

AASC NEWSLETTER

Association for the Anthropological Study of Consciousness

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HOW ANTHROPOLOGY SHOWED ME WHO I AM

by J.B., Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Introduction

Before I took my first anthropology course, I had no idea who I was. I was so many people. There were Nell, Ronald, Suzette, Allan, Little Anne and many others. Each had his own identity, his own tastes, his own wardrobe and his own ideas about how life should be carried out. In this group of individuals, who was I?

Case Background

My instructor for the introductory anthropology course at Vancouver City College, Langara Campus, was Mrs. Ariadne Bursewicz. In September, 1981, at the time we met, I had already been diagnosed as a multiple and although I had not been able to locate any clinician experienced with MPD, I was having professional treatment between one and three times a week. During this treatment involving hypnosis and holistic psychotherapy, five major alter personalities had been isolated. The Inner Self - Helper (ISH) had been contacted and attempt was made to establish communication among the alters and the host personality. An attempt was made in November, 1981 to fuse these personalities into one complete person. However, this fusion did not hold under stress, for reasons which will be clear later on.

After this failure of fusion, I became discouraged with standard therapeutic models, extremely depressed and hopeless. Although I had survived the mishaps of my various alter personalities (including a near fatal drug overdose which resulted in a coma, arrest and incarceration in prison, abduction and transport to an exorcist, sudden flight to foreign cities, multiple self lacerations, sex as a hobby, and destitution) I could not accept the indication that I would have to live with this disorder for the rest of my life. Each personality, now separate again, was also showing signs of distress. For example, the three year old personality named "Little Anne" cried all the time, "Suzette" was extremely despondent and suicidal, "Allan" wished to return to his native Australia, and "Nell" took refuge in prayer. As a result, not only was I depressed for myself, but I lived in fear of any action the others might take and once again I never knew where I might find myself when I woke up. My anthropology instructor was concerned and had invited me for Christmas dinner (as was her custom every year for students who appeared to be alone). As a result of this chance to talk privately, we became friends. She suggested that I try some ideas to deal with the continual crying of my three year old alter personality, on the grounds that these ideas "might help but couldn't hurt". The ideas worked. Soon afterwards the Self - Helper spoke to Mrs. Bursewicz and asked her to help all the personalities achieve integration. Her response was that she had no training in psychiatry or psychotherapy. The Self - Helper persisted and Mrs. Bursewicz agreed to do what she could.

Treatment as Worked Out by an Anthropologist

The present problem was that of a group of at least six disparate persons of varying ages, sexes, and interests, sharing certain limited resources. These resources were one body, one income, and only 24 hours a day. The condition at this point was a situation where each personality attempted to pursue his or her own interests to the exclusion of others. Thus there was constant strife. The physical side effects of this internal strife include bad dreams, severe headaches, and bleeding intestines. Standard psychotherapeutic methods applied over the last eight years had failed. It was obvious that a new approach was necessary.

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Approach and Method

Mrs. Bursewicz decided that to make conditions liveable, it was necessary to try to establish certain bases for further action: equitable sharing of the scarce resources, reduction of strife, establishment of common goals in the common interest and establishment of an esprit-de-corps. She felt that before any actual attempts of fusion could be implemented, certain basic groundwork had to be undertaken. This involved (1) to search the literature on MPD to discover the nature of the problem, its causes and successful measures of treatment, (2) to discover and remove hindrances to fusion, (3) to prepare each personality for fusion by bringing each to realize that the fused state was not death but a different form of life for each, (4) to deal with appearance of personalities, (5) to stop the splitting process before fusion could be attempted, and (6) to reverse splitting.

Mrs. Bursewicz used a fourfold approach based on the following methods. Her first method was to discover how many personalities there actually were and to come to some personal agreement with each. The next method was to use principles of social structure as discovered in cultural anthropology to form an artificial society. The third method was to provide common goals by means of a common ideology. This involved choosing symbols which had applicable meaning but had no previous associations for any one of the personalities. Last of all was the method of removing, on an individual basis, personal difficulties, attitudes and animosities which would prevent cooperation among the various personalities.

Application

The factors of a small group sharing scarce resources gave Mrs. Bursewicz the idea that an artificial band social structure could be formed by these personalities. A band is characterized by a small group known personally to each other, linked by kinship, egalitarian, and governed by group consensus. So Mrs. Bursewicz formed 'the committee'. The committee operated on the following eight premises. No member was to rush off and do his own thing without consulting the committee. Every member was to have an equal chance to discuss any matter brought before the committee. Any member could bring material before the committee. Committee decisions had to be based on unanimous decisions no matter how long discussion would take. All committee members were to reach mutual agreement on allocation of resources and the responsibilities that were being incurred. All committee members were to protect each other and give mutual aid. There was to be no chairman and any member could call a meeting. Lastly, any acts by an individual to the detriment of all were to be under the judgment of the committee and under its sanctions.

Sanctions

The main sanction is drawn from band-type social organization. This is disapproval of an individual by

the entire group. The power of this sanction should not be underestimated when it is applied in a small face to face group. If this were unsuccessful, the sanction of exclusion could be applied (coventry, shunning, or even exile). The most severe sanction consisted of a death sentence passed by unanimous consent of the committee.

The first development of the committee formation as described above was the first unanimous decision made by these personalities. This appears to be trivial but because each individual agreed, it was a major breakthrough in cooperation. This decision was a choice of color of wool for a sweater. The second committee decision was to invite Mrs. Bursewicz to be a committee member and to unanimously give her veto power. (There is no record in the literature of a therapist being part of the structure within a multiple personality.) The committee proved to be a viable method of organizing the concerns of daily life. Although, of course, different personalities were "out" (in control) at different periods with resulting amnesia for the others, there were marked improvements. The improvements were first of all that each would fulfill any responsibilities agreed to by the others so that appointments were kept, assignments were completed, and bills were paid. Secondly, although amnesia was still a factor, a message would be given to the next personality to come out that would orient it in time, place, and situation. This removed much of the fear and uncertainty experienced by the host personality as well as some of the alters.

World View

Although each personality came from a western background, each was highly convinced that to get anything desired, it was necessary to grab now and not to consider the consequences. This selfish view contributed greatly to the disastrous side effects experienced in MPD. It was therefore necessary to acculturate the personalities by changing their world view to one of cooperation and unified goals. Mrs. Bursewicz decided that the most basic method of handling world view as by manipulation of symbols. Due to the unfortunate life experiences suffered by all the personalities, the religious divergences, and the failure of hope, it was obvious that western symbols would be useless or even dangerous. She knew from discussions with me that I was comfortable with transformation masks and other anthropological representations having a multi-face theme, and that I was not fearful of this type of symbolism. She chose a unifying symbol from Kwakiutl mythology for the following reasons: (1) no associations, (2) the symbol itself, the Sisiutl has three heads and yet is one being, (3) the legend and powers of the Sisiutl emphasize that strength can be achieved with proper preparation, (4) the power of focus was used by having a gold ring made to order (by Dennis Hanuse) with a Sisiutl design. The purpose of this ring was to provide an easily portable reminder of strength and of the fact that there was someone who was always available as backup and support.

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FROM THE EDITOR . . .

This issue we have two articles detailing experiential aspects of consciousness. The first is by J.B., an Canadian woman who once suffered from multiple personality disorder. Her history and successful treatment by applied anthropological methods was discussed by Kelly MacDonald in a paper she gave at this year's *Annual AASC Meetings*. J.B. has consented to have her own account published for the first time in the *Newsletter*. She has requested that her identity remain anonymous. Her article provides an insider's view of MPD as a contrast to previous articles by Dr. Locke and Dr. Allison. The second article by Matthew Bronson describes his own experiential encounter with Umbanda spirit healing in Brazil and continues the discussion of Brazilian spirit healing begun by Dr. Greenfield in the June 1986 issue of the *Newsletter*.

Thanks to new desktop publishing software the *Newsletter* has taken on a new look with this issue. I hope to continue with further improvements in the next issue. The December issue will feature an article on Wallace Black Elk and the second half of Bronson's article, "Joining the Medium's Table."

AASC NEWS

Call for Papers

Next year's annual conference chair, **Cynthia Siegel**, reminds *AASC* members and other interested parties of the upcoming deadline of October 16, 1987, for paper and symposia submissions. The conference dates are March 2-6, 1988. Submissions should be made as soon as possible to facilitate planning. Information and application forms were included with the last issue of the *Newsletter* and the presentation proposal form is included with this issue. For accommodation and additional information contact **Cynthia Siegel** at 336 Blue Ridge Drive, Martinez, CA 94553, (415) 935-4463.

ORGANIZATIONS

Topset and **Instituto de Psicofisica** are two affiliated Brazilian non-profit organizations doing research on human resources and unusual phenomena. **Topset**, the parent organization, is dedicated to the sciences of the mind and has developed methods for developing intuition and creativity, for the control of emotions and stress, for benefiting from accelerative learning methods and biofeedback, and for attaining self-control and self-awareness. The **Instituto de Psicofisica** explores unusual phenomena where a mind/matter interaction seems to be present. Three projects are currently being planned in retroactive PK, the possible effects of mental attitudes on some kinds of illness, and factors which may help accelerative learning. For more information contact the joint president of both organizations: **Ivan Americo Werneck**, Topset Ltda., Rua Olga, 139, Bonsucesso, CEP 21041, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, Brazil.

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JOINING THE MEDIUM'S TABLE: PART ONE

A BRAZILIAN HEALING ODYSSEY

by **Matthew Bronson**, California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, California

We entered the temple through a non-descript door on a side street of a working-class suburb of Sao Paolo, Brazil. We were a group of American researchers come to participate in an *Umbanda* ceremony, to experience first-hand this fast-growing sect which combined elements of Christianity, traditional Afro-Brazilian deity worship and a Spiritist belief in reincarnation and afterlife. We were greeted by a pleasant man dressed all in white who escorted us to the audience chamber which was separated from the main altar by a white curtain. We too were dressed in white, as instructed, to reflect any negative energies and to maintain the highest possible vibration.

As we were seated, we heard the rhythmic beating of several conga drums and a melodious chanting of Christian hymns coming from behind the curtain. The initiates of the temple, about a dozen or so, were preparing for the evening's "work" in spirit. An older man came out, waving a censer in the aisles, infusing the room with an earthy, herbal smell. Soon, it was time to begin.

The curtain was parted and we saw before us an altar covered with many small figurines which represented Christian saints and their *Umbanda* counterparts. A vase full of bright yellow flowers stood before the main figure, that of Jesus/Oxala, and an old Indian woman stood, swathed in white, swaying with the drumming. To the right, four swarthy young men beat on the waist-high drums with elegant abandon. The "saint father", a pleasant-looking black gentleman of about 40, directed their efforts, signalling the changes in song and rhythm to suit the mood of the moment.

The other initiates opened a space around the "saint mother", the old Indian woman who was the reigning medium of the place, when she suddenly began to shake and convulse as if entering an epileptic fit. The "saint father" stopped the music and everything went silent as the medium straightened up, put one hand behind her back, and put a big cigar in her mouth. Someone rushed to light the cigar and she turned to stare at us with an impassive expression, eyes half-closed; she had incorporated the guiding spirit of the temple, an old Indian healer, and the real work of the evening was about to begin.

She began to address those present with a booming voice, speaking in a strange accented Portuguese. According to the "saint father", her Portuguese is colored by the native dialect which was the mother tongue of the old Indian spirit. The spirit welcomed us and proceeded to approach each of the other mediums.

She pressed points on their wrists and arms and whispered to them. Each one, in turn, would begin to shake and shout dance or parade about stiff-legged according to the mood of the guiding spirit which took over. Soon, all of them had incorporated, and were mumbling in that strange "itsy nitsy" Portuguese, as they swayed and danced to the music. The energy was palpable as the members of the audience were invited up to receive advice and healing.

The "saint mother" would treat each individual differently according to the need. One woman was told to lay flat on the floor where she was covered with a white sheet and a candle was lit on her head and feet. This was designed to remove deep blocks in the flow of her life force. She reported a great easing and profound relaxation afterwards. Eventually, it was my turn to go up.

I approached the medium. She pressed points on my wrists and elbow with a firm grip and I was immediately overcome by an intense warmth and a white light which spread from my arms all through my body. I became aware of a presence behind me and to the left.

At this point, I experienced a real "moment of truth." I knew that if I allowed it, that this presence or spirit or whatever it was would enter my body. The prospect was frightening, yet as I remembered the circle of love surrounding and protecting me, I decided to let go. My usual self, the "I" which is writing this, was set aside and became a mere witness to what transpired. I began to shake and sway to the drums, and heard hooting and hollering coming from my lips. The saint father stopped the drumming and I felt as though I were crossing a great abyss. As I landed on the other side, the group began a chant which went something like this: "Oh Jesus, welcome this son into our house." My dancing and twirling slowed and I heard the phrase, "I am sincere," in Portuguese repeated several times from lips. Meanwhile, a member of our group, a lady with whom I enjoyed a special rapport, found herself jerking in exact synchrony with my movements against her will (this was reported to me later).

The saint mother held my arms once again and whispered soothing words to me. I awoke as if from a dream to find my body soaked in sweat as I stood before her. "This one has a powerful protector, an old Indian chief and healer," she said in her funny Portuguese. I was escorted back to my seat, feeling cleansed, excited, as though I were on the brink of an unknown world. The members of our group of seekers were intensely curious but I refused to discuss the experience for several days, feeling that it was intensely private and should not be trivialized by idle chatter.

The ritual was soon brought to a close as each of the initiates came out of trance and the saint mother extinguished her cigar. The saint father said a closing prayer thanking the spirits for the work that evening and we began to leave. The other temple members looked at me with a great interest and

affection as he stopped me and said, "You worked very well this evening; you have a natural ability as a medium and are always welcome in this house."

By their understanding, I had incorporated one of the healing spirits of the house and had helped them in their project of bringing harmony between the spiritual and the physical worlds. It felt like an initiation and a profoundly significant experience but one that was difficult to square with anything else in my life.

Our healing odyssey continued and we met many remarkable people in the following weeks. Among them was Dr. Edson Queiroz, one of the most famous and perhaps most controversial figures on the Brazilian Spiritist scene. Queiroz is purported to be a medium for the spirit of Dr. Adolfo Fritz, the same spirit who came through the Brazilian medium Arigo made famous as "The Surgeon with the Rusty Knife." While in his mediumistic trance, Queiroz performs surgeries that can only be termed "miraculous," given the rapidity with which he works, the lack of antisepsis and anesthesia, and the remarkable cure rate which several years of careful clinical records attest.

As we observed in the operating chamber of his Spiritist center in the Northeast of Brazil, Dr. Fritz explained that he is merely the spokesman for a council of perhaps hundreds of disincarnate physicians who facilitate the work. Members of his team take care of the asepsis and anesthesia on a spiritual plane and leave it to him to flaunt every rule of surgical decorum. After removing a tumor from a man's chest in about a minute and half, he tossed it to me, shouting "catch" as Brazilian television recorded the scene. (For more information about Dr. Queiroz' exploits, see my "Spiritist Healers in Brazil," in *Shaman's Drum*, Number 3, 1985.) This attitude is part of the project which Dr. Fritz and his colleagues have embarked upon: to challenge Science with irrefutable evidence of the existence of spirit.

After our trip, which afforded us a vivid cross-section of the rich spiritual life of Brazil, we returned to our daily lives in the U.S. I thought often of my brush with mediumship, Brazilian-style, but lacking any framework to make sense of it, I chalked it up to the special atmosphere of Brazil where such things are commonplace. I blamed it on Rio. Little did I know that my journey had only just begun.

(Editor's Note: A version of this paper was given at the 1986 Annual Meeting of the AASC. The second half of this article will appear in the December issue of the *Newsletter*.)

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PUBLICATIONS

The Parapsychologisch Instituut publishes a newsletter, *Parapsychologische Nieuwsbrief*, three times a year and is compiling an inventory of current periodicals on the subject matter of parapsychology

for the December 1987 issue of the newsletter. For information contact: **Parapsychologisch Instituut**, Springweg 5, 3511 VH Utrecht, The Netherlands.

The *Journal of Scientific Exploration* is a new, semi-annual publication of the **Society for Scientific Exploration** which contains original, reviewed scientific papers that are aimed at advancing the study of all aspects of anomalous phenomena. The editor is Ronald A. Howard. For subscription information or a free sample issue, contact: **Pergamon Journals, Inc.**, Maxwell House, Fairview Park, Elmsford, New York, 10523

BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

Individuals interested in reviewing the following books should contact book review editor, **Michael Winkelman**, at *AASC Newsletter*, P.O. Box 4032, Irvine, CA 92716 - 4032.

The Miracle of Existence, by Henry Margenau, (Boston: New Science Library/Shambhala Publications), 1987.

Psychic Breakthroughs Today, by D. Scott Rogo, (Wellingsborough, Northamptonshire: Aquarian Press), 1987.

Continued from page 2:

Meanwhile, to develop and use this symbol, work was being undertaken to strengthen each separate personality. This was done in cooperation with the Self-Helper through the use of controlled dreaming, individual therapy to resolve the conflicts acquired by each personality as part of its life experience, and group therapy to resolve common life experiences. The Self-Helper indicated the needs and controlled the dreams. The anthropologist drew on shamanistic technique to deal with these problems. Among these techniques were 'cleansing ceremonies', principles of sympathetic magic, and a protection on the supernatural plane. Heavy use was made of ritual, including the use of fire, water, a naked blade, blood, music and repetitive chant. These shamanistic techniques were used to retrieve buried memories, to remove deep guilt, to express suppressed anger and resentment, and to replace these with positive emotions, emotional support, unity, and caring. These techniques replaced the standard therapeutic techniques of hypnotherapy and drug therapy. Although these procedures needed time, imagination and a willing suspension of disbelief, they appear to have been efficacious, and never needed to be repeated for the original cause. The Sisiutl was part of these "shamanistic ceremonies" as a positive integrating symbol of strength.

By this point the original group of personalities was acting as a unified body for the common good. Along the way, all had been brought to the same age, that of the physical body. Among the conflicts which had had to be resolved were the questions of sexual identity, a goal in life beyond integration, and the realization that an adult in this society is not tied for life to his natal family. In other words, I gradually

started to form artificial kinship bonds with people not actually physically related to me. This was extremely important as it meant the beginning of a small degree of trust, and the diminution of the previously overwhelming and paralyzing fear I had acquired with regard to other people.

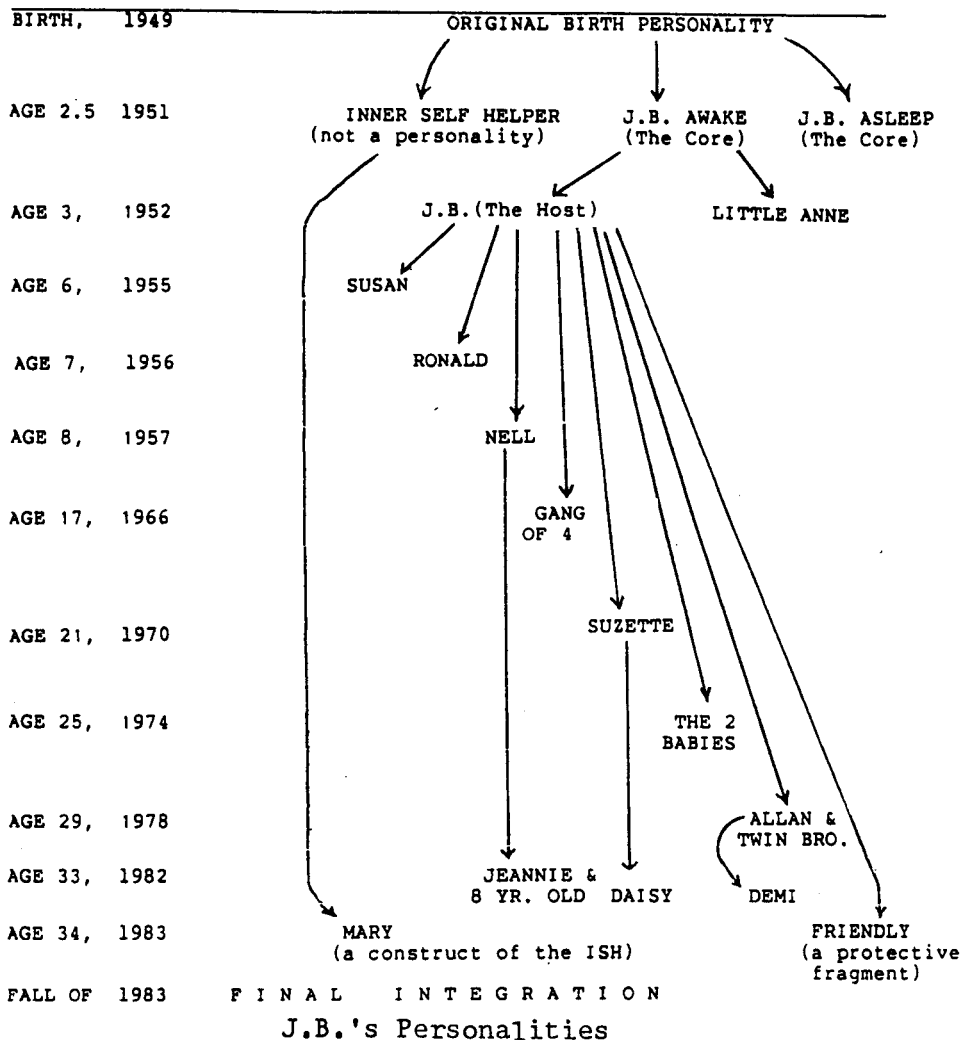
One of the functions of world view is to provide an ideal pattern of action for a given social situation. This pattern is inculcated during enculturation. In a person with MPD, socialization has not been successful in providing such a pattern in the face of perceived danger. The world view ideal is translated into action by means of the coping mechanism. In ordinary enculturation a variety of coping mechanisms are transmitted to the individual, who applies them with varying degrees of success in culturally prescribed situations. A person with MPD has only one coping mechanism, that of mental flight (running away). Therefore socialization has been completely inadequate, not only in presenting ideal patterns for coping, but also in defining the dangers which should be perceived in different situations. As a result it is necessary for the multiple to learn coping mechanisms by means of deliberate explanation as well as constant example, while at the same time social situations have to be explained and ranked in order of gravity, importance, or danger. In a sense the multiple has built defenses so heavy that perception of the social world is grossly caricatured, leaving no room for fine nuances. People are perceived as good or bad and always dangerous. This world view of the social landscape has to be adjusted if the multiple is ever to interact as a whole person in society.

The Personalities Not Discovered by Previous Therapies

At the beginning of this essay, it was stated that there were apparently five major alter personalities. Previous therapists had not discovered some extremely important personalities. Among these were four who had been formed when I was 17 years old. They were personalities who handled anger and were of the type who are modelled on and imitate the aggressors. They manifested themselves as a group and had been responsible for acts of violence, danger, and apparent self-destruction. These acts had caused great misery to all other parts of me, the more so as they appeared to be inexplicable. Mrs. Bursewicz discovered that one of the five major alter personalities had sole knowledge of these four. Three major attempts were made to contact these personalities to extend friendship to them and to bring them into the committee structure. They were so violent and aggressive that they were unreachable. The only sanction which had been effective for 15 years was brute strength. Perceiving friendliness as a sign of weakness, these personalities attempted to kill Mrs. Bursewicz who naturally fought back. The other five major alters joined her in this battle and the concerted efforts and strengths of the five personalities and Mrs. Bursewicz resulted in the deaths of the four violent ones. After this, I became conscious of feelings of

J.B.'s Chronological Age & the Time Frame During Which Splitting Occurred

The Splitting Process (→ denotes primary & successive splits)



anger and hate which I had experienced for 15 years. I had to learn how to handle these. Some of these feelings were so strong the Mrs. Bursewicz developed a shamanistic ceremony to discharge them.

New Personalities

One encouraging sign was that as crises occurred, while the new coping mechanisms were being learned, the new personalities formed in response to new situations were small children (under age eight). This was encouraging because on a subconscious level although splitting was still habitual, it was no longer useful because a child was ineffectual and powerless within these new situations. Gradually a technique was developed which reversed the splitting process for each of these new personalities. The principle of this technique was to supply the basic need whose apparent lack had resulted in the new personalities. Mrs. Bursewicz supplied the need and convinced all levels of persons on the physical, emotional, and mental plane that the need was being supplied. For example, the fragment which we called Friendly disappeared once Mrs. Bursewicz was able to convince her that the need for 'protection'

was already being supplied by alters' collective strength in numbers.

The Final Integration

Among the discoveries made during the process of integration was the delineation of the internal social landscape, and the changes which occurred in it as a result of the changes in internal social structure among the various personalities as they adopt the methods outlined in this essay.

As a result of the artificial social structure and the new committee, the personae had become accustomed to working together as a well adjusted team. As they achieved interdependence and trust in each other, they began to realize that there would be advantages to continual consciousness and body control. They also realized that each of them was a necessary part, and that to have control and consciousness it would be necessary to become more intimately united with each other. Without outside urging, they had come to realize that true wholeness was desirable. By themselves developing a complicated but shared set of internal symbols, each in turn passed into a deeper and inner world within. None lost his or her particular identity but each gained that of the others. The final

person to emerge from this slow, gradual but strong fusion has the qualities and characteristics of all the surviving personalities as well as The Core.

The Sisiuti remains a central concept. The new coping mechanisms are successful. The desire to run away, although still experienced, can be controlled by using the concept of strength as symbolized by the Sisiuti, and by applying coping mechanisms appropriate to the situation.

Post Fusion Therapy

Therapy has continued, but more as advice and backup of the kind that one could receive in other cultures from one's own kin group. Dreams and their messages are still being used by the Self-Helper to deal with difficult situations. Mrs. Bursewicz still draws on shamanism when her advice is requested. It is through applied anthropology that I have reached this stage of true unity. Because the principles used are found world-wide in human society, I am confident that my unity will last the rest of my life.

Acknowledgment: Thank you to Kelly MacDonald (Dept. Sociology/Anthropology, Simon Fraser

University, Burnaby, B.C. and to Ariadne Bursewicz (Dept. Anthropology, Vancouver Community College, Vancouver, B.C.) for allowing me to consult their case notes.

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(Editor's note: A version of this story was presented under the title "The Use of Anthropological Theory to Treat a Case of Multiple Personality" at the 1987 AASC Annual Meeting. The editor gratefully acknowledges the permission of J.B. to reprint the above essay.)

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THE STORY OF THE SISIUTL

by Ariadne Bursewicz, Department of Anthropology, Vancouver Community College, Vancouver, B.C., Canada

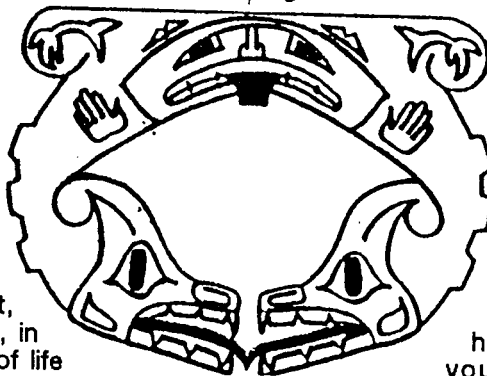
The rain forest of the northwest coast of Canada is so full of plants that it is a temperate jungle. Huge trees, festooned with hairy moss, crowd towards the light far above. Whenever there is a break in the canopy the exposed forest floor is overgrown with shrubs such as devil's club which twine over the rotten logs that make passage almost impossible. The whole is usually dank and dripping with moisture, and the unwary visitor is startled by the giant slugs which move slowly in the dim light.

It is no wonder, then, that to the people of this coast the forest is a place of evil and danger, a place where Cannibal Woman lurks. The great communal houses are always built with their backs to the forest, and their doors to the sea. The sea, in contrast to the forest, is the source of life and wealth. The waters are rich in sea-mammals, and abundance of fish, seaweeds, and shellfish. Passage on the sea is easy and trade is profitable.

More is to be gained from the sea than mere material requirements. Spiritual power and strength may be gained from the great Kwakiutl sea-serpent, the Sisiutl. If one purifies oneself by fasting, prayer, and the sweat-bath, and then sets out in a small canoe, one may find the Sisiutl far out in the water. The blessed man will drop his paddle in awe as the supernatural being rears his great heads from the water. Such a purified man may then obtain two things from the Sisiutl—a magic belt of strength and the water of life. But disaster strikes the impure one who dares to approach the Sisiutl, and he finds that his canoe has turned into stone and is slowly sinking with him.

At Cape Mudge, on Quadra Island, the Kwakiutl tell a tale of one man who had successfully found the Sisiutl and had received the belt of strength and the

water of life. One day when he had been on a journey, this man and his servant entered the mouth of a river and paddled upstream toward the village set back on the bank. To their surprise there seemed to be no smoke coming from any of the houses nor any people to be seen. Yet there were no signs that the village had been abandoned for the summer camps. The house boards were all still in place and the canoes were still drawn up on front of the buildings. Then they noticed that one longhouse had a small trickle of smoke, but no other sign of life. They approached this house carefully and passing between the carved doorposts entered the dark interior. As their eyes became accustomed to the dimness they saw an old woman sitting close to a small fire. She moved and they realized that this old woman was blind, and didn't perceive that they were in the room with her. As she reached for her cane, the young man quickly moved it out of reach. Disturbed by this, the old woman called out and was answered by the appearance of a young woman. The young woman explained that there were two strangers in the house. When the young man asked where all the people had gone, she responded with a startling story. Some months earlier a huge monster had come up from the sea. Since then it had stayed in their river. Whenever anyone went not get water, the monster swallowed him. So, one by one, each inhabitant of the village was devoured, until the only ones left alive were the young woman and her grandmother.



The young man listened to the silence of the ghost village, then turned to the girl with an offer of help. He took off the belt of strength that he had received from the Sisiutl, and fastened it around his servant's waist. Then he sent the servant to fetch water from the river. The servant walked down to the river where the great monster surfaced and swallowed him in one huge gulp. Then the young man stood outside the house and called the words of power that he had from the Sisiutl. And inside the monster the Sisiutl belt swelled, and the servant drew on its supernatural strength and burst the monster apart. As the monster fell open, out spilled all the people of the village and out stepped the servant. Some of the corpses were very rotted and there was a horrible smell. The young man took his water of life and sprinkled it on all the bodies. The people all came back to life, and there was great rejoicing. Then the young man went back to the house and sprinkled the water of life on the old woman's eyes, and her sight returned.

The happy ending for the young man came some days later when he and the girl married each other at one of the greatest feasts ever held on the West Coast. And ever since, their descendants have carried the crest of the sea-serpent with three horned heads, the Sisiutl.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Newsletter of the Association for the Anthropological Study of Consciousness* publishes articles, book reviews, news items, conference notices, and bibliographic materials in the general area of the anthropology of consciousness. This includes altered states of consciousness, ethnographic and analytical material on shamanism, initiation, magic, mediumistic communication, and transpersonal experiences. Reports on indigenous healing practices, non-Western psychotherapies, and divination as well as linguistic, philosophical, and symbolic studies of myth and consciousness are also printed. Finally, the *Newsletter* publishes articles on psychic archaeology, applied parapsychology, and anomalous human abilities. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced, and up to ten pages for articles and three pages in length for reviews.

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