowledge and authority has been vouchsafed that justifies his claim to unquestioned belief and obedience from his followers.

In the modern world, with the advantages of rapid transportation and ready communication, the simple charismatic model of cult organization is not always adequate to describe many social and religious movements. In such programs as Pentecostalism, Black Power, and the New Left, there is typically a considerable number of local or special issue groups loosely joined in what Luther Gerlach has called an "acephalous, segmentary, reticulate organization" (1968). Each segment may be, in effect, a separate revitalization organization of the simple kind described above; the individual groups differ in details of code, in emotional style, in appeal to different social classes; and, since the movement as a whole has no single leader, it is relatively immune to repression, the collapse of one or several segments in no way invalidating the whole. This type of movement organization is singularly well adapted to predatory expansion; but it may eventually fall under the domination of one cult or party (as was the case, for instance, in Germany when the SS took over the fragmented Nazi party, which in turn was heir to

a large number of nationalist groups, and as is the case when a Communist party apparatus assumes control of a revolutionary popular front).

4. Adaptation. Because the movement is a revolutionary organization (however benevolent and humane the ultimate values to which it subscribes), it threatens the interests of any group that obtains advantage, or believes it obtains advantage, from maintaining or only moderately reforming the status quo. Furthermore, the code is never complete; new inadequacies are constantly being found in the existing culture, and new inconsistencies, predicative failures, and ambiguities discovered in the code itself (some of the latter being pointed out by the opposition). The response of the code formulators and disciples is to rework the code, and, if necessary, to defend the movement by political and diplomatic maneuver, and, ultimately, by force. The general tendency is for codes to harden gradually, and for the tone of the movement to become increasingly nativistic and hostile both toward nonparticipating fellow members of society, who will ultimately be defined as "traitors," and toward "national enemies."

True revolutions, as distinguished from mere coups d'état, which change personnel without changing the structure, require that the revitalization movement of which they are the instrument add to its code a morality sanctioning subversion or even violence. The leadership must also be sophisticated in its knowledge of how to mobilize an increasingly large part of the population to their side, and of how to interfere with the mobilization of the population by the establishment. The student of such processes can do no better than to turn to the works of contemporary practitioners such as Che Guevara and Mao Tse Tung for authoritative explications and examples of the revolutionary aspect of revitalization.

5. Cultural transformation. If the movement is able to capture both the adherence of a substantial proportion of a local population and, in complex societies, of the functionally crucial apparatus (such as power and communications networks, water supply, transport systems, and military establishment), the transfer culture and, in some cases, the goal culture itself, can be put into operation. The revitalization, if successful, will be attended by the drastic decline of the quasi-pathological individual symptoms of anomie and by the disappearance of the cultural distortions. For such a revitalization to be

accomplished, however, the movement must be able to maintain its boundaries from outside invasion, must be able to obtain internal social conformity without destructive coercion, and must have a successful economic system.

6. Routinization. If the preceding functions are satisfactorily completed, the functional reasons for the movement's existence as an innovative force disappear. The transfer culture, if not the goal culture, is operating of necessity with the participation of a large proportion of the community. Although the movement's leaders may resist the realization of the fact, the movement's function shifts from the role of innovation to the role of maintenance. If the movement was heavily religious in orientation, its legacy is a cult or church that preserves and reworks the code, and maintains, through ritual and myth, the public awareness of the history and values that brought forth the new culture. If the movement was primarily political, its organization is routinized into various stable decision-making and morale-and-order-maintaining functions (such as administrative offices, police, and military bodies). Charisma can, to a degree, be routinized, but its intensity diminishes as its functional necessity becomes, with increasing obviousness, outmoded.

V. The New Steady State. With the routinization of the movement, a new steady state may be said to exist. Steady-state processes of culture change continue; many of them are in areas where the movement has made further change likely. In particular, changes in the value structure of the culture may lay the basis for long-continuing changes (such as the train of economic and technological consequences of the dissemination of the Protestant ethic after the Protestant Reformation). Thus in addition to the changes that the movement accomplishes during its active phase, it may control the direction of the subsequent equilibrium processes by shifting the values that define the cultural focus. The record of the movement itself, over time, gradually is subject to distortion, and eventually is enshrined in myths and rituals which elevate the events that occurred, and persons who acted, into quasi- or literally divine status.

Two psychological mechanisms seem to be of peculiar importance in the revitalization process:

mazeway resynthesis (Wallace 1956a) and hysterical conversion. The resynthesis is most dramatically exemplified in the career of the prophet who formulates a new religious code during a hallucinatory trance. Typically, such persons, after suffering increasing depreciation of self-esteem as the result of their inadequacy to achieve the culturally ideal standards, reach a point of either physical or drug-induced exhaustion, during which a resynthesis of values and beliefs occurs. The resynthesis is, like other innovations, a recombination of preexisting configurations; the uniqueness of this particular process is the suddenness of conviction, the trance-like state of the subject, and the emotionally central nature of the subject matter. There is some reason to suspect that such dramatic resyntheses depend on a special biochemical milieu, accompanying the "stage of exhaustion" of the stress (in Selye's sense) syndrome, or on a similar milieu induced by drugs. But comparable resyntheses are, of course, sometimes accomplished more slowly, without the catalytic aid of extreme stress or drugs. This kind of resynthesis produces, apparently, a permanent alteration of mazeway: the new stable cognitive configuration, is, as it were, constructed out of the materials of earlier configurations, which, once rearranged, cannot readily reassemble into the older forms.

The hysterical conversion is more typical of the mass follower who is repeatedly subjected to suggestion by a charismatic leader and an excited crowd. The convert of this type may, during conversion display various dissociative behaviors (rage, speaking in tongues, rolling on the ground, weeping, and so on). After conversion, his overt behavior may be in complete conformity with the code to which he has been exposed. But his behavior has changed not because of a radical resynthesis, but because of the adoption under suggestion of an additional social personality which temporarily replaces, but does not destroy, the earlier. He remains, in a sense, a case of multiple personality and is liable, if removed from reinforcing symbols, to lapse into an earlier social personality. The participant in the lynch mob or in the camp meeting revival is a familiar example of this type of convert. But persons can be maintained in this state of hysterical conversion for months or years, if the "trance" is continuously maintained by the symbolic environment (flags, statues, portraits, songs, and so on) and continuous suggestions (speeches,

rallies, and so on). The most familiar contemporary example is the German under Hitler who participated in the Nazi genocide program, but reverted to *Gemütlichkeit* when the war ended. The difference between the resynthesized person and the converted one does not lie in the nature of the codes to which they subscribe (they may be the same), but in the blandness and readiness of the hysterical convert to revert, as compared to the almost paranoid intensity and stability of the resynthesized prophet. A successful movement, by virtue of its ability to maintain suggestion continuously for years, is able to hold the hysterical convert indefinitely, or even to work a real resynthesis by repeatedly forcing him, after hysterical conversion, to reexamine his older values and beliefs and to work through to valid resynthesis, sometimes under considerable stress. The Chinese Communists, for instance, apparently have become disillusioned by hysterical conversions and have used various techniques, some coercive and some not, but all commonly lumped together as "brain-washing" in Western literature, to induce valid resynthesis. The aim of these communist techniques, like those of the established religions, is, literally, to produce a "new man."

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of these two psychological processes for culture change, for they make possible the rapid substitution of a new cultural *Gestalt* for an old, and thus the rapid cultural transformation of whole populations. Without this mechanism, the cultural transformation of the 600,000,000 people of China by the Communists could not have occurred; nor the Communist-led revitalization and expansion of the USSR; nor the American Revolution; nor the Protestant Reformation; nor the rise and spread of Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Buddhism. In the written historical record, revitalization movements begin with Ikhnaton's ultimately disastrous attempt to establish a new, monotheistic religion in Egypt; they are

found, continent by continent, in the history of all human societies, occurring with frequency proportional to the pressures to which the society is subjected. For small tribal societies, in chronically extreme situations, movements may develop every ten or fifteen years; in stable complex cultures, the rate of a societywide movement may be one every two or three hundred years.

In view of the frequency and geographical diversity of revitalization movements it can be expected that their content will be extremely varied, corresponding to the diversity of situational contexts and cultural backgrounds in which they develop. Major culture areas are, over extended periods of time, associated with particular types: New Guinea and Melanesia, during the latter part of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, have been the home of the well-known "cargo cults." The most prominent feature of these cults is the expectation that the ancestors soon will arrive in a steamship, bearing a cargo of the white man's goods, and will lead a nativistic revolution culminating in the ejection of European masters. The Indians of the eastern half of South America for centuries after the conquest set off on migrations for the *terre sans mal* where a utopian way of life, free of Spaniards and Portuguese, would be found; North American Indians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were prone to revivalistic movements such as the Ghost Dance, whose adherents believed that appropriate ritual and the abandonment of the sins of the white man would bring a return of the golden age before contact; South Africa has been the home of the hundreds of small, enthusiastic, separatist churches that have broken free of the missionary organizations. As might be expected, a congruence evidently exists between the cultural *Anlage* and the content of movement, which, together with processes of direct and stimulus diffusion, accounts for the tendency for movements to fall into areal types (Burridge 1960).

The Ghost Dance Religion

Alice Beck Kehoe

During the late 1860s, a Northern Paiute Indian named Wodziwob ("white hair") experienced several visions telling him to create the Ghost Dance religion. By following Wodziwob's vision-revealed instructions, the Indians would hasten the day when white people would disappear, dead Indians would live again, and the old Indian way of life would return. The movement experienced early success and quickly expanded from the Great Basin area into California and Oregon but eventually faltered. In 1889, years after Wodziwob's religion had died, a second and more extensive Ghost Dance movement began, this time led by another Paiute Indian, Jack Wilson, or, in the Paiute language, Wovoka ("the woodcutter"). In this selection, Alice Beck Kehoe describes Wovoka's early life with David Wilson, an Anglo rancher, and his family, as well as his preaching as a young adult and his 1889 vision that resulted in his becoming a prophet. Kehoe believes that the Ghost Dance religion was a complete religion and that its basic message, though aimed primarily at Indians, was applicable to all people of goodwill. Wovoka's gospel was especially appealing to the Indians, who in 1889 were suffering from persecution by the whites, epidemics, loss of their economic resources and lands, and continuing attempts to eradicate their customs and beliefs. The Ghost Dance religion spread to the tribes of the Northwest, eventually reaching the plains from Oklahoma to Canada. The religion came to a violent end for the Sioux in late December 1890, with the killing of 370 Indians at Wounded Knee.

New Year's Day, 1892. Nevada.

A wagon jounces over a maze of cattle trails crisscrossing a snowy valley floor. In the wagon, James Mooney, from the Smithsonian Institution in far-away Washington, D.C., is looking for the Indian messiah, Wovoka, blamed for riling up the Sioux, nearly three hundred of whom now lie buried by Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota. The men in the wagon see a man with a gun over his shoulder walking in the distance.

"I believe that's Jack now!" exclaims one of Mooney's guides. "Jack Wilson," he calls to the messiah, whose Paiute name is Wovoka. Mooney's other

guide, Charley Sheep, Wovoka's uncle, shouts to his nephew in the Paiute language. The hunter comes over to the wagon.

"I saw that he was a young man," Mooney recorded, "a dark full-blood, compactly built, and taller than the Paiute generally, being nearly 6 feet in height. He was well dressed in white man's clothes, with the broad-brimmed white felt hat common in the west, secured on his head by means of a beaded ribbon under the chin. . . . He wore a good pair of boots. His hair was cut off square on a line below the base of the ears, after the manner of his tribe. His countenance was open and expressive of firmness and decision" (Mooney [1896] 1973: 768-69).

That evening, James Mooney formally interviewed Jack Wilson in his home, a circular lodge ten feet in diameter, built of bundles of tule reeds tied to a pole frame. In the middle of the lodge, a bright fire

Reprinted by permission of Waveland Press, Inc., from Kehoe, THE GHOST DANCE: ETHNOHISTORY AND REVITALIZATION, 2/e. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2006). All rights reserved. Originally published in 1989.

of sagebrush stalks sent sparks flying out of the wide smoke hole. Several other Paiutes were with Jack, his wife, baby, and little son when Mooney arrived with a guide and an interpreter. Mooney noticed that although all the Paiutes dressed in “white man’s” clothes, they preferred to live in traditional wickiups. Only Paiute baskets furnished Jack Wilson’s home; no beds, no storage trunks, no pots or pans, nothing of alien manufacture except the hunting gun and knife lay in the wickiup, though the family could have bought the invaders’ goods. Jack had steady employment as a ranch laborer, and from his wages he could have constructed a cabin and lived in it, sitting on chairs and eating bread and beef from metal utensils. Instead, Jack and Mary, his wife, wanted to follow the ways of their people as well as they could in a valley overrun with Euro-American settlement. The couple hunted, fished, and gathered pine nuts and other seeds and wild plants. They practiced their Paiute religion rather than the Presbyterian Christianity Jack’s employer insisted on teaching them. Mooney was forced to bring a Euro-American settler, Edward Dyer, to interpret for him because Jack would speak only his native Paiute, though he had some familiarity with English. This was Mason Valley, in the heart of Paiute territory, and for Jack and Mary it was still Paiute.

Jack Wilson told Mooney that he had been born four years before the well-remembered battle between Paiutes and American invaders at Pyramid Lake. The battle had been touched off by miners seizing two Paiute women. The men of the Paiute community managed to rescue the two women. No harm was done to the miners, but they claimed they were victims of an “Indian outrage,” raised a large party of their fellows, and set off to massacre the Paiutes. Expecting trouble, the Paiute men ambushed the mob of miners at a narrow pass, and although armed mostly with only bows and arrows, killed nearly fifty of the mob, routing the rest and saving the families in the Indian camp. Jack Wilson’s father, Tavibo, was a leader of the Paiute community at that time. He was recognized as spiritually blessed—gifted and trained to communicate with invisible powers. By means of this gift, carefully cultivated, Tavibo was said to be able to control the weather.

Tavibo left the community when his son Wovoka was in his early teens, and the boy was taken on by David Wilson, a Euro-American rancher with sons of

his own close in age to the Paiute youth. Though employed as a ranch hand, Wovoka was strongly encouraged to join the Wilson family in daily prayers and Bible reading, and Jack, as he came to be called, became good friends with the Wilson boys. Through these years with the Wilsons, Jack’s loyalty to, and pride in, his own Paiute people never wavered. When he was about twenty, he married a Paiute woman who shared his commitment to the Paiute way of life. With his wages from the ranch, Jack and Mary bought the hunting gun and ammunition, good-quality “white man’s” clothes, and ornaments suited to their dignity as a respected younger couple in the Mason Valley community.

As a young adult, Jack Wilson began to develop a reputation as a weather doctor like his father. Paiute believe that a young person lacks the maturity and inner strength to function as a spiritual agent, but Jack was showing the self-discipline, sound judgment, and concern for others that marked Indians gifted as doctors in the native tradition. Jack led the circle dances through which Paiute opened themselves to spiritual influence. Moving always along the path of the sun—clockwise to the left—men, women, and children joined hands in a symbol of the community’s living through the circle of the days. As they danced they listened to Jack Wilson’s songs celebrating the Almighty and Its wondrous manifestations: the mountains, the clouds, snow, stars, trees, antelope. Between dances, the people sat at Jack’s feet, listening to him preach faith in universal love.

The climax of Jack’s personal growth came during a dramatic total eclipse of the sun on January 1, 1889. He was lying in his wickiup very ill with a fever. Paiute around him saw the sky darkening although it was midday. Some monstrous force was overcoming the sun! People shot off guns at the apparition, they yelled, some wailed as at a death. Jack Wilson felt himself losing consciousness. It seemed to him he was taken up to heaven and brought before God. God gave him a message to the people of earth, a gospel of peace and right living. Then he and the sun regained their normal life.

Jack Wilson was now a prophet. Tall, handsome, with a commanding presence, Jack already was respected for his weather control power. (The unusual snow blanketing Mason Valley when James Mooney visited was said to be Jack’s doing.) Confidence in his God-given mission further enhanced Jack

Wilson's reputation. Indians came from other districts to hear him, and even Mormon settlers in Nevada joined his audiences. To carry out his mission, Jack Wilson went to the regional Indian agency at Pyramid Lake and asked one of the employees to prepare and mail a letter to the President of the United States, explaining the Paiute doctor's holy mission and suggesting that if the United States government would send him a small regular salary, he would convey God's message to all the people of Nevada and, into the bargain, make it rain whenever they wished. The agency employee never sent the letter. It was agency policy to "silently ignore" Indians' efforts toward "notoriety." The agent would not even deign to meet the prophet.

Jack Wilson did not need the support of officials. His deep sincerity and utter conviction of his mission quickly persuaded every open-minded hearer of its importance. Indians came on pilgrimages to Mason Valley, some out of curiosity, others seeking guidance and healing in that time of afflictions besetting their peoples. Mormons came too, debating whether Jack Wilson was the fulfillment of a prophecy of their founder, Joseph Smith, Jr., that the Messiah would appear in human form in 1890. Jack Wilson himself consistently explained that he was *a* messiah like Jesus but not the Christ of the Christians. Both Indians and Euro-Americans tended to ignore Jack's protestations and to identify him as "the Christ." Word spread that the Son of God was preaching in western Nevada.

Throughout 1889 and 1890, railroads carried delegates from a number of Indian nations east of the Rockies to investigate the messiah in Mason Valley. Visitors found ceremonial grounds maintained beside the Paiute settlements, flat cleared areas with low willow-frame shelters around the open dancing space. Paiutes gathered periodically to dance and pray for four days and nights, ending on the fifth morning shaking their blankets and shawls to symbolize driving out evil. In Mason Valley itself, Jack Wilson would attend the dances, repeating his holy message and, from time to time, trembling and passing into a trance to confirm the revelations. Delegates from other reservations were sent back home with tokens of Jack Wilson's holy power: bricks of ground red ocher dug from Mount Grant south of Mason Valley, the Mount Sinai of Northern Paiute religion; the strikingly marked feathers of the magpie;

pine nuts, the "daily bread" of the Paiutes; and robes of woven strips of rabbit fur, the Paiutes' traditional covering. James Mooney's respectful interest in the prophet's teachings earned him the privilege of carrying such tokens to his friends on the Cheyenne and Arapaho reservations east of the mountains.

Jack Wilson told Mooney that when "the sun died" that winter day in 1889 and, dying with it, he was taken up to heaven,

he saw God, with all the people who had died long ago engaged in their oldtime sports and occupations, all happy and forever young. It was a pleasant land and full of game. After showing him all, God told him he must go back and tell his people they must be good and love one another, have no quarreling, and live in peace with the whites; that they must work, and not lie or steal; that they must put away all the old practices that savored of war; that if they faithfully obeyed his instructions they would at last be reunited with their friends in this other world, where there would be no more death or sickness or old age. He was then given the dance which he was commanded to bring back to his people. By performing this dance at intervals, for five consecutive days each time, they would secure this happiness to themselves and hasten the event. Finally God gave him control over the elements so that he could make it rain or snow or be dry at will, and appointed him his deputy to take charge of affairs in the west, while "Governor Harrison" [President of the United States at the time] would attend to matters in the east, and he, God, would look after the world above. He then returned to earth and began to preach as he was directed, convincing the people by exercising the wonderful powers that had been given him. (Mooney [1896] 1973: 771-72)

Before Mooney's visit, Jack Wilson had repeated his gospel, in August 1891, to a literate young Arapaho man who had journeyed with other Arapaho and Cheyenne to discover the truth about this fabled messiah. Jack instructed his visitors, according to the Arapaho's notes:

When you get home you make dance, and will give you the same. . . . He likes you folk, you give him good, many things, he heart been sitting feel good. After you get home, will give good cloud, and give you chance to make you feel good. and he give you good spirit. and he give you all a good paint. . . .

Grandfather said when he die never no cry. no hurt anybody. no fight, good behave always, it will give you satisfaction, this young man, he is a good Father and mother, dont tell no white man. Jueses [Jesus?] was on ground, he just like cloud. Everybody is alive agin, I dont know when they will [be] here, may be this fall or in spring.

Everybody never get sick, be young again,— (if young fellow no sick any more,) work for white men never trouble with him until you leave, when it shake the earth dont be afraid no harm any body.

You make dance for six weeks night, and put you foot [food?] in dance to eat for every body and wash in the water. that is all to tell, I am in to you. and you will received a good words from him some time, Dont tell lie. (Mooney [1896] 1973:780–81)

Seeing the red ocher paint, the magpie feathers, the pine nuts, and the rabbit skin robes from the mesiah, his Arapaho friends shared this message with James Mooney. Jack Wilson himself had trusted this white man. Thanks to this Arapaho document, we know that Jack Wilson himself obeyed his injunction, “Dont tell lie”: he had confided to the Smithsonian anthropologist the same gospel he brought to his Indian disciples.

“A clean, honest life” is the core of Jack Wilson’s guidance, summed up seventy years later by a Dakota Sioux who had grown up in the Ghost Dance religion. The circling dance of the congregations following Jack Wilson’s gospel symbolized the ingathering of all people in the embrace of Our Father, God, and in his earthly deputy Jack Wilson. As the people move in harmony in the dance around the path of the sun, leftward, so they must live and work in harmony. Jack Wilson was convinced that if every Indian would dance this belief, the great expression of faith and love would sweep evil from the earth, renewing its goodness in every form, from youth and health to abundant food.

This was a complete religion. It had a transcendental origin in the prophet’s visit to God, and a continuing power rooted in the eternal Father. Its message of earthly renewal was universalistic, although Jack Wilson felt it was useless to preach it to those Euro-Americans who were heedlessly persecuting the Indian peoples. That Jack shared his gospel with those non-Indians who came to him as pilgrims demonstrates that it was basically applicable to all people of goodwill. The gospel outlined personal behavior and provided the means to unite individuals

into congregations to help one another. Its principal ceremony, the circling dance, pleased and satisfied the senses of the participants, and through the trances easily induced during the long ritual, it offered opportunities to experience profound emotional catharsis. Men and women, persons of all ages and capabilities, were welcomed into a faith of hope for the future, consolation and assistance in the present, and honor to the Indians who had passed into the afterlife. It was a marvelous message for people suffering, as the Indians of the West were in 1889, terrible epidemics; loss of their lands, their economic resources, and their political autonomy; malnourishment and wretched housing; and a campaign of cultural genocide aimed at eradicating their languages, their customs, and their beliefs.

Jack Wilson’s religion was immediately taken up by his own people, the Northern Paiute, by other Paiute groups, by the Utes, the Shoshoni, and the Washo in western Nevada. It was carried westward across the Sierra Nevada and espoused by many of the Indians of California. To the south, the religion was accepted by the western Arizona Mohave, Cohonino, and Pai, but not by most other peoples of the American Southwest. East of the Rockies, the religion spread through the Shoshoni and Arapaho in Wyoming to other Arapaho, Cheyenne, Assiniboin, Gros Ventre (Atsina), Mandan, Arikara, Pawnee, Caddo, Kichai, Wichita, Kiowa, Kiowa-Apache, Comanche, Delaware (living by this time in Oklahoma), Oto, and the western Sioux, especially the Teton bands. The mechanism by which this religion spread was usually a person visiting another tribe, observing the new ceremonial dance and becoming inspired by its gospel, and returning home to urge relatives and friends to try the new faith. Leaders of these evangelists’ communities would often appoint respected persons to travel to Nevada to investigate this claim of a new messiah. The delegates frequently returned as converts, testifying to the truth of the faith and firing the enthusiasm of their communities. Those who remained skeptics did not always succeed in defusing the flame of faith in others.

Never an organized church, Jack Wilson’s religion thus spread by independent converts from California through Oklahoma. Not all the communities who took it up continued to practice it, when months or years passed without the hoped-for earth renewal. Much of Jack Wilson’s religion has persisted, however,

and has been incorporated into the regular religious life of Indian groups, especially on Oklahoma reservations. To merge into a complex of beliefs and rituals rather than be an exclusive religion was entirely in accordance with Jack Wilson's respect for traditional Indian religions, which he saw reinforced, not supplanted, by his revelations. Though the Sioux generally dropped the Ghost Dance religion after their military defeats following their initial acceptance of the ritual, older people among the Sioux could be heard occasionally singing Ghost Dance songs in the 1930s. The last real congregation of adherents to Jack Wilson's gospel continued to worship together into the 1960s, and at least one who survived into the 1980s never abandoned the faith. There were sporadic attempts to revive the Ghost Dance religion in the 1970s, though these failed to kindle the enthusiasm met by the original proselytizers.

"Ghost Dance" is the name usually applied to Jack Wilson's religion, because the prophet foresaw the resurrection of the recently dead with the hoped-for renewal of the earth. Paiute themselves

simply called their practice of the faith "dance in a circle," Shoshoni called it "everybody dragging" (speaking of people pulling others along as they circled), Comanche called it "the Father's Dance," Kiowa, "dance with clasped hands," and Caddo, "prayer of all to the Father" or "my [Father's] children's dance." The Sioux and Arapaho did use the term "spirit [ghost] dance," and the English name seems to have come from translation of the Sioux. The last active congregation, however, referred to their religion as the New Tidings, stressing its parallel to Jesus' gospel.

To his last days in 1932, Jack Wilson served as Father to believers. He counseled them, in person and by letters, and he gave them holy red ocher paint, symbolizing life, packed into rinsed-out tomato cans (the red labels indicated the contents). With his followers, he was saddened that not enough Indians danced the new faith to create the surge of spiritual power that could have renewed the earth, but resurrection was only a hope. The heart of his religion was his creed, the knowledge that a "clean, honest life" is the only good life.

Cargo Cults

Peter M. Worsley

A cargo cult, one of the several varieties of revitalization movements, is an intentional effort on the part of the members of society to create a more satisfying culture. Characteristic of revitalization movements in Melanesia, but not restricted to that area, cargo cults bring scattered groups together into a wider religious and political unity. These movements are the result of widespread dissatisfaction, oppression, insecurity, and the hope for fulfillment of prophecies of good times and abundance soon to come. Exposure to the cultures and material goods of the Western world, combinations of native myth with Christian teachings of the coming of a messiah, and belief in the white man's magic—all contributed to the New Guinean's faith that the "cargo" would soon arrive, bringing with it the end of the present order and the beginning of a blissful paradise.

Peter M. Worsley's article depicts a movement that often was so organized and persistent as to bring government work to a halt. Cargo cult movements still occur in Melanesia, where they are often intermixed with other types of revitalization movements.

Patrols of the Australian government venturing into the "uncontrolled" central highlands of New Guinea in 1946 found the primitive people there swept up in a wave of religious excitement. Prophecy was being fulfilled: The arrival of the Whites was the sign that the end of the world was at hand. The natives proceeded to butcher all of their pigs—animals that were not only a principal source of subsistence but also symbols of social status and ritual preeminence in their culture. They killed these valued animals in expression of the belief that after three days of darkness "Great Pigs" would appear from the sky. Food, firewood, and other necessities had to be stockpiled to see the people through to the arrival of the Great Pigs. Mock wireless antennae of bamboo and rope had been erected to receive in advance the news of the millennium. Many believed that with the great event they would exchange their black skins for white ones.

This bizarre episode is by no means the single event of its kind in the murky history of the collision of European civilization with the indigenous cultures of the southwest Pacific. For more than one hundred years traders and missionaries have been reporting similar disturbances among the peoples of Melanesia, the group of Negro-inhabited islands (including New Guinea, Fiji, the Solomons, and the New Hebrides) lying between Australia and the open Pacific Ocean. Though their technologies were based largely upon stone and wood, these peoples had highly developed cultures, as measured by the standards of maritime and agricultural ingenuity, the complexity of their varied social organizations, and the elaboration of religious belief and ritual. They were nonetheless ill prepared for the shock of the encounter with the Whites, a people so radically different from themselves and so infinitely more powerful. The sudden transition from the society of the ceremonial stone ax to the society of sailing ships and now of airplanes has not been easy to make.

After four centuries of Western expansion, the densely populated central highlands of New Guinea remain one of the few regions where the people still

"Cargo Cults" by Peter M. Worsley from SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, May 1959. Reprinted with permission. Copyright © 1959 by Scientific American, Inc. All rights reserved.

carry on their primitive existence in complete independence of the world outside. Yet as the agents of the Australian Government penetrate into ever more remote mountain valleys, they find these backwaters of antiquity already deeply disturbed by contact with the ideas and artifacts of European civilization. For “cargo”—Pidgin English for trade goods—has long flowed along the indigenous channels of communication from the seacoast into the wilderness. With it has traveled the frightening knowledge of the white man’s magical power. No small element in the white man’s magic is the hopeful message sent abroad by his missionaries: the news that a Messiah will come and that the present order of Creation will end.

The people of the central highlands of New Guinea are only the latest to be gripped in the recurrent religious frenzy of the “cargo cults.” However variously embellished with details from native myth the Christian belief, these cults all advance the same central theme: the world is about to end in a terrible cataclysm. Thereafter God, the ancestors, or some local culture hero will appear and inaugurate a blissful paradise on earth. Death, old age, illness, and evil will be unknown. The riches of the white man will accrue to the Melanesians.

Although the news of such a movement in one area has doubtless often inspired similar movements in other areas, the evidence indicates that these cults have arisen independently in many places as parallel responses to the same enormous social stress and strain. Among the movements best known to students of Melanesia are the “Taro Cult” of New Guinea, the “Vailala Madness” of Papua, the “Naked Cult” of Espiritu Santo, the “John Frum Movement” of the New Hebrides, and the “Tuka Cult” of the Fiji Islands.

At times the cults have been so well organized and fanatically persistent that they have brought the work of government to a standstill. The outbreaks have often taken the authorities completely by surprise and have confronted them with mass opposition of an alarming kind. In the 1930’s, for example, villagers in the vicinity of Wewak, New Guinea, were stirred by a succession of “Black King” movements. The prophets announced that the Europeans would soon leave the island, abandoning their property to the natives, and urged their followers to cease

paying taxes, since the government station was about to disappear into the sea in a great earthquake. To the tiny community of Whites in charge of the region, such talk was dangerous. The authorities jailed four of the prophets and exiled three others. In yet another movement, that sprang up in declared opposition to the local Christian mission, the cult leader took Satan as his god.

Troops on both sides in World War II found their arrival in Melanesia heralded as a sign of the Apocalypse. The G.I.’s who landed in the New Hebrides, moving up for the bloody fighting on Guadalcanal, found the natives furiously at work preparing airfields, roads and docks for the magic ships and planes that they believed were coming from “Rusefel” (Roosevelt), the friendly king of America.

The Japanese also encountered millenarian visionaries during their southward march to Guadalcanal. Indeed, one of the strangest minor military actions of World War II occurred in Dutch New Guinea, when Japanese forces had to be turned against the local Papuan inhabitants of the Geelvink Bay region. The Japanese had at first been received with great joy, not because their “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” propaganda had made any great impact upon the Papuans, but because the natives regarded them as harbingers of the new world that was dawning, the flight of the Dutch having already given the first sign. Mansren, creator of the islands and their peoples, would now return, bringing with him the ancestral dead. All this had been known, the cult leaders declared, to the crafty Dutch, who had torn out the first page of the Bible where these truths were inscribed. When Mansren returned, the existing world order would be entirely overturned. White men would turn black like Papuans, Papuans would become Whites; root crops would grow in trees, and coconuts and fruits would grow like tubers. Some of the islanders now began to draw together into large “towns”; others took Biblical names such as “Jericho” and “Galilee” for their villages. Soon they adopted military uniforms and began drilling. The Japanese, by now highly unpopular, tried to disarm and disperse the Papuans; resistance inevitably developed. The climax of this tragedy came when several canoe-loads of fanatics sailed out to attack Japanese warships, believing themselves to be invulnerable by virtue of the holy water with which they had sprinkled themselves.

But the bullets of the Japanese did not turn to water, and the attackers were mowed down by machine-gun fire.

Behind this incident lay a long history. As long ago as 1857 missionaries in the Geelvink Bay region had made note of the story of Mansren. It is typical of many Melanesian myths that became confounded with Christian doctrine to form the ideological basis of the movements. The legend tells how long ago there lived an old man named Manamakeri ("he who itches"), whose body was covered with sores. Manamakeri was extremely fond of palm wine, and used to climb a huge tree every day to tap the liquid from the flowers. He soon found that someone was getting there before him and removing the liquid. Eventually he trapped the thief, who turned out to be none other than the Morning Star. In return for his freedom, the Star gave the old man a wand that would produce as much fish as he liked, a magic tree and a magic staff. If he drew in the sand and stamped his foot, the drawing would become real. Manamakeri, aged as he was, now magically impregnated a young maiden; the child of this union was a miracle-child who spoke as soon as he was born. But the maiden's parents were horrified, and banished her, the child, and the old man. The trio sailed off in a canoe created by Mansren ("The Lord"), as the old man now became known. On this journey Mansren rejuvenated himself by stepping into a fire and flaking off his scaly skin, which changed into valuables. He then sailed around Geelvink Bay, creating islands where he stopped, and peopling them with the ancestors of the present-day Papuans.

The Mansren myth is plainly a creation myth full of symbolic ideas relating to fertility and rebirth. Comparative evidence—especially the shedding of his scaly skin—confirms the suspicion that the old man is, in fact, the Snake in another guise. Psychoanalytic writers argue that the snake occupies such a prominent part in mythology the world over because it stands for the penis, another fertility symbol. This may be so, but its symbolic significance is surely more complex than this. It is the "rebirth" of the hero, whether Mansren or the Snake, that exercises such universal fascination over men's minds.

The nineteenth-century missionaries thought that the Mansren story would make the introduction of Christianity easier, since the concept of "resurrection,"

not to mention that of the "virgin birth" and the "second coming," was already there. By 1867, however, the first cult organized around the Mansren legend was reported.

Though such myths were widespread in Melanesia, and may have sparked occasional movements even in the pre-White era, they took on a new significance in the late nineteenth century, once the European powers had finished parceling out the Melanesian region among themselves. In many coastal areas the long history of "blackbirding"—the seizure of islanders for work on the plantations of Australia and Fiji—had built up a reservoir of hostility to Europeans. In other areas, however, the arrival of the Whites was accepted, even welcomed, for it meant access to bully beef and cigarettes, shirts and paraffin lamps, whisky and bicycles. It also meant access to the knowledge behind these material goods, for the Europeans brought missions and schools as well as cargo.

Practically the only teaching the natives received about European life came from the missions, which emphasized the central significance of religion in European society. The Melanesians already believed that man's activities—whether gardening, sailing canoes, or bearing children—needed magical assistance. Ritual without human effort was not enough. But neither was human effort on its own. This outlook was reinforced by mission teaching.

The initial enthusiasm for European rule, however, was speedily dispelled. The rapid growth of the plantation economy removed the bulk of the able-bodied men from the villages, leaving women, children, and old men to carry on as best they could. The splendid vision of the equality of all Christians began to seem a pious deception in face of the realities of the color bar, the multiplicity of rival Christian missions and the open irreligion of many Whites.

For a long time the natives accepted the European mission as the means by which the "cargo" would eventually be made available to them. But they found that acceptance of Christianity did not bring the cargo any nearer. They grew disillusioned. The story now began to be put about that it was not the Whites who made the cargo, but the dead ancestors. To people completely ignorant of factory production, this made good sense. White men did not work; they merely wrote secret signs on scraps of paper, for

which they were given shiploads of goods. On the other hand, the Melanesians labored week after week for pitiful wages. Plainly the goods must be made for Melanesians somewhere, perhaps in the Land of the Dead. The Whites, who possessed the secret of the cargo, were intercepting it and keeping it from the hands of the islanders, to whom it was really consigned. In the Madang district of New Guinea, after some forty years' experience of the missions, the natives went in a body one day with a petition demanding that the cargo secret should now be revealed to them, for they had been very patient.

So strong is this belief in the existence of a "secret" that the cargo cults generally contain some ritual in imitation of the mysterious European customs which are held to be the clue to the white man's extraordinary power over goods and men. The believers sit around tables with bottles of flowers in front of them, dressed in European clothes, waiting for the cargo ship or airplane to materialize; other cultists feature magic pieces of paper and cabalistic writing. Many of them deliberately turn their backs on the past by destroying secret ritual objects, or exposing them to the gaze of uninitiated youths and women, for whom formerly even a glimpse of the sacred objects would have meant the severest penalties, even death. The belief that they were the chosen people is further reinforced by their reading of the Bible, for the lives and customs of the people in the Old Testament resemble their own lives rather than those of the Europeans. In the New Testament they find the Apocalypse, with its prophecies of destruction and resurrection, particularly attractive.

Missions that stress the imminence of the Second Coming, like those of the Seventh Day Adventists, are often accused of stimulating millenarian cults among the islanders. In reality, however, the Melanesians themselves rework the doctrines the missionaries teach them, selecting from the Bible what they themselves find particularly congenial in it. Such movements have occurred in areas where missions of quite different types have been dominant, from Roman Catholic to Seventh Day Adventist. The reasons for the emergence of these cults, of course, lie far deeper in the life-experience of the people.

The economy of most of the islands is very backward. Native agriculture produces little for the world market, and even the European plantations

and mines export only a few primary products and raw materials: copra, rubber, gold. Melanesians are quite unable to understand why copra, for example, fetches thirty pounds sterling per ton one month and but five pounds a few months later. With no notion of the workings of world-commodity markets, the natives see only the sudden closing of plantations, reduced wages and unemployment, and are inclined to attribute their insecurity to the whim or evil in the nature of individual planters.

Such shocks have not been confined to the economic order. Governments, too, have come and gone, especially during the two world wars: German, Dutch, British, and French administrations melted overnight. Then came the Japanese, only to be ousted in turn largely by the previously unknown Americans. And among these Americans the Melanesians saw Negroes like themselves, living lives of luxury on equal terms with white G.I.'s. The sight of these Negroes seemed like a fulfillment of the old prophecies to many cargo cult leaders. Nor must we forget the sheer scale of this invasion. Around a million U.S. troops passed through the Admiralty Islands, completely swamping the inhabitants. It was a world of meaningless and chaotic changes, in which anything was possible. New ideas were imported and given local twists. Thus in the Loyalty Islands people expected the French Communist Party to bring the millennium. There is no real evidence, however, of any Communist influence in these movements, despite the rather hysterical belief among Solomon Island planters that the name of the local "Masinga Rule" movement was derived from the word "Marxian"! In reality the name comes from a Solomon Island tongue, and means "brotherhood."

Europeans who have witnessed outbreaks inspired by the cargo cults are usually at a loss to understand what they behold. The islanders throw away their money, break their most sacred taboos, abandon their gardens, and destroy their precious livestock; they indulge in sexual license, or, alternatively, rigidly separate men from women in huge communal establishments. Sometimes they spend days sitting gazing at the horizon for a glimpse of the long-awaited ship or airplane; sometimes they dance, pray and sing in mass congregations, becoming possessed and "speaking with tongues."

Observers have not hesitated to use such words as "madness," "mania," and "irrationality" to

characterize the cults. But the cults reflect quite logical and rational attempts to make sense out of a social order that appears senseless and chaotic. Given the ignorance of the Melanesians about the wider European society, its economic organization and its highly developed technology, their reactions form a consistent and understandable pattern. They wrap up all their yearning and hope in an amalgam that combines the best counsel they can find in Christianity and their native belief. If the world is soon to end, gardening or fishing is unnecessary; everything will be provided. If the Melanesians are to be part of a much wider order, the taboos that prescribe their social conduct must now be lifted or broken in a newly prescribed way.

Of course the cargo never comes. The cults nonetheless live on. If the millennium does not arrive on schedule, then perhaps there is some failure in the magic, some error in the ritual. New break-away groups organize around "purer" faith and ritual. The cult rarely disappears, so long as the social situation which brings it into being persists.

At this point it should be observed that cults of this general kind are not peculiar to Melanesia. Men who feel themselves oppressed and deceived have always been ready to pour their hopes and fears, their aspirations and frustrations, into dreams of a millennium to come or of a golden age to return. All parts of the world have had their counterparts of the cargo cults, from the American Indian Ghost

Dance to the Communist-millennarist "reign of the saints" in Münster during the Reformation, from medieval European apocalyptic cults to African "witch-finding" movements and Chinese Buddhist heresies. In some situations men have been content to wait and pray; in others they have sought to hasten the day by using their strong right arms to do the Lord's work. And always the cults serve to bring together scattered groups, notably the peasants and urban plebeians of agrarian societies and the peoples of "stateless" societies where the cult unites separate (and often hostile) villages, clans, and tribes into a wider religio-political unity.

Once the people begin to develop secular political organizations, however, the sects tend to lose their importance as vehicles of protest. They begin to relegate the Second Coming to the distant future or to the next world. In Melanesia ordinary political bodies, trade unions and native councils are becoming the normal media through which the islanders express their aspirations. In recent years continued economic prosperity and political stability have taken some of the edge off their despair. It now seems unlikely that any major movement along cargo-cult lines will recur in areas where the transition to secular politics has been made, even if the insecurity of prewar times returned. I would predict that the embryonic nationalism represented by cargo cults is likely in future to take forms familiar in the history of other countries that have moved from subsistence agriculture to participation in the world economy.

Urban Rastas in Kingston, Jamaica

William F. Lewis

William F. Lewis's anthropological research and publications focused largely on religion and social movements, most recently with Rastafari culture. In this selection Professor Lewis describes in rich ethnographic detail the personalities and attributes of Nigel, Lion, and David, three urban Rastas living in Kingston, Jamaica. As Lewis describes his interviews with the three Rastas, the reader learns about Rastafarian beliefs, rituals, symbols, diet, and language, as well as other aspects of the people he refers to as "Soul Rebels."

Many Americans think of the Rastafarians as members of a deviant subculture, knowing only the reggae music of the Rastafarian song-prophet Bob Marley, or the Rasta "dreadlocks," or perhaps the Rastafarian reputation as prodigious ganja smokers. The Rastafarian movement began in Jamaica in the early 1930s. Rastas believe that Haile Ras Tafari Selassi I of Ethiopia is their black Messiah—the King of Kings and Lord of Lords—and that black true believers will some day dismiss their white oppressors and be repatriated to Ethiopia, their spiritual homeland. Although the largest number of Rastas live in Jamaica, there are also followers in the United States, England, Canada, Ethiopia, and other parts of the world.

Nigel

On a sultry day in downtown Kingston a weary walker might come upon Nigel lounging on his front steps, shirtless, with a towel draped around his shoulders as he carefully dries himself after one of his periodic splash baths. That is how I first met him. A careless observer might take Nigel to be mad, a stigma with which Jamaican society labels the solitary life free from the cares of family and the demands of social responsibility. However, Nigel is affable, courteous and willing to share his wisdom with sympathetic listeners. I was one of them.

Nigel's conversations with passers-by can become serious communications. He interprets such a happy occasion as the result of a mutual consciousness that compels people to reason with him. True communication is never mere serendipity. Once a male stranger (Nigel seldom if ever converses seriously with a female) demonstrates that his interests are compatible with Nigel's, his scrutiny and suspicion change to a more relaxed and intimate tone. Then Nigel asks the visitor to remove his shoes, unburden himself of his baggage, and empty his pockets of money, tobacco, and combs, things Nigel finds polluting. He requires all to relieve themselves of these demonic influences before any can enter his mansion. I complied.

Nigel's mansion turns out to be the building that housed his formerly prosperous clothing boutique which catered to the sartorial demands of the

Reprinted by permission of Waveland Press, Inc., from Lewis, SOUL REBELS: THE RASTAFARI. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1993). All rights reserved.

Jamaican elite. The quarters are large, two stories high, with spacious rooms that are now bereft of furniture and decoration. Nigel's mansion is but a vestige of the glamour and prestige he enjoyed as one of the wealthiest tailors in Jamaica. The yellow clip-pings that hang willy-nilly from the flaking walls of the main room bear silent witness to Nigel's renunciation of both his business and family. The Jamaican media once celebrated him as a promising designer of clothes for both the wealthy and the celebrated. That was before his commitment to the principles of Rastafari.

Nigel explains his conversion to Rastafari as an odyssey, a passage that began shortly after his appendectomy operation. Then modern drugs and treatments were of no avail in restoring his energy, vitality and spirit. However, an encounter with a Rasta turned into meetings of mutual communication and disclosure. On the Rasta's advice, Nigel drank large amounts of ganja tea and smoked equally large amounts of marijuana. He recovered his health. From then on, he affiliated himself with the ways of Rastafari, and he too hallowed the herb as the healing of nations. Furthermore, he attributes the restoration and continuance of his health to his dedication to the Rasta principles of love, meditation, reasoning and *ital* (natural) foods of which marijuana is a part.

Nigel found peace when he embraced Rastafari. His fashion industry and family were the weapons he created to wage warfare on people. Thus, he divested himself of his career and married life.

Shortly after his conversion in 1981, Nigel began to send funds to Rastas in the rural interior. At that time, Jamaican businesses were recouping their losses suffered under the democratic socialism of the Manley government which had threatened their profits. Nigel recalls how the bank officials thought that he was donating funds to a subversive group in the interior. A popular rumor at the time was that Manley's allies had contingents ready in the country who would help Cuban communists infiltrate Jamaica. Nigel was under great suspicion. The bank refused to handle any of his transactions. The government harassed him on charges of tax evasion. His wife tried to commit him to a mental institution. Nigel muses: "Because I was becoming aware of my own identity, I had to go through this

suffering. That's in the past, the price I paid. Now I am free."

Now Nigel is neither an entrepreneur nor an artist but an ascetic. He refuses to touch money, and only the free will offerings of others sustain him. His meatless diet consists only of fruits, vegetables and an occasional fish. He abhors the eating of animal meat because dead flesh will only cause sickness for the person who consumes it. Nor will he accept any fruit or vegetable whose natural appearance has been altered by any cutting, mashing or peeling. Nigel seems lanky and anorexic. However, his appearance belies his vigor and vitality which are evident in his darting about and enthusiastically engaging the visitor in philosophical discussion about the affairs of the world, the way to health and the meaning of sexuality.

An aroma of ganja smoke clings to Nigel's long, unkempt and natural dreads. This slovenliness too is deceptive because Nigel is particularly fastidious about the cleanliness of his body and he meticulously monitors its functions. This leads him to administer frequent purgatives to himself lest the accumulation of toxins within cause harm for the whole body. His frequent cleansings and purgations of the body as well as the avoidance of contact with any decaying matter, especially a dead body, are normative in Nigel's life. Were these norms violated, his spiritual and physical health would be imperiled.

Without his regimen, Nigel would be unable to find the strength to weave his philosophical reflections through his writings, his conversations and solitary moments of meditation. Esoteric writings and volumes are scattered throughout his quarters. He has amassed stacks of newspaper clippings and sundry writings whose relationship to the philosophy of Rastafari at first glance appears obscure. Nevertheless, Nigel can explain every metaphor and symbol in his literary collection and connect them to what he believes are the truths of Rastafari. Included in his assemblage of works are titles such as: "Dread Locks Judgement," "Anthropology: Races of Man," "Radical Vegetarianism," "Rasta Voice Magazine," "Economy and Business," "Women as Sex Object," and "Pan African Digest." His own essays range from glosses on Joseph Owens' *Dread* and Dennis Forsythe's *Healing of Nations* to highly idealistic writing on a new economic order. Among these pieces is

correspondence from previous English and American visitors to Nigel's mansion.

Nigel's own writings have an intense and highly involuted style which gives them an arcane quality, a form somewhat reminiscent of James Joyce's stream of consciousness. Tolerance and patience are demanded of the reader who wishes to decipher Nigel's turn of phrase and novel transformation of words. Indeed, the uninitiated reader might wonder if the police are not correct in simply shrugging him off as a Rasta who has had too much ganja. His prose is obscure and agonistic, but, nevertheless, he can elicit sense from every syllable, word and line. Nigel's deftness in turning his twisted writings into an articulate message makes him a shaman and mythmaker of sorts, for his vocalizations about the revelation he bears have the rhythm, cadence and timbre of a person standing outside of the self.

...

The Upper Room

Nigel's "Upper Room" is on the second level of the building with two large windows opening to a view of eastern Kingston and allowing the cool breezes from the sea to circulate through the room. It is furnished with a few mats, a raggedy sleeping cot over to the side, a square table on which the herb is blessed, and shelves along the wall on which lie chillum pipes of various lengths. The chillum pipes are stored for other Rastas who might visit and join Nigel for reasoning. In his Upper Room Nigel undergoes his most intense experience with ganja and elaborates ecstatically on Rastafari. In accord with what he believes to be Rastas' tradition, he excludes women from these sessions.

When the brethren have gathered in the Upper Room, Nigel raises his arms toward the East in a grand gesture and blesses the herb with vocalizations resembling glossolalia. "Amharic," he says as an aside, "the Ethiopian language." The blessings are spontaneous and ecstatic, but on listening closely I detected a word that sounded like *mirrikat*, the Amharic word for blessing. Later Nigel mentioned that he learned some Amharic at the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Kingston.

After the chillum is filled, and the herb is burning, Nigel is the first to draw deeply from the pipe. His

chest expands as smoke fills his lungs. He exhales billows of smoke through his nostrils and mouth, and the whiffs frame his lionlike face with tendrils of plumes that seep through his long locks and beard. Through the clouds of smoke, Nigel stares at all in the room with a fierce look, regal, but cutting and penetrating. His demeanor demands a response.

"The conquering Lion of Judah shall break every chain," I acclaim.

Nigel seems pleased with this affirmation of his link with the Emperor Haile Selassie, the Lion of Judah.

Another's turn comes to partake of the chalice, and Nigel passes the pipe with a most respectful gesture. Kneeling before the next brother with his own head bowed low to the floor, his outstretched arms offer him the chillum. The brother accepts, draws from it, and proclaims, "Jah Rastafari."

The chillum moves from participant to participant, brother to brother, each honoring the other with gestures of deference but never permitting their flesh to meet. Bodily contact is assiduously avoided. Soon the participants assume unusual bodily postures. The effect is startling. Nigel takes the lead in displaying great physical agility and dexterity by twisting his body into yogalike positions. All the brethren follow suit. They throw their bodies into lionlike leaps. Nevertheless, their bodily deportments are undertaken with great concentration and awareness, for not once did their acrobatic feats threaten to harm anyone in the room.

"What is love?" asks one of the brothers.

"Love is where there are no starving people. As long as there are hungry people, hatred is in power. Caring and supporting . . ."

Their dance continues, and perhaps ten minutes passes.

"Sex is a performance, a duty."

"Women are for pickneys (babies)."

Another interval, and more of their dancing.

"Burn Babylon." Some begin chanting the familiar lyric.

"Why the police brutality and why youths beaten by Babylon? They steal because they are hungry and want to fill their bellies. No crime in taking food because you are hungry."

"Africa for the blacks, Europe for the whites, Jamaica for the Arawaks."

...

David and Lion

Tourists and Jamaicans alike must cross an unsteady, wooden pier in order to board the ferry that takes passengers from Kingston Harbor to the legendary Port Royal across the bay. Once celebrated as a haunt for pirates and a playground for debauchery, Port Royal now rests quietly on the bay, chastised forever, it seems, by the raging earthquake it suffered in the late seventeenth century. That cataclysm hurled much of the port into the Caribbean.

Near the ramp leading to the pier lazes David, a Rasta brother. He is attending his concession stand which is simply a large crate hoisted on a dolly for maneuverability. From the cart, David sells Red Stripe beer, D & G sodas, as well as Benson cigarettes by ones and twos, and, of course, raw sugar cane and coconut, the most popular items. A sampling from his assortment of refreshments often comes as welcome relief for the overheated traveler after the half-hour trip across the bay.

David and Lion live together in a hovel about twenty yards from their stand. The shack rests precariously on the side of the pier, supported in part by the hanging branches of a huge tree on which part of it also leans. The roof and sidings are constructed of huge pieces of cardboard and plastic sheeting. Nearby, a slipshod folding chair, unworthy of any task, clings to the pier's edge and marks out an area that serves as a reception space for guests. The sound of the rushing water against the piles, the squeaking of the rats, and the dust from the parched earth fill the place David and Lion call home with a romantic irony. They sit between two worlds, perhaps a sign of their liminality. From one viewpoint, Port Royal's outlines loom across the bay standing witness to wanton living long ago. From another angle stands the symbol of law and order, a police station, to which the Rastas pay no heed.

Lion and David eat *ital* food, a healthy low-salt, low-fat and low-cholesterol diet, that consists mainly of vegetables, plantains and the occasional red snapper, caught off the pier. At a clearing away from their hut, they prepare the food on an aluminum can cover some twenty-four inches in diameter. The fare is seasoned with hot pepper and served on tin plates. Sometimes a rat might boldly rush a dish at what appears to be an opportune moment in an effort to wrest a morsel from a distracted diner. The Rastas,

however, are generous and share their food with any of their guests, human and animal alike.

When business is slow at their stand, Lion, David and other brethren hustle on the streets of Kingston, selling anything from boxed donuts to belts and tams (knitted headgear which they themselves have crafted). They are talkative entrepreneurs and quick to prevail upon a prospective customer, especially a white tourist, to purchase one of their handiworks or products.

Reasoning

Toward late afternoon on a hot July day, two brethren arrive at the pier and exchange greetings with David. David assures the visiting brethren that I, the white guest sitting near the hut, have respect and love for Rastafari. Lion emerges from below the rafters of the pier where he was resting and lends support to David's assurances that their white visitor is trustworthy.

When the group is ready, David places the Bible on the ground and marks off a few pages from which he will draw his inspiration. The spliffs are lit with a short grace: "Give thanks." At that moment, however, some youths happen on the scene, probably drawn by the whiff of ganja smoke overcoming the salty sea breezes. They ask for some herb. Lion rebukes the boys and says: "This is high reasoning, boys, and not play." They run off. The Rastas return to the matter at hand.

David mulls over the scriptural passage about the Nazarites and the proscription on the cutting of hair. "Love is the foundation of Rastafari. The covenant is the hair, the locks. This is Godly."

As a group of commuters disembarks from the ferry and hurries by the group, scarcely giving them a glance, Lion comments: "Jamaican people cannot see the truth. They have eyes, hands, feet, but don't use them properly for justice and love. They are blinded."

Rashi holds his spliff and remarks pensively: "Rastas are clever, living for truth. The weed is important. It is healing."

After reflecting a bit on the wisdom in the herb, the Rastas turn to excoriating the success of reggae musicians, a discussion that enlivens the group. Few endearing words are spent on reggae musicians who, the Rastas believe, preach the philosophy of

Rastafari, give interviews to magazines, enrich themselves, but filter none of their profits into the creation of a stronger culture for the rest of the brethren.

“Look how they draw up around Nesta’s place on New Hope, clean and shining. Burn reggae.”

All agree.

Soon the brethren fall into a quiet, meditative mood. A few reflect in low voices on the similarity between the churches and reggae. This prompts David to take up a verse from the scriptures and freely elaborate on it. The verse is: “Let the dead bury the dead.”

“The churches in Jamaica bury only dead people, and take people’s money to build bigger church buildings, instead of providing work and industry for people. The Rasta never dies but has life eternal, as Christ promised. God cannot lie. To have life eternal one must follow the Rasta culture in the Bible. Rasta is a new name. It is the new Jerusalem that Isaiah promised in the prophecy.”

David’s words excite the group, and they all affirm the equality of people. They denounce the hypocrisy of organized religion, reggae and the government for manipulating the Bible and authority. The more their anger with society increases, so much the more does the spontaneity of the gathering quicken.

David takes the spliff from a Rasta reclining next to him. Holding it, he prays that the chalice be not a source of condemnation but a guardian of life eternal. He inhales deeply, holds the smoke within, and for almost a minute after exhalation he gazes intently on me, the white visitor sitting across from him. Then:

“Rasta is not the color of the skin. Blacks hate their fellow man, just like white man hates. Even some Rastas have words on their lips but not in their hearts.”

As darkness draws closer, and fewer people queue up for the ferry, the Rastas become more vociferous.

“Living is for the Rastas. Moses and the prophets are not dead, but reign in Zion, a Kingdom that is better than the one here. I have life. I will never die but go to Zion with Ras Tafari Selassie I” [pronounced as “aye”].

Interspersed among their exultations of Selassie are monotone chantings expressing a yearning for

repatriation to a land of freedom from which they have been exiled.

“Africa yes! But not the Africa of today because it is just as corrupt as Jamaica.”

Silence. The spliffs are lit again, passed around and blessed. The mood changes. The brethren become serious and playful, ecstatic and earthly. Lion leads this flow of sensuousness. He rolls on the ground, smiles, laughs lightly while singing an improvisation on liberty, freedom and repatriation. He kisses the roots of a nearby tree and exclaims: “Jah Rastafari.”

The others participate in his display with their own paeans on liberation and freedom. Soon they too tumble over the ground, enjoying themselves immensely, and encouraging me to “ride the vibes and feel freedom.”

At dusk, bright lights illumine the decks of a British warship that had docked in the harbor earlier in the day. The sharp relief of the ship in the distance prompts Lion to remark:

“War is against Rastafari. Rastas do what is right for life and live forever. Jamaican people love war too much. I don’t know why.”

David pursues the thought further. “I-n-I is never listened to. We are rejected. They have no culture. They steal, kill and shoot.”

Lion snuggles closer to the roots of the tree which are bulging from the parched earth. He seems to caress them.

“I-n-I Rastafari are the love in the world. We are very peaceful, loving and don’t eat poisonous things, no salt, no liver, no dead animals.”

Rashi adds: “We want wholeness, fullness of justice, fullness of love.”

When asked to identify the source of his power, Rashi responds:

“I-n-I is the bible in the heart. The true bible is yet to be written. I-n-I moves beyond the bible. It is a word that we must move beyond. I-n-I live naturally in the fullness of divinity, don’t have to go to school. Truth is in the heart. I-n-I have to learn our flesh and blood. Then everybody gets food, shelter. This is the truth.”

Popes and priests irritate them. “Burn the pope. Burn the pope man. The Church is a vampire with their cars and living in the hills [an area where the elite reside]. The pope is a vampire, wants our blood. Selassie I is the head. The pope is the devil.”

The light fades. More silence. The bay water slaps against the pilings. A rat tears across the planks and startles me. I jump. Lion, however, admonishes me with a reminder that the rat is only a creature.

"The barber shop is the mark of the beast. Comb and razor conquer. The wealth of Jah is with locks, in fullness of his company."

All nod in agreement. I mention that my understanding is increasing.

"Be careful with words, brother," Lion says, "overstand not understand. I people are forward people not backward."

Another interjects: "It is a brand new way of life. The language of I-n-I is forward. I-n-I people will pay no more. For five hundred years, they built Babylon on us, but they will do it no more."

...

Adoring the Father: Religion and Charisma in an American Polygamous Community

William Jankowiak and Emilie Allen

Based on fieldwork in a small town in the western United States, the following article seeks to explain the relationship between the emotional dynamics of polygamous family life and the male-centered theology of a Mormon offshoot movement. Mainstream Mormonism, represented by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, has banned plural marriages since 1890 and today excommunicates individuals who practice plural marriage. However, a small minority of practitioners, many of whom live in isolated rural communities, maintain that the polygynous marriage of one man to many women is an expression of God's will and practice what the present authors call Fundamental Mormonism. Polygamy is illegal in the United States, but the U.S. government has tacitly adopted a "live and let live" attitude toward the community documented here, and the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that children cannot be taken away from parents living polygamously.

Most anthropological studies of polygamy focus on the structure of marriage and household; Jankowiak and Allen instead take a psychological perspective. They explore the emotional experience of individuals in polygamous households, documenting how emotion, memory, and theology generate cultural symbols—in this case, that of the revered father.

The example of polygamous non-orthodox Mormons illustrates the ability of religious communities to redefine themselves in response to changing social and political conditions. Among 19th-century Mormons, 10 to 20 percent of the families were polygamous; more than 30 percent of the families in pseudonymous "Angel Park" are polygamous. It is one of five polygamous communities in the western United States, Canada, and northern Mexico.

"A father's ghost is the one we can never shake."

—A son's comment in Ibsen's *The Ghost*

William Jankowiak and Emilie Allen, "Adoring the Father: Religion and Charisma in an American Polygamous Community" in *ANTHROPOLOGY AND THEOLOGY: GODS, ICONS, AND GOD-TALK* edited by Walter Randolph Adams and Frank A. Salamone. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, pp. 293–316 © 2000. Reprinted by permission.

Introduction

There are few modern cultures where religious meaning is derived entirely from its theological tenets and where religious dogma is forcefully applied uniformly. Most cultures find themselves adjusting to other psychological needs, cultural values, and social and personal interests. Religious meanings, like all cultural meanings, invariably reflect the interplay between official creed and other

structural and psychocultural factors. This interplay accounts, in large measure, for the institutionalization of father adoration, or reverence, in the Fundamentalist Mormon cosmology.

In this chapter we will explore the origins, persistence and meaning of a social and familial institution we will call father adoration or father reverence. It is our contention that father adoration is a psychocultural configuration that arises from four separate, yet intertwined, components: (1) a theology that endows men with a supernatural essence that commands the regeneration of a religious organization primarily, but not exclusively, through copious reproduction; (2) a closed-corporate, theological community that confers its greatest esteem on men in leadership positions as members of the church's priesthood council or on men who are independently wealthy; (3) a polygamous family system organized around a husband/father, who is the primary focal point—at least at the symbolic level—and, who unites the often competing female-centered natal family units; and (4) an American cultural ethos that values emotional familial involvement over a detached, albeit respectful, role performance. Together, these forces introduce new factors into the fundamentalist cosmology which, over time, become incorporated as a new, albeit sacred, aspect of the community's world-view. Within this world-view, fathers are the most valued social category.

We intend to explore how these components not only foster the formation of father adoration; but, also account, in large part, for the variation found within that formation. Specifically, we will examine father adoration as it manifests itself most powerfully: a fondly-remembered, deeply troubling, and socially salient experience of adulthood. The institution of father adoration is a product of numerous factors that are, in themselves, suggestive; but, when they cohere, as they do in Angel Park, they form a seminal family form. The data presented in this chapter were collected between 1993 and 1995, during a seventeen month study of a Fundamentalist Mormon polygamous community we will call Angel Park.

Angel Park: The Religious Community

Angel Park is a sectarian religious community that forms one of five polygamous communities found in the western United States, Canada and Northern Mexico. Each of these communities is separately

governed and maintains only nominal, if any, contact with one another. The population of Angel Park, located in the western United States, is approximately 9,000, including 687 families ranging greatly in size from four to six-eight family members, accounting, in all, for less than one tenth of the 21,000 to 50,000 Americans (depending on which source one uses) who follow a polygamous lifestyle (Quin 1991; Kilbride 1994).

On the whole, Angel Park is a town which from first appearances looks like a rather quaint and ordinary community. Like other small American rural communities, all of its main roads (seven in all) are paved, whereas its side streets are not. It has one grocery store, a health food store, a post office, a police station, a volunteer fire department, two elementary schools, two junior high schools, one high school, three private home schools, and one religious school (first through twelfth grade), one dentist (who is non-Mormon), two gas stations, a small motel, several auto shops, a milk plant, a large mortgage company, three restaurants (two for locals; the other more upscale for tourists on their way through the Southwest), and a petting zoo. The houses and mobile trailers range in size from 32,000 square feet to around 1,100 square feet, with many in various stages of completion or renovation. Because of its location, Angel Park's economy cannot support all of its residents. Most men work in the construction industry while other men and women work in a variety of other kind of jobs (e.g., accountants, janitors, masseuses, caretakers, teachers, nurses, mechanics, and long-distance truck drivers) *outside* the community.

Given the uniqueness of the community's family system, it is easy to overlook the commonalities that Fundamentalist Mormons share with mainstream American culture. Forged out of the nineteenth century American frontier experience, Fundamentalist Mormonism embraces many American middle class values: basic frugality of means, emphasis on controlling one's destiny, a striving of upward mobility and a belief in personal autonomy.

Although many residents of Angel Park feel certain that aspects of the mainstream culture are immoral—e.g., cigarettes, drugs (but not alcohol or caffeine consumption), MTV, R-rated movies, and so forth—most residents occasionally participate in the American consumption ethic even while simultaneously voicing their disapproval of that ethic. Several polygynous families have even appeared on various

talk shows to defend their religiously based lifestyle from stereotypical and shallow attacks. Thus, contemporary fundamentalists are not like the Amish, who sweepingly disapprove of, and strive to withdraw from, contemporary American culture. For the fundamentalist, life is to be enjoyed and that enjoyment includes many of its sensual pleasures (coffee-drinking, alcohol consumption, and eating at all-you-can-eat buffets). Common dinner topics range from religious issues, the merits of secular philosophy, the entertainment value of Jurassic Park to President Clinton's seemingly uneasy marriage and its reflection of changes in American culture, and what herbs are best for preventing sickness.

Angel Park is not isolationist by choice or inclination. Fundamentalist Mormons never rejected American society as much as they feared provoking its wrath. As a middle-aged man puts it, "We follow the law of the land except when it contradicts God's law of plural marriage." Nonetheless, for most of its 80-year existence, the community has repeatedly encountered social harassment and political persecution. Whatever physical and psychological withdrawal fundamentalism has made has been for its own self-preservation.

From 1882 on, federal and state governments sought to disenfranchise the Mormons in Utah. As a result, many polygynists went into hiding, fleeing into remote areas of Utah, Idaho, Arizona and into Mexico. By 1897, almost 200 Mormons were sent to prison for practicing polygyny (Bohannon 1985: 81). However, despite the arrests and the often vocal opposition from Americans outside the community, several church leaders—including some of the founders of the Angel Park community—came to believe that the 1890 Manifesto which declared that polygamy was a sin and, thus, prohibited to any devout Mormon as invalid, and against God's will. During the 1930s, small groups of "true" or "fundamentalist" Mormons rejected the 1890 Manifesto and sought to establish new intentional communities which would provide encouragement, support, and protection for those who wanted to practice their religion in its entirety, which meant the formation of a polygamous family system.

Thus began an ongoing antagonistic and sometimes bitter conflict between Mormon Fundamentalists, the mainstream Mormon church, and state and federal government. From the 1930s until the 1950s, Angel Park was the site of numerous governmental

raids, the last and largest taking place in 1953, which resulted in the arrest of 39 men and 86 women and their 263 children. The children were placed in foster homes for up to two years (Van Wagoner 1991; Bradley 1993: 110). An unintended consequence of the raids was to

Strengthen everyone's conviction and dedication to maintain their lifestyle. Outside pressure had in effect turned everyone into a community of believers" (Bradley 1993: 110).

Since the late 1960s there has emerged a greater tolerance, albeit a reluctant one, between the State and the polygamous community. Although the State remains adamant in its insistence that polygamy is illegal, it has tacitly adopted a "live and let live" attitude toward Angel Park.

Given contemporary American mainstream culture's tolerance toward cohabitation, alternative child rearing practices, and other related social experiments in family living, the polygamist community is culturally and politically tolerated—a position that has been reinforced by the 1987 Supreme Court ruling which found that children could not be taken from their mother solely on the basis of living in a polygamous household. The Court ruled that documentation of child abuse and not unorthodox family form was the primary basis for police intervention (Quin 1991). Today, some community members are openly proud that, after decades of persecution, their religiously inspired way of life has finally received legal protection.

Angel Park is an intentional community where practitioners live, or expect to live, in a plural family. Unlike nineteenth century Mormonism, where an estimated 10 to 20 percent of the families were polygamous (Foster 1991), more than 30 percent of the families are polygamous. Often, individuals who do not plan to create a plural family leave the community. This practice ensures that the community is constantly replenishing itself with those who are committed to living "the principle" (i.e., plural marriage). Recent disagreements within the community have resulted, however, in Angel Park splitting into two rival religious communities or wards (e.g., first and second ward). With the exception of different notions of political succession within the church organization, both wards are, by and large, remarkably similar in their cultural and theological orientation. In this and every other way,

Angel Park has remained, throughout its history, both demographically and culturally, a male-centered theologically governed, family oriented religious community.

Mormon Theology—Christianity and Honoring Thy Father

Mormonism, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS), emerged out of the American frontier experience which shaped, and continues to shape, its interpretation of Christian doctrines. Its theology is grounded in the teachings of three books: *The Bible*, *The Book of Mormon*, and *The Doctrine and Covenants*. The latter two books are prescribed as holy scripture, the words of God revealed directly to Joseph Smith (Musser 1944).

These revelations and doctrines contributed to the formation and growth of a distinctly new kind of American religious canon. Although Mormonism is derived from a Judeo-Christian cultural heritage, it is not a typical Christian denomination. Rather, as Jan Shipps (1985) points out, its reinterpretation of many of Christianity's most basic axioms produced a strikingly novel synthesis which, she insists, generated a new American religion.

With the exception of plural marriage, there are several non-negotiable tenets forming the core of Mormon theology. One such tenet holds that God is a polygamous man who loves all his children, but confers on men and not on women, an elevated spiritual essence which insures that "righteous" living men will obtain a higher spiritual standing. Women's standing, on the other hand, is determined by their performance in the highly valued complementary roles of wife and mother. Men, on the other hand, occupy leadership positions in their families, on the church council, as well as having the potential, in the next life, to become a godhead with dominion over all their descendants. Within this cosmological framework the father is charged with the duty to constantly expand his kingdom by entering into the institution of plural marriage (Musser 1944).

A second tenet holds that an individual's celestial rank is determined by the performance in this life of virtuous deeds. It is important to point out that a man's celestial rank is not determined by the number of wives he has or the number of children he reproduces. It is determined, primarily, by a person's

ability to live righteously, correctly, according to God's will, with the highest virtue reserved to those who enter into a plural family. In contrast, women achieve salvation primarily by becoming a sister-wife (i.e., a co-wife) in a celestial, or plural, family. Because the family unit extends beyond the grave into an eternal world, whereby the marriage contract "seals" a man and woman together "for time and eternity" in the Heavenly Kingdom, it is in a woman's "best interest to advance her husband's interest, which means that she should bear a large number of children" (Bohannon 1985: 81), while also striving to uphold her husband's behavior, especially in front of his children.

Accordingly, Fundamentalist Mormons, more than those of the contemporary mainstream, hold that a central purpose of this life is to prepare for the coming of the Celestial Kingdom, a belief that supports the Fundamentalist's conviction that they are God's chosen people born to live "the fullness of the Gospel" and, thus, create God's ideal—the polygamous family (Baur 1988). This conviction lies at the heart of Angel Park's communitarian impulse to create a socially-unified and spiritually-harmonious united order. Significantly, the creation of this new order depends upon the contribution of the fathers.

Honoring of Fathers and Competing with Fathers

Social standing in every American town is organized around race, wealth, religious membership, and ethical conduct. This is certainly true in Angel Park, a small town which is governed by a religious elite who is "called by God," in a rank order of succession, to the office of the Brethren, or the priesthood council. It constitutes, as such, a sacred charter dedicated to creating a social environment conducive to supporting the polygamous family system.

To achieve this ideal, Angel Park was formally incorporated into a religious trust in order to provide social and economic assistance to its members. The ideal was to create a supportive environment which would enable one to transcend his or her more base human nature and become, in the process, a more tolerant and loving person, and, thus, spiritually worthy to enter into the kingdom of God. Within this religiously-inspired framework, men, as fathers, occupy an important place. Not only are they the

religious specialist in their family, the final arbiter of all spiritual and ethical conflicts, but also the high priests of the entire community.

The history of any group is often shaped through the stories it tells itself. None are as powerful as the historical testimonials that people tell one another in gatherings of public remembrance. In Angel Park, these testimonials invariably focus on their father's heroic deeds and accomplishments which ultimately advanced or improved the community. These testimonials, devotional in tune and presentation, honor the deceased father's memory through the selection of hagiographic accounts that ritualistically praise the fathers' actions, while, at the same time, overlook their shortcomings.

The hagiographies are remarkably alike in their content. They typically tell a story of a just and honorable man whose steadfastness to his religious convictions, often in the face of personal financial loss and hardship, demonstrate his commitment to cherished community ideals or participation in important community activities. These activities included the building of some structures, often a drainage ditch, the operation of a much needed saw mill, the creation of a mortgage company which would employ residents, make large contributions to the community's legal defense, or strive to uphold the United Order.

The public testimonials are customarily received as wonderful tales of loving devotion. The devotional tone can be heard in a mid-twenties woman's remembrance of the role her deceased father played in her life. Delivered during a church service, she stressed how "my father always explained the importance and meaning of the Gospel to his family." "Although," she added, "he was strict and diligent in his work, he was also a concerned and loving parent who always worked with his children so they never got in trouble." She concluded by saying how she loved to "see him in the morning pour milk into his coffee; and; that even today every time she makes coffee the smell reminds me of his wonderful presence." This palpable visionary presence of the father is not uncommon.

The love of the father is found, too, in the remarks of a woman in her mid-thirties, who recalled that, as a young girl, she would go on walks with her father who never failed to explain the importance of the living God's law (i.e., polygamy). She declared, with an

emotional timbre in her voice, that through "his kindness and love, I am a better person." A teenaged, unmarried woman whose father had passed away when she was eight years old, remembered her father as a sensitive man who "I appreciated for his kindness and commitment to the family." She added that "he will always be an inspiration to me."

Father adoration is often expressed outside of church. A man in his forties said at his family's Sunday dinner, where the entire family eats together, to his wives and children, that his father always stressed the importance of eating, at the very least, one meal a week together as a family. "Dad always said," he added (with tears in his eyes), "the family that eats together stays together." He dwelled on his father's enlightenment and how he, too, as a father, wanted to continue what was, for him, a memorable family tradition.

The honoring of the father as either an important founder of the community or the founder of a family line is reinforced by Angel Park's private school requirement that every graduating senior must write a report about either his or her family history or the history of a significant community founder. In this context, a community founder is defined as anyone who made a significant contribution to Angel Park's growth and development. Such a man is regarded as a kind of father to the whole community; and, in a way, everyone's father. Significantly, women, as mothers or wives, are seldom the subject of these student essays. Nor are they ever commemorated during church services. Hagiographies, in Angel Park, are reserved only for fathers.

These examples do not mean that mothers are less loved or regarded as unimportant in Angel Park. Adults are quick to acknowledge their mother's contribution (discussed below). Appreciation of the mother is more private, though not necessarily less emotionally intense. In the public arena, however, Fundamentalists prefer to speak entirely in the idiom of father adoration and seldom in terms of mother adoration. Typically, after the father has "passed to the other side," he is commemorated by the placement of his photo in a prominent place in the family living room. A deceased mother's photo, however, is usually smaller or, if it is the same size, is placed under his, or inconspicuously, on an adjacent wall. The placement of the photos of the deceased constitute the highest form of remembrance and the

declaration of filial affection. In this sense, there is a restricted form of ancestor reverence in Angel Park, with almost exclusive focus on one's father.

Familism: Competing with a Father's Reputation

Although Fundamentalist Mormon theology and church leadership actively discourage familial ranking (i.e., the ranking of families into a hierarchy of relative social worth), it nevertheless flourishes in Angel Park. Its social repercussions encourage a kind of clannishness whereby individuals seek to advance their own reputation; and, indirectly, their family's status through economic achievement and superior moral performance. Although an individual's actions are felt to be either an aspect of family inheritance or something unique to one's own personality, status competition often involves the advancing, or smearing, of a father's reputation. It is not surprising that children but not necessarily adults, often believe their relative social standing depends upon advancing or criticizing one another's accomplishments. There is nothing novel in this pan-human propensity. What is illustrative is the fact that gentle and not so gentle "digs" are couched in a father-centered discourse, which often is nothing more than an exercise in status leveling or status assertion. Such inter-family competition takes place in a variety of settings: 'song duels' between children of rival families, general peer group teasing, and public criticism and ridicule of another's behavior.

One popular form, the song duel, takes place only between children and never, as in the case of the Eskimo song duel, between adults. As an example, an eight-year-old girl encounters two seven-year-old half-sisters from rival religious factions, and immediately sings: "Your family is too simple, just too simple . . ." The seven-year-olds just as quickly repeat the song fragment by substituting the eight-year old's family name in place of their own. Claims and counter-claims are flung backward for the peer group.

Teasing always involves mockery in the name of one's father, another child's supposed family-centered personality traits that the family, and its figurehead, the father are implicated in the defect can be seen in the interaction of children playing a game of playground basketball. When one boy repeatedly

kicked the ball, some children ridiculed his physical clumsiness as "typical of all the Jacksons." In a reversal of father adoration, the Jackson's father is belittled, for he is the source of the clumsiness. Father mockery is inevitable in a community where his adoration is crucial. If the father is mocked, he can also be praised. Positive attributes are seen as a trait typical of a certain family. For example, when a particularly gifted musician performed at her school reception, she was warmly applauded with many in attendance noting in appreciation that "all the Boyds are gifted musicians, just like their father." When one wants to raise up in awe or mock, the image of the father is invoked as an indication of strong feelings either way.

Unlike children's status competitions, which take place in semi-public arena and are directed at a specific person, adults prefer to voice their negative evaluations in private settings amongst family members and close friends. These evaluations invariably take the form of teasing put-downs such as the so-and-so "family puts on airs" or "they think they are so special," in order to uphold, on the one hand, a community ethos of fellowship while, also defending, if not advancing one's own family reputation. There is, thus, in Angel Park, a kind of balance of power involving mockery of fathers and adoration of them as a way of preserving the historical continuity of status. Mockery is one way of keeping certain fathers in their place within the local social hierarchy.

Adult family rivalry often involves the embellishment of one's father's accomplishments through the manipulation of historical facts. Before the religious split in the community, a man who arrived in the community during the 1960s instructed his children, who performed in a school play about the history of the community, a scene that glorified his communal contributions (many of which never happened), while neglecting to mention other men who played a more pivotal historical role. Immediately after the performance, other family members returned home and retold to one another the special exploits of their father in building up Angel Park. Of course, status competition or the manipulation of local history occur in communities and cultures all across America; but, in Angel Park these are invariably expressed in the name of honoring or dishonoring someone's father.

Not every embellished historical account is made to advance a father's accomplishments. Some accounts are invoked to defend what the family considers to be slanderous charges made against their father and, indirectly, themselves. A family's low status can be altered with pervasive historical revisionism. In the 1930s, for example, one man was charged by police for sexual indecency. Fifty years later, his middle-aged daughter habitually explains to anyone who will listen how her father was framed and thus was never sexually immoral. In this way, adults try to maximize their father's memory in order to advance or maintain their position in a social hierarchy that is only partially shaped by principles derived from its fundamentalist theology. In essence, because father adoration is so strong and pervasive a phenomenon in Angel Park, the historically-based status of one's family has a long and durable shelf-life.

The Charismatic Father: Imaging the Polygamous Family

The polygamous family's social organization is derived, in part, from theological axioms which uphold men as the religious specialist and authority in the family; and, in part, from the social dynamics of polygamous family life which make men, as husbands and fathers, the pivotal axis by which wives and children organize attention and internalize family identity. From an organizational perspective, intense and persistent familial attention is on the father as the ultimate adjudicator of family affairs. For children of a plural marriage, the notion of familism and thus belongingness stems from an image of the all-powerful father who is the biological, social and religious pater to his children. In a very practical way, the plural family is held together as much by an image of sharing a common bond as it is with actual memories of interacting with one's father (who embodies the common bond at its highest). It is a bond that needs the active involvement, participation, and affirmation of fathers, co-wives, and mothers.

American psychologists have long noted that, for American children of both sexes, the mother is "the most important figure" (Sered 1994: 57). Because families tend to be organized, in the daily give and take of life, around the mother, there is a general tendency, especially among White American middle-class families, toward developing greater emotional

ties between mothers and children than between fathers and children. Sered (1994) points out that matrifocal units often arise within patrilineal social organizations. In Angel Park, this American tendency toward matrifocality is undermined by the cultural emphasis on the spiritual and administrative authority of the father, while giving equal attention to the husband-wife and mother-child relationship.

Unlike other polygamous societies, Mormon polygamous couples expect to develop strong intense emotional relationships with each other. Such strong husband-wife relationships may undermine a woman's ability to challenge her husband's authority. It is the desire for romantic intimacy that intensifies a woman's identification with the role of wife/lover in addition to that of mother—an orientation that stands in sharp contrast to the mainstream matrifocal ideal where the image of motherhood holds the greater emotional and cultural salience. In Angel Park, a woman's primary emotional and psychological identity often swings between that of wife and mother. This split dampens the pull toward de facto matrifocal units. In a sense, a woman's role is to balance and humanize the desires of marginal intimacy with the needs of her children. To lean too far in either direction would undermine the whole delicately [woven] structure in the polygamous family life.

Because co-wives are often in competition for their husband's attention, they contribute to the idealization process by focusing their children's attention on their father. They are focused on him for attention; so, in a turn, should their children. He becomes the symbolic link between himself, the family, and the community. As mothers, co-wives instruct their children to love and cherish their father and strive to fulfill his expectations. This effort, along with the child's own desire to bond with his father, enhances the father's stature and esteem.

Zablocki (1980) reminds us that charismatic leaders have to constantly prove that they are worthy of the special grace extended to them. He adds (1980: 326) that "tangible failures in the external domain have a way of increasing, rather than decreasing, [a father's] charismatic legacy." Left to themselves, the ideological dreams and day-to-day organizational realities soon go separate ways (Zablocki 1980: 326). The community of Angel Park recognizes the tendency to fragment and strives to achieve consensus

by stressing obedience to higher ideals, as does any close-knit culture or religious group. In the case of polygamists, scriptural authority enhances a father's authority by conferring the priesthood on men alone. A priest can withhold blessings; and, thus, delay a son from going before the priesthood council to request a wife. At the family level, the father's authority is reinforced whenever he leads the family in Sunday school service (usually conducted in his home), participates in arranging the marriage of the children, leads the family in its daily prayers, and reveals his religious dreams to his wives and children.

The experience of visions and dreams are the most vivid evidence of a person's ability to interact with the spirit world. By imparting such religious visions and their meaning to his children and wives, a father's authority is unmistakably affirmed. It is understood that personal visions are of profound religious significance and must be taken very seriously. To this end, polygamists seek to understand God's will through the aid of visions and dreams. Prayers, visionary dreams, and one's own inner promptings are evaluated in an attempt to understand God's will processes; not unlike the approach taken by American Puritans to spiritual values and conflicts. The validity of dreams as a vehicle of truth are so strong in the Fundamentalist religion that they are often the critical guide in making important decisions.

A middle-aged man, for example, told his family about an angel who instructed him that his oldest son would live the fullness of the Gospel (i.e., would stay in the community and form a plural family). In another dream, a father told of his son's ability to support the family and sustain the family unity. Still another father reminded his wives of a vision he had when he was a young man, which signaled that he would live a short life, but very fulfilling. This dream affirmed his religious righteousness and the need to follow his instructions, cherishing his time with them. Such dreams circulate within the family and, at times into the community, serving to uphold the father's authority (directly supported by God) and to make him not only a moral force, but a charismatic presence within the family.

In every moral community there is identification of the self with the leader. If "identification is the process of developing bonds to an object and altering one's actions because of these attachments" (Ross 1993: 58), then the peculiar inter-dynamics of

the American Mormon polygamous family likewise contribute to transforming the father from an important, albeit respected parent, into an all-powerful charismatic figure whose memory is privately cherished and socially adored. Since the father is given God's will, he is the voice of spiritual idealism, he must be heeded. In doing so, he imposes the conditions for transcendence which is derived, in part, from social organization and, in part, from emotional identification with father, the man. This image may or may not be at odds with a son or daughter's actual experience and thus remembrance of their father. Even when it is, however, the power of father adoration is so strong that it can erase the discrepancies.

Love, Ambivalence and Hostility: Resolving the Father

The internal dynamics of polygamous family life contributes to the production of charismatic awe felt towards the father. It is an adoration that will continue throughout most people's lives. It is, however, an adoration tempered by the actual quality of the childhood and teenage relationship with the father. For those whose father passed away when they were children, there is only an unqualified adoration for the father. However, for those who had long-term interaction with their father, their memories are less clouded with idealization and based on fantasy and more grounded in actual reality. The reality forces or compels many sons and daughters to assimilate the cultural ideal to their own more personal encounter which may be less than perfect. Before exploring the darker side of father-child interaction, we want to look at the children's perspective, especially those whose father died when they were too young to have many meaningful or memorable interactions.

A common theme, a consistent lament, in Angel Park is the yearning of children for a closer relationship with their deceased father. A fourteen year-old boy, for example, whose father had passed away six years earlier, when asked about the importance of a father, said that

A father is so important for a boy. He will give you guidance, leadership and direction. I regret I didn't have a closer relationship with my Dad before he passed to the other side.

The intensity of such idealism is revealed in the following event. An eleven year-old girl was walking up a mountain path when she spontaneously exclaimed, "I remember going up here with Dad. It was so wonderful." She turns to her mother and asks, "Mom, did I go up here with Dad?" The mom nods, and the girl says, "Yes! I remember it was so often."

Another example of how yearnings for close intimacy contribute to generating an idealized posture toward one's father can be seen in a twenty-five year-old woman's efforts to come to terms with her biological father who abandoned her mother and left the community when she was a toddler only to return when she was a teenager. She refused to accept her step-father as her father, but rather maintained a detached and resentful posture toward him. Toward her biological father, however, she maintained a positive, albeit fantasy grounded, relationship. Although now in her late twenties and with seven children, she calls her biological father twice a week "just to talk about things with the man I adore." One's ego identification is based, in part, on recognizing one's biological roots and, in part, on rendering homage, regardless of biology, to whoever is the patriarchal family head. In this instance, however, she refused to accept her step-father and preferred to dwell on an idealized image of her biological father who would some day return and be worthy of her love.

The above idealizations are as much about fantasy as they are about reality. As psychological projections, they are a familiar theme in mainstream American society. What is unusual about these accounts from Angel Park is the tendency to recall only enjoyable or blissful childhood experience involving one's father.

Although Fundamentalist Mormons want nothing more than to honor and admire their fathers, often as not, despite their best efforts, it is a qualified honor. It is, nonetheless, the depth and persistence of the desire to do so that indicates the hold of father adoration as an institution. Because the father's actual involvement with his family ranges from intimate involvement to outright indifference, it is not surprising that there is a deep underlying ambivalence toward one's father; who, as a valued social symbol, is the focal point of family organization and identity. In effect, the father is the key metaphor that

links the church and self together into a unified cultural system.

There are two often competing images of the father in Angel Park. The cherished and revered public image (discussed above) is often modified, in private conversation, by a more guarded and obviously ambivalent attitude which ranges from clear fondness to smoldering resentment and outright rejection. Given the community's social dynamics and the core tenets of its religious creed, most are uncomfortable in acknowledging their ambivalence, and prefer instead to praise their deceased father's memory. However, the actual reality of their father-child interactions, as often as not, gets into the way.

The quality of one's feelings toward one's father depends on the degree of the father's involvement in his child's life. If the father passed away when his children were young, as we have shown above, there is a tendency to internalize their father as a revered and valued symbol. Here the idealization is personal in tone and substance. It is a fantasy but it is still valued. For those who maintained a long-term interaction with a father who was an active parent, but emotionally aloof, the idealization process is seldom complete.

We found that if the father had a warm relationship with his children there is no contradiction between the father's public image and the child's actual remembrance (as an adult) of their interaction. However, if the father-child relationship was grounded in what a child believed was an abusive relationship, then that adult daughter or son's attitude could veer from absolute adoration to smoldering resentment. If one felt anger toward one's father and still lived in the community of Angel Park, that anger would be reconciled with that the cultural ideal of the father as the central person. The reconciliation often takes place in three ways: absolute adoration, guarded adoration, and rejection. Guarded adoration, by far the most common attitude toward the father, is characterized by maintaining a clear distinction between the accomplishments of the father, the cultural and family symbol, and the qualities of the father as a man. For example, sons of a prominent family repeatedly praised their father's accomplishments and what he had meant to them. But, in private, they acknowledged their lack of real closeness and the emotional gap it left in their lives.

Significantly, brothers, more than sisters, admitted a fear of their father and, even, at times, a deep resentment. One brother recalled that he admired deeply his father, but often wondered if he loved him. He noted that, personally, he had no difficulty in distinguishing between his father as a cultural symbol from his actions as a man. Such an ability to compartmentalize is not shared by most of his nineteen other brothers who feared the consequences and were anxious of the implications of a failure to completely honor their father's memory. The brother further observed that

My brothers are afraid that if they acknowledge the more personal aspects of his [father] character they might hate him. They do not want to look or acknowledge that he was also a man. They can only handle him as my honored father. They think they have to adore him in every way or not at all.

For them, there could never be guarded adoration, only an absolute one.

An example of guarded adoration can be heard in one middle-aged woman's reminiscence that she "wasn't close to my dad. The only reason I want to write my father's life history is to do it before someone else does and then read it at our church service." For her, it is celebrating the father's public image and publicly proclaiming that hold the greater interest.

Another attitude is total rejection. When a son or daughter rejects, especially in conversation, his or her father, it usually means that they no longer participate in the community's social life. By rejecting the father as a critical cultural symbol, the individual effectively severs his ties to the wider cultural and religious order. He or she can now leave the community, which they invariably do. Rejection of the father entails a kind of self-exile from Angel Park—so deep is the necessity of father adoration that when rejections occur, the child will often bitterly curse his or her father.

It is important to point out that in every polygamous culture there is a shortage of women. Angel Park is no different. Most sons must leave the community to search for a wife who, more often than not, refuses to convert to the religion and move back to the community. In these instances, the son leaves the community to find a wife and not because of a strained relationship with his parents, living or dead; whereas rejection of the father usually means

rejecting the religion; rejecting the religion or its community does not necessarily mean it will result in the rejection of the father.

The various attitudes toward the father hide a deep-seated ambivalence and emotional vitality which can fuel his idealization as bearer of family pride and identity. We believe that ambivalent anger toward the father actually contributes to the institutionalization of father adoration in Angel Park primarily by rechanneling the guilt that accompanies the rejection. The characteristic ambivalence does not satisfactorily reconcile the father-son relationship; and, as such, constitutes an emotional reservoir for the unresolved emotions that shape the style in which father adoration is manifested in ceremonial and ordinary life in Angel Park.

In contrast, mothers are seen as an emotional constant: warm, nurturing and intimate. They embody strength and continuity and are seldom perceived to be a force to contend with. Seldom feared or rejected, they are the emotional, but not symbolic, glue that holds the polygamous family together. More importantly, there is not the difficulty and sometimes troubling expectations and pressure of adoration or reverence. It is not a culturally proscribed response. The bifurcation of the father into two parts, the symbol and the man, is one means that men and women in Angel Park use to manage what is, for many, a ghost they can never shake.

Conclusion

The emergence of father adoration arises, in part, from theological centrality of the father in the Fundamentalist Mormon religious system as well as from the peculiar social dynamics of the polygamous family household. It is the social dynamics, and not just an endemic form of child-rearing practice that generates this phenomenon.

We have sought to explore the interplay between the psychocultural dynamics of the polygamous family and its male-centered theology and how it transforms the father into a revered cultural, if not personal, symbol. Although fundamentalist theology discourages familial ranking, the dynamics of living in a close-corporate community, especially one organized around a patriarchal theology, encourages the development of an intense sense of familism that is crystallized in the adoration of the father.

It is the transformation of the father, but not the mother, into a venerable, powerful, and loving memory that distinguishes the contemporary Fundamentalist Mormon community from the mainstream Mormon church as well as from the numerous Christian denominations. In periodically

gathering together in the name of the father, the family and the community celebrate their cultural heritage as well as renew their dedication to the creation and maintenance of what it believes to be the Heavenly Father's ideal family unit—the polygamous family.

Religious Dimensions of the UFO Abductee Experience

John Whitmore

Although rarely discussed in terms of religion, UFO abduction—or the belief that one has been abducted by unidentified aliens—holds fascinating parallels with religious experiences, as argued in the following article by John Whitmore. The stories told by abductees fit the typical patterns of many religious narratives worldwide, including visions, initiations, encounters with godlike leaders, and the receipt of profound messages intended to benefit humanity. Like other religious experiences, the idea of contact with aliens suggests an encounter with the nonhuman Other. In modern tales of supernatural abduction, however, the encountered Other is not a deity, spirit, or demon but a being with extremely advanced technology. Whitmore bases his study on primary source materials about UFO abduction, such as popular books and magazines, and notes that participants themselves often interpret their experiences in religious terms. Without directly attacking the credibility or authenticity of UFO narratives, Whitmore gently suggests that UFO beliefs stem from the same psychological and cultural sources as more traditional religious beliefs. He ends with a plea for scholars of religion to pay attention to this significant theme in popular culture.

Stories of UFO abduction have been reported more frequently in the United States than in other countries, and they became increasingly prominent in the last decades of the 20th century. These narratives prompt us to consider the relationship between emergent forms of religious experiences, concepts of Otherness, and the effects of changing technology on humans' view of their place in the universe.

In recent times, the subject of UFO abductions has gained immense popularity, both with the public and with a small group of scholars and writers who have turned their attention to the UFO phenomenon. The number of people who claim to have been abducted by occupants of UFOs has been rising almost exponentially since the early 1970s when the subject was first granted acceptance by the media and the

ufological community. With the publication in 1987 of Whitley Strieber's *Communion*, interest in abductions and abductees exploded. Strieber's account, written with skill by an accomplished author, presented the bizarre details of UFO abduction in an accessible way, spurring the book to the top of the *New York Times* bestseller list. In the wake of this success, talk shows on radio and television fed the public interest in the abduction phenomenon with a steady diet of reports of individuals who believed that they, too, had been abducted.

Contemporaneous with the rise in popularity of Strieber's book was the work of UFO researchers who were dedicated to examining abductions. Individuals

Reprinted by permission from THE GODS HAVE LANDED: NEW RELIGIONS FROM OTHER WORLDS, edited by James R. Lewis, the State University of New York Press. © 1995 State University of New York. All rights reserved.

like Bud Hopkins, whose own book *Intruders* (1987) made it to the bestseller list, came to dominate the field of ufology. Hopkins and those who share his methodology believe that UFO abductions are a widespread phenomenon that are not always remembered by the victims. Hypnosis is considered a powerful and reliable tool for retrieving these memories, which Hopkins and others argue reveal a specific pattern of action on the part of UFO occupants. In contradistinction to Strieber, who considers his own experiences to be mainly inexplicable, hypnosis-using researchers tend to have clearly defined theories about the nature and purpose of the abduction phenomenon. These theories have come to dominate the field of ufology. A quick examination of UFO books published in the last eight years reveals that books on abductions have outnumbered books on all other subjects related to UFOs combined, by a substantial margin. Popular magazines devoted to UFOs have become almost exclusively concerned with abductions in recent years.

The popularity of abductions has led to a proliferation of first-person accounts, both remembered consciously and retrieved through hypnosis, which are accessible to the researcher. These primary sources reveal a wealth of bizarre detail which is not wholly amenable to the neat theories of many ufologists. A careful examination of abduction narratives indicates that the patterns alleged to have been discovered by abduction investigators often have religious overtones or similarities with more traditional types of religious experience. In addition, the abduction experience is often given a religious meaning by the percipient, and these interpretations are habitually overlooked or ignored by the UFO investigator. The purpose of this chapter will be to examine the abduction phenomenon from the standpoint of religious studies, concentrating on the primary sources with careful attention to religious interpretations of the events that form the pattern of abduction experience.

Sketching the general characteristics of the phenomenon is the first step in such an analysis. In coming to grips with the claims of abductees and researchers, the practice of hypnosis must first be considered. The use of hypnosis to investigate UFO abductions dates back to one of the earliest instances of the phenomenon, the story of Betty and Barney Hill in 1963 (Fuller 1966). In the overwhelming

majority of cases available for research, the memory of the abduction event was obtained or clarified through hypnosis. Typically, the abductee consciously recalls little or nothing about the experience. Certain telltale signs, such as unaccounted for spans of time, uneasy feelings associated with UFOs, or the sense of a presence in the bedroom before falling asleep, serve to clue the vigilant researcher into the possibility that an abduction has occurred (Hopkins 1987). Hypnosis is then generally used to explore the abduction experience.

While the reliance on hypnosis is heavy among abduction researchers, most seem to be aware of the difficulties inherent in the process. Hypnosis apparently allows access to a subconscious level of an individual's psyche, allowing him or her to recall repressed memories of actual events, but also making it possible to derive "memories" of things which have never happened (Klass 1988). Hypnotism greatly increases a subject's suggestibility, infusing him or her with a desire to please the questioner and making the subject very susceptible to leading questions (Jacobs 1992). Although they recognize these limitations, researchers, with few exceptions (Vallee 1988), contend that when used competently hypnosis is an accurate tool for uncovering factual details of the abduction event. It would be premature, however, to dismiss the possibility that many, if not all, abduction memories are confabulations of the subconscious, guided by the preconceptions of the hypnotist. Noted UFO debunker Philip Klass favors this view, and rather plausibly dismembers some better known cases by applying this theory. Scott Rogo (1990) also argues for a more psychological view of UFO abductions and his work applies psychoanalytical principles to abduction experiences, showing how such experiences could easily be products of the anxieties of participants.

The nature of accounts obtained through hypnosis is important for understanding the religious characteristics of the abduction phenomenon. As Jung (1958) has argued, specifically in relation to UFOs, the subconscious is a storehouse of religious ideas and symbols. Such symbols can become exteriorized through anxiety or stress. Thus, the religious imagery and interpretation brought out by hypnosis could be confabulations of the subject's subconscious and perhaps worked into a UFO narrative in an effort to please the hypnotist. In his research, Jung

noted that certain complexes of religious symbols appeared time and time again in widely separated subjects. The prevalence of similar patterns in part gave rise to his theory of a collective unconscious, a fund of ideas and imagery shared by all people. This theory may also help to explain the similar patterns, filled with religious overtones, which abduction researchers claim to find among their subjects.

The applicability of a Jungian form of analysis to UFO abductions is further strengthened by the markedly dreamlike character of the experience. Dreams are the most common arena in which religious symbolism is encountered. One of the signs noted by abduction researchers as indicative of an abduction event is the prevalence of dreams containing UFOs or alien-related imagery. In many of the cases in which the abduction is at least partially recalled prior to the use of hypnosis, it is recalled as a dream rather than as an objective event. For example, Kathy Davis, the main subject of Bud Hopkins's bestseller *Intruders*, consistently believes that her experiences were a series of dreams about UFO abductions. In his investigation, Hopkins hypnotically examines the alleged abduction events by directing her towards these dreams and asking her to recount their details. Hopkins explains that Davis remembers these events as dreams in order to shield her psyche from the unsettling implications of their reality. Unless one is strongly committed to a theory of extraterrestrial genetic engineers, as is Hopkins, it is difficult to dismiss Kathy Davis's contention that the events were in fact dreams.

An examination of the available primary accounts of abductions also reinforces the dreamlike character of the phenomenon. Often the abductee reports being outside her body during certain stages of the event, or views herself in the third person throughout. Abductees report very common dream imagery during the course of their ordeals, such as floating or flying, falling endlessly, or appearing naked in a public place. Time and space appear disjointed in a nonsensical, dreamlike way. Day instantly becomes night, the inside of a room or craft appears far larger than its exterior dimensions would allow, and events which subjectively seem to have taken hours are found to have taken minutes, or vice versa. Massive structures or huge gatherings of people are reported in places familiar to the abductee, places where they could not possibly have been (Fiore

1989). The phantasmagoric texture of a reported abduction is arguably its prime characteristic, and, much like dreams of a more prosaic kind, the abduction contains patterns and images of religious significance.

The patterns alleged to exist in tales of UFO abductions are, upon first glance, quite convincing. The presence of so many intricate details concerning the appearance of the aliens, the procedures undergone, and the messages imparted to the victim seem to argue strongly against the hypothesis that abductees are simply lying. Researchers such as Hopkins and David Jacobs (1992) contend that these patterns only begin to make sense if the abductions themselves are objective events perpetrated by extraterrestrials with scientific motives. However, such researchers tend to ignore the religious connotations of these patterns and details.

Abductions often begin with the perception of light: extremely bright light that causes the percipient to become paralyzed, blinded, or generally disoriented. Sometimes the light renders the abductee unconscious. This intense light is usually identified as the light of a flying saucer or extraterrestrial vehicle. The religious symbolism inherent here is quite obvious. The appearance of a brilliant light is often said to herald an encounter with the divine Other. Paralysis, blindness, and disorientation are associated with this light. The experience of Saul on the road to Damascus, Muhammad on the Night of Power, or Arjuna in the *Mahabharata* are well-known examples of divine encounters which conform to the model. Bright lights and their attendant effects are stock harbingers of the numinous experience.

Alternately, the experience begins in the nighttime, at the abductee's home, right before falling asleep. The abductee sees one or more beings approaching her bedside, often after passing through walls or closed windows. The abductee usually feels paralyzed at this point, and often loses consciousness. The bedside visitors then take the abductee into their craft, once again passing through walls and taking their victim with them. Visions of beings or faces over the bed before one falls asleep is among the most common of all hallucinations, occurring in the distinctive mental state that lies between waking and sleeping. The visions of abductees have analogies to the experiences of religious ecstasies and saints, who report seeing angels, demons, or revered religious

figures coming to them in the night (Evans 1985). Often, these figures lead the mystic on a journey to view heaven or hell, or counsel him in religious matters. Strieber (1988) reports being transported by his visitors to strange, unearthly realms, as do Davis (Hopkins 1987) and Andreasson (Fowler 1990).

After the light, the abductee encounters the aliens. The alien is, as the name suggests, the personification of the Other, utterly nonhuman. Although descriptions vary somewhat, the alien is described as having a large forehead, denoting superhuman intelligence; dressed in shining garments without seams or fasteners; with unblinking, penetrating eyes. The alien often floats or flies, and speaks to the abductee without moving its lips. This complex of attributes is standard for many types of supernatural beings, from angels as described in Christian medieval texts (Vallee 1988) to the devas encountered by Nala in the *Mahabharata*. The alien's appearance marks it as not of this world, and the technology which surrounds it, spacecraft and high tech machinery, shows it to be superior to humanity.

In their encounters with this superhuman Other, abductees report being floated upwards into a waiting craft. Oftentimes, they pass through walls or other obstacles and feel disembodied, as if their soul only were being taken to the UFO (Hopkins 1987; Fowler 1989). Aboard the ship, abductees report frightening details. They are poked, prodded, and molested, most often in a sexual manner. They are subjected to painful medical procedures by groups of aliens, and are even dismembered, body parts severed and organs removed, only to be reassembled (Hopkins 1987; Fiore 1991). After the physical ordeal, they are subjected to some sort of spiritual examination. An alien, generally taller or more authoritative than his fellows, probes their souls. Abductees often report feeling that their memories are being examined or their souls scrutinized, perhaps for some spiritual flaw. After this, abductees are given messages in their minds which they take back with them when they return to normal life. Often these messages concern the purpose of the alien's visit—to interbreed with humanity in order to produce a new hybrid race. Abductees are told that they themselves, or humanity as a whole, are somehow creations of the aliens. The messages can be eschatological in character, forecasting a coming catastrophe or the dawning of a new age.

This scenario has many exact parallels to traditional accounts of shamanistic initiations. Shamanism, an archaic religious complex centered around ecstatic visionary experiences, is widespread among primordial peoples across the globe. The psychological factors inherent in shamanism have been discussed (Silverman 1967) and the broad stages which characterize shamanistic initiation have been outlined (Halifax 1982), in ways that reveal striking similarities with the patterns of UFO abductions. Shamanistic initiations begin with the individual being pulled into the world of the Other, experiencing an isolation from society. They involve brutal physical and mental ordeals, often centering around dismemberment and torture. After being judged worthy by his tormentors, the shaman's nature and mystical ancestry are revealed to him, much as the abductee is given knowledge of her descent. The shaman is often given eschatological knowledge, and returns to society as a healer and religious authority chosen by the spiritual realm. Inexplicable healings and feelings of having been chose are also reported by UFO abductees. Both types of experience are extremely frightening, personality-altering encounters with the Other, perceived at least at first as the Jungian Shadow, mysterious and threatening to the conscious self. Both leave definite, permanent imprints on the psyche of the percipient.

The most important part of the procedures undergone by the abductee, at least in terms of the amount of time spent on it by abduction researchers, is the genital examination. Abductees, both male and female, report having their reproductive systems scrutinized by the aliens, either by hand or with sophisticated-looking instruments. Quantities of sperm and ova are obtained in a process often involving some type of sexual stimulation. In one very early abduction case, a Brazilian farmer actually had intercourse with an attractive female alien (Vallee 1989). Such direct means of obtaining genetic material are sometimes reported, but most often the abductee is aroused in some inexplicable mental way, and often brought by this shadowy means to orgasm (Hopkins 1987; Jacobs 1992). Abductees' minds are filled with erotic images, exciting them against their will. Female abductees are often vaginally penetrated at some point during their experience, and male abductees also tend to report anal penetration by some uncomfortable instrument (Strieber 1988).

The presence of this overt sexual imagery may at first glance offer no insight into the religious significance of the abduction phenomenon. However, as Jung has noted (1958), sexual imagery is often found to be associated with the encounter with the Other. Sexuality is a powerful component of the individual psyche, and one of the primary arenas for the day-to-day confrontation with otherness is the individual's dialogue with the opposite sex. The sexual symbolism often associated with religious experience is in this view an underscoring of the otherness which typifies the encounter with the numinous.

Some abductees report the healing of some ailment as a result of their abduction. The medical processes undergone are in these cases directed at correcting some chronic condition. Abductees claim that other humans aboard the UFO with them also undergo healings, and the aliens explain that these healings have a spiritual component as well as a physical effect. In one case, an abductee viewed a group of people who the aliens said was to be sent down to disadvantaged areas of Earth in order to engage in healing missions (Fiore 1989). The healing powers of God or superhuman beings have long been a subject of religious belief, and to find aliens involved in miraculous, if technological, healings is perhaps not surprising. The connection with shamanistic initiation, in which the shaman returns from his trip as a healer, has already been noted.

At some point in their experience, many abductees report meeting a leader of the aliens. This leader, who is usually physically distinguishable from his fellow aliens, spurs a strong reaction in the minds of the abductees. The alien often reassures the abductee, mysteriously removing any pain felt during the exam (Fiore 1989). Some abductees seem to feel that the alien leader is extremely "good," and bond to him in a warm, emotional way. The abductee implicitly trusts the leader, and feels as if she has known him all her life. Often, the abductee simply feels love for the alien (Jacobs 1992). The feelings may even be sexual, once again emphasizing the otherness of the encounter. Such feelings of goodness, trust, and deep love, linked in abduction cases to the alien leader, are in more traditional types of religious experience often predicated of the divine. The leader of the aliens is the ruler of the numinous realm of the Other into which the abductee is drawn, and is as

such a personification of Otherness, in a manner analogous to God.

A more detailed examination of the messages received by abductees from UFO occupants reveals a wealth of religious details. The content of these communications is often extremely difficult for the abductee to recall, even under hypnosis, and requires great effort on the part of both the hypnotist and the abductee to uncover. Often, the abductee only remembers that she was given some sort of message, and is told by the aliens that she will be unable to remember the content until a later date, "when the world is ready to accept it" (Fiore 1992). These messages can be divided into four distinct classes, each with a specifically religious connotation.

The first type of message is the moral injunction. The aliens tell the abductee that humankind has been behaving very badly, and that if they don't mend their ways, the planet will suffer some sort of chastisement. Sometimes the moral message is quite practical; if the nations of the earth do not stop their constant bickering and experimentation with nuclear weapons, they will assuredly destroy themselves (Fiore 1989). Others are more metaphysical, proclaiming that humans must adopt a more loving attitude towards their fellows and their planet if they are to survive. Sometimes the aliens themselves claim that they will take an active role in the moral sphere, and are ready to destroy humanity if we do not spiritually mature or if we pose a threat to other worlds. These types of messages bear strong resemblances to the prophetic utterances of the UFO contactees of the '50s and '60s. The theme that humankind's moral activity is the interest of some superhuman being is of course a stock theme of Christianity and most other religions, although in this case the judgment is meted out to man not by Jesus Christ but by a powerful alien race.

Other messages are more strictly apocalyptic in character, forecasting a horrible catastrophe on a worldwide scale that will bring about the end of history. Some form of drastic ecological collapse is currently the most popular scenario, ozone depletion or the corruption of the world's oceans being particularly favored (Strieber 1989). The human race however will survive, either by being transplanted to some safe planet to live in paradisiacal comfort, or through becoming one with the aliens through their process of hybridization. The union of man and

alien, sharing in the technological power and moral strength of the latter, raised by this union to a superlative degree and redeemed from the perils of earthly existence, is the aliens' final goal according to these abduction narratives (Fowler 1990).

The theme of being chosen also forms an important part of the messages received by abductees. They are told that they are special or important to the aliens and that their experiences are part of some larger plan (Jacobs 1992). They are sometimes charged with conveying the aliens' message to the people of earth, or informed that the aliens have chosen to reveal themselves to humanity through them (Fiore 1989). They are often told that they will know when the time is right to reveal their election and the aliens' gospel.

Other messages claim to reveal the identity and purpose of the aliens. The aliens have come from a distant planet and are busy on earth performing some type of genetic experimentation (Hopkins 1987; Jacobs 1992). Abductees are basically breeding stock for these aliens, supplying them with the eggs and sperm needed for their hybridization mission. The aliens claim to be responsible for the genetic development of man from his primal ancestor (Fowler 1990). That is, they are the creators of humanity; they made us and have guided our evolutionary development and have even intervened in history. The aliens are returning in such great numbers now in preparation for the aforementioned catastrophe. In this scenario, the aliens perform many of the traditional functions of God. They create humanity, guide it through history, and eventually offer a form of salvation, all through a nearly omnipotent technology that replaces the miraculous will of God for modern humankind.

The content of these messages underscores a phenomenon that is encountered time and time again in an analysis of the UFO phenomenon—the projection of traditional religious themes onto a technological science fiction framework. The parallels of these messages to doctrines of the Christian religion are particularly striking. In the moralizing messages, we get the sense that time is running out, that humans must reform or face judgment by the aliens who are superior not merely technologically but also, apparently, ethically. This is the message of the Old Testament prophet, warning of the calamities God will visit upon His people unless they mend their ways.

Apocalyptic messages invoke images of Armageddon and mass catastrophe from which a faithful remnant will be preserved. Abductees are informed that they are chosen to play a special part in a suprahuman plan, and they must evangelize among the non-elect, spreading an alien gospel. The aliens' messages about themselves and the role they play in the development of human culture reveal history to be the unfolding of that plan, in order to produce a new, superior hybrid being—the next step in human evolution. The aliens take the place of a God of salvation history working for humanity's redemption. The goal of history, according to abduction narratives, is not the union of God and man in Christ; rather, it is the union of humanity and alien towards which the UFO godlings strive. The barely disguised grafting of these theological elements of America's most popular religion onto the bizarre phenomenon of UFO abductions argues strongly for that phenomenon's essentially religious nature.

The psychological profiles of UFO abductees reveal differences from those of nonabductees, differences which can be said to indicate the effect of some type of religious experience. Psychologist Kenneth Ring's recent study (1992) finds abductees reporting changes in their mentalities after their encounters. Abductees tend to become more spiritual in outlook, to see in the universe the workings of some supernatural force. Their religious views are more syncretic, finding in all religions some form of spiritual truth. Many abductees report paranormal talents gained as a result of their experience. The ability to cause electromagnetic disturbances, to travel out of body, or to read minds is often claimed. This pattern of personality change is quite similar to that found among people who report near-death experiences, another phenomenon with heavy religious overtones. These experiences, however subjective they may be, have powerful and long-lasting effects upon the psyche of the individual, prompting permanent changes in worldview and lifestyle. In this respect, UFO abductions are like the paranormal events connected with conversion experiences in Puritan New England or modern charismatic Pentacostals: intrusions of another world associated with adoption of a spiritual creed.

Considered in a broad and general sense, the very idea of UFO abductions is an intensely religious concept. Humans of all times and places have held some

belief in beings of another order of intelligence—not gods, but sentient creatures different from humanity. This expression of the idea of the Other has traditionally fallen under the supervision of religion, which conceived of these beings spiritually and attributed their great powers to subtleness of nature or superior magical knowledge. The Other still takes this form in modern abduction tales, now a physical extraterrestrial possessing advanced technology rather than a djinn composed of fire. The aliens still retain magical powers—the ability to pass through walls, to fly, to speak with telepathy. As the demons and fairies of previous cultures, they kidnap humans and snatch babies for some inscrutable purpose (Vallee 1969).

To interpret the phenomenon of UFO abductions within a scholarly framework is a difficult task, considering the scope and detail that the phenomenon manifests. Even abductees have severe problems making sense out of their experiences, and tend to turn to researchers/hypnotists who hold highly imaginative views of what is happening for advice and guidance. On one level, abductions are simply uninterpretable. A dreamlike confusion seems to be the hallmark of these reports, and the statements of abductees, although somewhat consistent in terms of overall patterns, is at times widely contradictory. The experiences of many abductees after the abduction event (or between abductions in an ongoing case) are so bizarre as to seem nonsensical. What is one to make of an abductee's report that sinister government agents, with fake identification and license plates, came to harass her about her experiences (Keel 1988)? Or of Kathy Davis's claim that unmarked black helicopters buzzed her house after UFO sightings (Hopkins 1987)? It is tempting to dismiss the entire subject of UFO abductions, and interpret them simply as the rantings of paranoids, yet to do this would be to ignore the significance they have for the study of religion.

The abductees themselves often tend to explain their experiences in terms of religion. Although some abductees strongly reject the idea that their terrifying encounters could have any spiritual significance, many interpret the aliens a priori as supernatural beings. The specific reasons for this will be postulated in the conclusion. At this point, it is interesting to note that the cases which are the most extensively documented and least manhandled by

hypnotist-researchers show the most religious details and the greatest degree of personal consciousness on the part of the abductee that her experience was religious in character.

An excellent example is that of Betty Andreasson, whose ongoing abduction experiences have been the subject of three books (Fowler 1980, 1982, 1990). Andreasson herself, a devout Christian, believes that her abductors, as frightening as they are to her, are angels, servants of God. These aliens show an interest in the Bible and baptize her at the beginning of her encounters. They teach her spiritual lessons concerning the nature of the soul and resurrection, and take her out of her body to cavort with them as beings of light. She reports what can only be called a mystical experience, in which the aliens introduce her to a being called the One, with whom she experiences ecstatic union. Andreasson feels that the aliens, the Watchers as she calls them, guide mankind at the command of God, the One.

Whitley Strieber, the most famous of the abductees, also believes his experiences to have been primarily religious in character. Although raised a Catholic, Strieber no longer adheres to any organized religion, and his encounters lack the specifically Christian references of Betty Andreasson's. The "visitor experience," as he terms the abduction phenomenon, is concerned with the evolution of human consciousness, and the science used by the visitors is a "technology of the soul" aimed at heightening man's awareness of his spiritual dimension. He compares the aliens to demons, cosmic predators whose task it is to jolt humanity's spiritual capabilities by subjecting individuals to shock and pain. Upon attaining a sufficiently high state of consciousness, Strieber speculates, humanity may become a fit companion for God. Strieber believes that mystic experience is central to the solution of the UFO mystery, and adopts this attitude in his own investigations, encouraging people with similarly religious abduction experiences to speak out against the prevailing genetic experimentation theories of Hopkins and others (Conroy 1989).

The interpretation of abduction stories by UFO researchers also reveals undercurrents of religion. Many writers from outside the field of religious studies have noted the similarities between modern abduction accounts and the folklore of earlier years

concerning fairies and “little people” (Bullard 1987). The belief in diminutive nonhuman beings has always been present in some form in Western culture, and as late as the last century Evans-Wentz (1966) was able to chronicle the details of a living belief in fairies in Scotland and Ireland. Fairies, like UFO occupants, enjoyed abducting humans and causing their victims to experience temporal distortions, periods of “missing time” resembling those that modern UFO experts say are reliable signs of an abduction. Fairies, it was believed, could not properly reproduce and needed the help of humans to sustain their species. Encounters with them were often erotic experiences for the humans involved, and sometimes led to a continuing series of contacts resembling the repeat abductions seen in modern stories. Fairies, however inexplicable their activities, had a firm place in the theology of their time: they were fallen angelic beings, condemned to spend history as exiles from heaven.

Throughout the Middle Ages, both scholars and lay people accepted a belief in incubi and succubi, sexually ravenous demons that invaded bedrooms to molest innocent Christians. These diabolical entities were only one of the folkloric cousins of modern alien abductors found in the medieval period. Medieval chronicles report sightings of flying ships captained by the strange denizens of Magonia (Vallee 1969), who often carried off humans to their land beyond the clouds. In even earlier times the legends of the Norsemen bear witness to belief in a race of dwarves who abducted human beings for the purpose of reproduction.

The existence of a diminutive species of creatures who fly through the air and steal humans for sexual purposes is a belief by no means confined to Western culture. Vallee (1989) notes similar folklore among Native Americans of Mexico and South America. Wherever the idea is found, the beings are always assigned a place in the religious framework of the culture and their existence and purpose is granted a religious significance. The persistent linkage of folklore and religion on this issue is suggestive in terms of the modern attempt to interpret UFO abductions. As will be argued in the conclusion, humanity appears to have no choice but to evaluate its confrontations with the Other in terms of some religious experience. To ignore this connection when interpreting abductions may well be impossible, and at

any rate is not conducive to a complete understanding of the phenomenon.

Further strengthening the argument for the essentially religious nature of UFO abductions are the interpretive efforts of abduction researchers who, while not intending to raise issues of religion, still construct “theologies of abduction” when attempting to explain these phenomenon. Some, like Michael Persinger (1989), adopt what could be termed a reductionist position in regards to UFOs and abductions which can be equally well applied to religion. Persinger argues that abductions, as well as near-death experiences and mystical experiences, are the results of naturally occurring electrical charges affecting the temporal lobe of the brain. Such temporal lobe disturbances produce the hallucinations, disorientation, and heightened sense of meaning that are characteristic both of abductions and of religious experiences. Thus, in Persinger’s view, religion and abductions are much the same thing: products of discombobulated brains.

Other researchers adopt interpretive schemes which border on the fantastic. Keel (1988) and Vallee (1988) argue that UFOs and abductions are encroachments upon our world by another reality, a distinct dimension of otherness harboring classes of beings of which humanity is not normally aware. Abductions and other paranormal events are the mechanism by which the intelligences of this alternate reality control humanity, manipulating our beliefs and opinions in a rather sinister fashion. The deities and demons which fill religions are based upon these intelligences, and abductions are simply the latest device being used by extradimensional beings to influence human development. The theory that our world is subject to control by alternate realities is used to explain everything from Bigfoot to appearances of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

By far the most popular scenario for interpreting the abduction experience is the theory that extraterrestrial biologists are using humans for genetic experiments. This is the stance adopted by the majority of UFO books and magazines towards the abduction phenomenon. Most of the well-known hypnotist-researchers, like Hopkins, are strongly committed to this view, and, due to the uncertainties of hypnosis discussed earlier, it is difficult to determine if the theory is derived from the subject matter, or if the extraterrestrial theory influences the hypnotic recall

of the abductee. As noted, the idea that aliens were responsible for the creation and evolution of humanity in the manner described by abductees carries with it religious connotations.

An inseparable corollary to the notion that aliens are abroad kidnapping humans is the theory that the government is fully aware of this but conceals it from the public. Some argue that the United States and other world powers have cut a Faustian deal with the aliens, ignoring the extraterrestrial attacks on citizens in exchange for advanced technology (Hall 1988). Such a scenario pits a small group of the Elect who are knowledgeable about the aliens' existence and motives against government conspirators who have sold out the human race to diabolical alien monsters. Other conspiracy theorists believe that our planet is a pawn in a battle between two advanced alien species, one benevolent and concerned with human welfare, and the other evil and heartless with a desire to enslave humankind (Hamilton 1991). Abductions are carried out by both sides, with the beneficent aliens spiritually educating people so that they may resist the sinister extraterrestrials who abduct in order to torture and control. The government would appear to be on the wrong side of this Manichean war of Light and Darkness, and those who know must expose the conspiracy so that all people may come to the aid of the good extraterrestrials.

Searching for some methodological underpinnings for a conclusive analysis of the abduction phenomenon has been a difficult task. The scope and strangeness of abduction accounts strongly resist any attempt to pigeonhole the phenomenon neatly, but the one consistent thread that can be traced in the complex tapestry of abductions is the theme of religion. Any theoretical exercise aimed at interpreting abductions must take religion into account. Throughout this discussion, Jungian categories have been useful in coming to grips with the dynamics that seem to be at work in these stories. These categories allow the inherent bizarreness and incomprehensibility that are characteristic of abduction narratives to be preserved in the discussion, while also using religion as a rallying point for understanding the patterns that emerge from the confusing details. Since recollections of abductions are dreamlike and uncovered through a process of hypnosis in which the individual's subconscious can play a major part, Jung's psychological categories

seem tailor-made for an analysis of the phenomenon. The concept of the Other has been especially valuable for this investigation.

Whatever else UFO abductions may be, they are an encounter with the Other. Every detail of an abduction story emphasizes the idea of otherness. Abductees are subjected to an otherness of space, taken aboard an extraterrestrial spacecraft and even at times pulled out of their bodies, isolating them from any sense of the familiar. They experience an Otherness of time, which does not seem to flow at the same rate or with the same laws as in day-to-day existence. They are surrounded by Other beings, aliens with visages and powers which are simply not human. The aliens are physically Other, with their short statures, enormous eyes, and oversized heads. They are sexually Other, arousing the abductee and sparking feelings of love. They are spiritually Other, superintelligent and either morally superior or clinically amoral. The abduction experience is a very condensation of the strange and unfamiliar.

As encounters with the Other, UFO abductions are essentially religious. Humanity seems to innately separate the prosaic from the unfamiliar, and the sacred from the profane. Things which do not fit into the definitions of the familiar humanity tends to sacralize. The sacred, the numinous, is that which is "wholly other," completely beyond the pale of human experience as normally considered. Abduction by aliens certainly falls into that category, and this is perhaps the reason for the tendency of abductees to interpret their experiences within some sort of religious framework. Researchers who devise interpretive scenarios tend to encounter religion whether they mean to or not, and even resort to theologizing about alternate realities and the final goal of human history. The otherness of the abduction phenomenon makes religion impossible to escape, and no understanding of the phenomenon can be complete without a consciousness of its religious nature.

Abduction narratives seem to emerge, at least in part, from the subconscious of the abductee. Thus, the stories often contain images drawn from popular culture as well as archetypal symbols drawn from the abductee's psyche. The myth of the flying saucer and its alien occupants has been an important part of Western culture in the years since World War II, and the image of the UFO has been used in literature and

cinema to represent everything from the threat of communist invasion to the hope of a united world. The pervasiveness of UFOs in the popular consciousness has increased in recent years along with the number of abduction accounts. More interest in the phenomenon seemed to breed more accounts, which in turn increase the topic's popularity. Abduction accounts seem to absorb whatever details or issues are being discussed in the ufological community, leading to the interesting observation that abduction researchers tend to find whatever they are currently looking for within abduction accounts to support the theory of the day. The increased suggestibility characteristic of the hypnotic state makes it virtually impossible for researchers to hide their biases, and details of previous accounts are repeated by other abductees who pick them up from the hypnotist, from the media, or from UFO literature. The popular concerns of the day are invariably reflected in the abduction narrative, with worries about the environment replacing the fear of nuclear war as facets of the abduction account now that East–West tensions have eased. The ability of abductees to incorporate cultural symbols and concerns into their tales, coupled with the inherently religious nature of abductions as encounters with the Other, goes a long way towards explaining the religious themes discovered in the analysis of the patterns of abduction narratives.

An excellent example of this is the way in which abduction narratives incorporate characteristically American themes. UFO abductions seem to be primarily an American phenomenon; although several important cases have been reported outside the U.S., some argue that abductions are mainly confined to this country. Certainly, no other nation displays such an incredible interest in abduction stories. One reason for this could be the similarities of abduction stories to one of America's favorite literary themes, the captivity tale. Heavily influenced by theological motifs of early Protestant New England, emphasizing imprisonment and bondage, captivity narratives base themselves upon the capture of Americans by culturally distinct, physically different, alien Others: Native Americans, Barbary pirates, or the communist Vietnamese of a modern Rambo movie (Lewis 1989). The captives, usually women, are menaced by their alien captors, and such stories often concentrate on the details of their torture or rape. Anyone familiar with current tales of UFO abductions, especially

as related in popular magazines, can recognize the connection. Here the Other is truly alien, nonhuman and extraterrestrial, whose actions are threatening but inexplicable. The abductees, 80 percent of whom are women, are tortured and sexually violated by bizarre medical experiments, the prurient details of which are discussed on afternoon talk shows. In standard captivity narratives victims are often rescued by a morally perfect hero who destroys the victim's tormentors; in abduction tales the hero is the researcher hypnotist, who alone knows the chilling agenda behind the victim's capture. In captivity narratives American moral virtue is favorably distinguished from the savage excesses, sexual and otherwise, of the captors. The aliens of abduction narratives, coldly clinical and amorally utilitarian, treat their victims more like mere objects of scientific study, perhaps revealing a concern, often expressed in science fiction, that our modern society is becoming increasingly detached from human values.

The phenomenon of UFO abductions is a gold mine for scholars of religion. My brief examination of abductions in a search for patterns has revealed that these encounters can look quite similar to other more traditional forms of religious experience. Similar to dreams and called forth by the use of hypnosis, abductions manifest subconscious imagery which is often religious in nature. The general pattern of the abduction experience manifests congruencies with numinous encounters, and with archaic shamanistic symbolism. The consequences of the event for the abductee are the same as with other forms of subjective paranormal religious experiences. Even the interpretive scenarios developed by abduction researchers, which ignore the religious character of the abductee's experiences, are themselves rife with religious significance. Finally, the abductee's own interpretations of the phenomenon show a propensity, or even a need, to understand the religious significance of the phenomenon. As an important theme in popular culture, abductions deserve to be investigated by trained scholars, employing a number of methodologies, in order to determine the significance they have for the study of religion. It would be a great shame to leave such a topic, so rich with potential for increasing the understanding of popular religious concepts, in the hands of amateur hypnotists and believers in space-ships and government conspiracies.

Suggested Readings

Brown, Michael F.

1997 *The Channeling Zone: American Spirituality in an Anxious Age*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Goldberg, Harvey E.

1987 *Judaism Viewed from Within and from Without: Anthropological Studies*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

La Barre, Weston

1970 *The Ghost Dance: Origins of Religion*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Mardin, S.

1989 *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Marty, Martin E., and R. Scott Appleby

1991–95 *The Fundamentalism Project*. 5 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thrupp, Sylvia, ed.

1970 *Millennial Dreams in Action: Studies in Revolutionary Religious Movements*. New York: Schocken Books.

Volkman, Toby Alice

1985 *Feasts of Honor: Ritual and Change in the Toraja Highlands*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.