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BLACK-ELK'S VIEW OF AMERICAN CULTURE

by **William S. Lyon, Ph.D.**, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley

Wallace Black-Elk is a 66-year-old Lakota shaman who was raised by traditionalists on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. He is the pipe-bearing, spiritual descendant of the renowned "Nick" Black-Elk of John G. Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks*, and Joseph Epes Brown's *The Sacred Pipe*. Wallace Black-Elk, in typical Lakota fashion, had twelve "grandfathers" who imparted to him the spiritual legacies of the Oglala Nation. He received his shamanic training at a time when Lakota religious practices were banned on their reservations by the BIA. His teaching was conducted in secret so as to avoid prosecution. Due to such risks involved very few Lakota were trained as shamans during this period, and even today one finds very few Lakota shamans over fifty years of age who were trained in the traditional manner. These are now spoken of as "the hard times," and Wallace Black-Elk is one of the few survivors of this era.

Wallace Black-Elk received his first instructions in the use of the sacred pipe, the most sacred object in Lakota cosmology, at the age of five. As with Nick

Black-Elk, Wallace received his first visionary experience at the age of nine. Since that time Wallace has undergone over thirty personal vision-quests (hanbleceya). As such, today he is one of the leading elder shamans among the North American Indians, and is well-known in the spiritual sector of almost every North American Indian community. It has been my pleasure and honor to work in close association with Black-Elk since 1978, and full time for the past two years. In this paper I would like to give a brief description of how Wallace views the contemporary American culture. In order to best accomplish this, it will be necessary to first elucidate some of the basic elements of his cosmology. These precepts form the basis for all the views of us he holds. To begin with, for the Oglala, as for many North American Indian tribes, explanations concerning the things and movements of the universe most often appear in sets of four. This stems from the fact that the world of early man was divided essentially into four cardinal directions, each of which contained a special and specific sacredness. All other mammals, limited to memory/familiarity boundaries, live in a fixed, recognizable amount of territory. Only man, with his learned sense of direction, was able to absolutely escape the boundaries of space on this planet. This discovery was every bit as important as our discovery of fire, agriculture, or the use of metals. For the Oglala there is this sacred rhythm by which the universe runs -- a rhythm of fours -- four sacred directions, four sacred seasons, four races of man, four days to complete a vision-quest, four days for one's prayers to be answered, and so forth.

Given this brief introduction, let me begin by pointing out some of the basic differences between our creation myth and what Wallace was taught as a child. For Wallace, in the beginning the universe had two great beings -- Tunkashila, Grandfather, the Creator, and Maka ina, Grandmother, Mother Earth. For us, there is only a "heavenly Father" from which Adam manifests. From Wallace's point of view, someone forgot to teach us about our mother. For him the Earth is our real mother, and our biological mothers are merely pale imitations of our real mother the Earth. One of the side effects of their lack of education Wallace sees as our propensity to readily pollute the planet with little concern for the future welfare of all forms of life.

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In the beginning, as in the Garden of Eden, man was able to directly communicate with everything in creation, including those things we classify as "inanimate" objects. As he puts it:

"We were on vacation at one time. We were civilized and educated. We were doing okay because we were able to communicate with the fire, and create all forms and shapes of life. Each stone has a language of its own, and the water makes beautiful sounds. So there are countless languages."

For Wallace, however, the Garden of Eden was not an event in the distant past, but a tangible reality to those who seek it today. It is for this reason that Wallace often explains that he has no Lakota religion, rather he has a "way of life." For him, the minute one's way of life becomes a religion one sets in motion the necessary conditions to pit one human being against another. From his perspective, religions only serve to confuse mankind. As such, each of us in our lifetime passes through the "fall from Grace," and it is only by following a spiritual path in life that one is able to lift oneself from this fall. For Wallace, the culprit is not the forbidden fruit, but rather science and technology. As Wallace often states, tongue in cheek:

"Man decides he wants to do something -- wants to create, to exercise his mind. But everything is created to perfection already, so man can really create nothing. So he got a funny idea and pushed a rock down a mountain, and that rock starts spinning faster and faster. So he visualizes a circle. So he invents the wheel. And he poked a hole in the middle and put in an axle, and put himself to work. Now he wants to stop working, but he doesn't know how to stop working. So he creates a robot here to do the work for him. See? So man is going to outsmart himself. From the point of science and technology it was downhill. That's how come we've got a lot of junk yards."

For Wallace the creation of anything involves four essential factors as follows:

1. Wisdom -- this is the essence of the Creator which knows no beginning or end.
2. Knowledge -- this is the essence of Mother Earth, which, in turn is encompassed by the Wisdom. Wallace speaks of the Wisdom and the Knowledge as really being one.
3. Power -- this is the essence of fire that he often terms the "fire generation." It is the creative aspect of the Wisdom and the Knowledge.
4. Gift -- this is what results from the above three in process. It includes all that is created, and he often calls this the "love" or the "talent."

Within this created universe everything that exists Wallace explains in terms of four basic constituents -- the fire, the rock, the water, and the green. Here again the fire represents the spark of essence from the Creator that gives being to everything. The rock represents all that is created in the universe. The water refers to the lakes, oceans, rivers, etc., and the green is the vegetation to include the animal kingdom. These four elements constitute a dynamic view of nature with the fire being the first, primal ingredient. From Wallace's perspective we have forgotten about the fire. To him the fire is sacred and belongs not to us, but to the Creator. Therefore, to take that sacred fire and pack it into a hydrogen bomb with the intent to use it for destructive purposes is extremely naive. Anyone who steals Grandfather's fire and uses it in such a foolish way is merely inviting cosmic retribution. In fact his view is that we have totally misused the fire in every way, having forgotten its real essence.

"So man took that sacred fire and placed all the rock on top of it. He used it to melt our the metals, create the plastics, and mold and shape things. But in drifting over to science and technology man lost contact with Grandfather and Grandmother, who are of the highest value. Now we've shifted over to gold as the highest value. And now we're encompassed by the gold, and it is worth more than all of us put together. I don't think the white man knows how to spell, because on that money somebody left out the "I" where it says "In God We Trust." That's why these people no longer know who their Grandfather and Grandmother really are. We have a prophecy that a lot of buildings are going to come shaking down, and everyone will be standing around crying "Oh my God! Oh my God!" But the spirit already told me that what they really mean is "Oh my Gold! Oh my Gold!"

For our culture power means energy or kilowatts. For the Oglala shaman's power means the sacred pipe -- the canunpa wakan. Thus, where Wallace sees us as holding up gold as the most valuable object in the world, for him it is the sacred pipe. Through the use of these sacred pipes the Lakota shamans make direct contact with the world of spirits from which they seek a supernatural power aimed at help and health for all of mankind. Wallace currently carries four of these sacred pipes, one of which belonged to Nick Black-Elk. In our culture where supernatural power is most often relegated to the realm of fantasy, it is difficult for us to grasp this significant difference in basic attitudes towards the nature of what is referred to as "power." For example, I was told that John Neihardt was given a sacred pipe by Nick Black-Elk, but because he did not understand its true significance it ended up hanging on the wall of his home as a curio.

I remember once when a student asked Wallace which he favored more -- nuclear power or solar power. His reply was that he didn't look at nature in

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FROM THE EDITOR . . .

After two years of editing the *Newsletter*, I would like to sum up our organization's direction and future goals. In the last two years we have grown in size and commitment. The *Newsletter* has become larger and more article oriented. In the next year I would like to expand the *Newsletter* further into a quarterly journal which will better serve the needs of anthropological research on consciousness. In order to do this I will be accepting longer, full length articles for publication. I am convinced that there is a lot of interesting research in need of a viable, professional publication. The *Newsletter* can become this outlet. However, much depends upon our members to disseminate the *Newsletter* and information about our organization. We are at present at a turning point in which our organization can grow considerably. The next year will be critical to this growth. Those attending our upcoming meeting should bring ideas as to how to best implement this growth as well as the commitment to help bring this growth about. As your president-elect, I am open to suggestions about our society's goals and growth. Please feel free to talk to me at the meetings or to write to me at the *AASC* address.

AASC NEWS

AASC Annual Conference

Members are reminded to send in their registration and accommodation reservation forms for the upcoming *AASC Annual Conference* which will be held March 2-8, 1988, at the Presbyterian Conference Center, Pacific Palisades, California. Conference registration is less expensive before January 10, 1988. The deadline for the accommodation form is February 12, 1988. Both forms have been included in this issue for your convenience. Please send the forms to **Cynthia Siegel** at 336 Blue Ridge Drive, Martinez, CA 94553, (415) 935-4463. The preliminary conference schedule has been included with this issue.

AASC Membership Renewal

Please remember to renew your membership for 1988. Forms are included with this issue. Please note that these forms and new *AASC* membership dues should be sent to **Geri-Ann Galanti**, *AASC* Treasurer, at 2906 Ocean Avenue, Venice, CA 90291. Please note her address as previously dues were sent to the *AASC* address.

Erratum

Please note that the last issue of the *Newsletter* listed the wrong zip code for the *AASC* address. The zip code should be 92716-4032, not 97216-4032.

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NEWS

Fourth International Conference on the Study of Shamanism and Alternate Modes of Healing

St. Sabina Center, San Rafael, California, September 5-7, 1987

After four years, Ruth-Inge Heinze said, this conference has begun to develop a sense of community. The community includes a broad array of not only anthropologists, but artists, therapists, even lawyers, and it has its own definition of shamanism, although the emphasis has shifted over the four years from the academic study of shamanism to the uses of shamanism in healing. The conference's definition of shamanism includes the following three elements: 1) a shaman has the ability to access altered states of consciousness at will; 2) a shaman performs community service; and 3) a shaman is a mediator between the secular and the sacred.

Sacred mandalas of Tibet on slides, some very rare, all very beautiful, were presented by Tamar Wasserman Hill one night, very late, and I had wished to see them at a time when I could give them my full concentration, but I'm glad to notice that they are still memorable to me. I also found Erich Kasten's paper memorable: "Sami Shamanism -- Its Symbolism from a Diachronic Point of View." Sami traditions have been lost for three or four generations; Sami culture is verging on extinction. You may recall that even within the past two years, the Sami suffered the loss of their reindeer herds to the fallout from Chernobyl, and in light of world-response to the Chernobyl incident ("official" reassurance that *we* weren't hurt), it's interesting to note Kasten's discussion of the Sami view that the illness of an individual means disharmony in family and community. He commented that the concept of individual medical attention, for example, is incompatible with the Sami belief system.

Jaime Licauco presented a video documentary and discussion concerning the psychic surgeons of the Philippines; the documentary showed other unexplainable phenomena besides psychic surgery, for example, a boy who lives in the streets who seems to be brain-damaged, and who vomits rolls of coins -- he did it for the camera. Stanley Krippner commented on the tangible ways to prove psychic surgery under controlled conditions.

In the comic relief department, Mark Levy, who teaches art history at California State, Hayward, presented on shamanism and performance art. His content was a serious look at artists like Eve Kline ("The Artist Hurls Himself into the Void," in which the artist attempted to fly -- in ordinary -- reality and broke his shoulder in the fall) and Joseph Boyes ("I Like America and America Likes Me," in which the artist communicated for seven days with a wild coyote in a gallery as a healing ritual for the U.S.). Levy, who works with applying shamanic practices to scholarship, is really funny; he has a fabulous sense

of the ridiculous, the ironic, the subversion of the rational by Dada, by futurist art, and by shamanism.

Felicitas Goodman talked briefly about her research on the ability to use different body postures in accessing various states of consciousness. So far, she has found 22 postures. She shared one with the conference participants which was connected with the myth of the feathered serpent. Myths, she said, are reports of events in the other reality. Standing in the posture, we journeyed with the sound of Goodman's rattle. She shared the feathered serpent myth after others shared their journeys, finding some correlation in structures between the myth and the journeys.

Cathy Wolf, who led a medicine wheel ceremony at the *AASC Conference* last March in Temescal Canyon, led "The Ritual of the Six Winds" in San Rafael. We journeyed with the sound of her click sticks and then she gave us each a little bundle to which she gave an interpretation concerning the next six days.

There were quite a few other presentations, of course, as well as performances and discussions — — three days packed solid. Fortunately, as you know, Ruth-Inge Heinze produces a report of these conferences so it's possible to read all the papers.

In the last session, a discussion of proposals for next year's conference, some people said they wanted more scientific papers on shamanism, though a lot of people said they wanted more experiential sessions. It was said that the purpose of this conference is to give the participants energy for work in their own lives. Thus, it seems that the direction that this conference is heading is away from the study of shamanism proper and toward the practice and application of New Age healing methods in one's life.

Reported by **Lisa Ann Mertz**, #8 Brazos Road, East Haven, CT 06512

Great Pyramid and Sphinx Update

A Japanese archaeological team from Waseda University in Tokyo has recently confirmed the findings of a French team of additional chambers in the Great Pyramid of Khufu (Cheops) reported in "Great Pyramid Chambers Discovered," *AASC Newsletter*, 2(4):5-6, 1986. The Japanese, led by Sakuji Yoshimura, have discovered two new cavities behind the walls of the Queen's Chamber as well as a previously unknown tunnel which runs towards the Great Pyramid from 138 feet away. The tunnel which was discovered by chance ends at a wall that may contain a secret door to yet another hidden chamber. The researchers hope to enter the room through the door.

Last summer the Japanese team also confirmed their earlier discovery of an underground chamber six feet east of the Sphinx. They first found the Chamber last March using an electro-magnetic scanner to beam sound waves into the ground. After computer

analysis they confirmed their findings and suggested that the chamber also contains stone objects.

Like the Great Pyramid, the origin and age of the Sphinx has long been speculated on by scientists and occultists. Archaeologists believe it to have been built and to bear the likeness of King Kephren, the son of Khufu builder of the Great Pyramid. They place its age at about 4,500 years before present. While others such as the followers of Edgar Cayce believe it to be over 10,000 years old and to be the guardian of a subterranean "Hall of Records." The Japanese findings at least indicate the presence of an unknown chamber. Recently the traditional archaeological dating has also been challenged by archaeologist, Mark Lehner, who has carefully collected samples of carbon from both the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx Temple. After radiocarbon tests at two laboratories and recalibration with tree-ring dates he has evidence that both the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx Temple were built 400 to 450 years earlier than previously thought. If these figures are accepted than the early Egyptian chronology of the Old Kingdom will have to be revised.

Sources: "Peeks at the Pyramids," *Fortean Times*, #48, pp. 4-5, 1987, Perry, M. "New Findings at Sphinx and Great Pyramid," *American Dowsler*, 27(4):23-25, 1987, Smith, A.R. "The Great Pyramid Reveals her Age," *Venture Inward*, May-June 1986: 10-19+.

Reported by **Jeffery L. MacDonald**

CONFERENCES

Expanding the Dimensions of Psychotherapy: Opening the Intuitive Gate — — a groundbreaking conference on the role of intuition in psychotherapy will be held January 28-31, 1987 at the Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Francisco, California. Among the many participants will be Stanislav Grof, Frances Vaughan, and Virginia Satir. The conference, co-sponsored by the Center for Applied Intuition and John F. Kennedy University, will include addresses, panels, intuition trainings, and workshops. For information contact: **William H. Kautz**, Center for Applied Intuition, 2046 Clement Street, San Francisco, CA 94121, (415) 221-1280.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Spiritual Study Tour to Egypt — — Jon Driscoll and Penney Peirce in association with the Center for Applied Intuition and Frisbie Mansion Travel will lead a two-week journey to ancient Egypt. The tour includes a brief stopover in Paris, then on to Cairo with its museums, bazaars, and Coptic churches; a visit to Memphis, Sakara, Luxor, Denderah, Abydos, and Karnak; a five-day Nile cruise from Aswan to Edfu, the Elephantine Islands, the West Bank, Thebes, and Valley of the Kings, and finally back to Cairo to explore the mysteries of the Sphinx and Great Pyramid before departing for home. Brochure available soon from the **Center for Applied Intuition**, 2046 Clement Street, San Francisco, CA 94121, (415) 221-1280.

JOINING THE MEDIUM'S TABLE: PART II HEALING THE SPIRIT

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

In January of 1986, I was invited to serve as a translator for Dr. Queiroz who was coming to the U.S. for the first time as a guest of the International Healing Foundation. The IHF, which is dedicated to the practice of spiritual wisdom in healing had asked him here to teach us the techniques employed in his Spiritist Center (short of psychic surgery). We hoped to apply this knowledge in work with seriously ill people here in California and at a distance. We were not disappointed.

Queiroz spoke at length of the spiritual dimension of illness. He described the specific layer of interaction between the spiritual and physical as the *perispiritual body*. This energy field, which sits a few millimeters above the skin, registers the karmic and spiritual/emotional/mental disposition of each person. Those diseases which are spiritual, as opposed to purely organic in origin, begin as lesions on the perispiritual body. Healers may counteract or retard both the physical (e.g. cancerous) and perispiritual lesions by applying life force to the afflicted area. Similarly, the application of this life force through the hands or via the mental projection of the healer can help to eliminate any imbalances in the patient's system which have not reached the lesion stage.

He described for us the *triage* whereby applicants for healing were divided up by the Center's guiding spirits into three groups: those who needed surgery under the scalpel and needles of Dr. Fritz, those who required *fluidic therapy*, i.e., energy healing as described above, and those who were to be subjects for *disobsession* where lower spirits who are interfering with their health are removed. Some receive a combination of therapies. We spent several days learning the techniques of energy healing but, as yet, knew nothing of *disobsession* nor of the critical role of the medium in that process.

One evening, Edson came to us visibly moved. He turned to me at the beginning of the session and said, "Matthew, will you serve as an intermediary this evening?" This sounded like where the action was and since I was already a linguistic intermediate, it was easy to agree.

He began to relate the following story: he had spent the day at a center dedicated to helping people come to terms with the psychological and emotional roots of their cancer as an auxiliary to conventional treatment. While attending a patient discussion group, he clairvoyantly perceived a skeletal spirit—form with its bug—eyes greedily fixed on one of the participants, a woman with a large tumor on her face, (we'll call her "Fran"). It was standing behind her and

apparently draining perispiritual energy through the lesion on her face.

He explained that what he had seen was an *obsessing spirit*, a discarnate person who had died and lost the way to the next stage of evolution. By some karmic debt, it had become bound to Fran and was participating in her disease, supporting it and perhaps even helping to cause it. The indicated procedure was to perform a *disobsession*, whereby this intrusive spirit would be disentangled from Fran's perispiritual body and sent on its own way. "For this we need a medium to incorporate the obsessing spirit—this is the quickest means of contacting the spirit and making it accessible to the orientation which it needs so desperately." He looked at me expectantly and I felt my skin crawl, just a little.

Yes, I was the medium he had in mind. And this was no high, healing spirit that I was being asked to allow into my body—this was an *obsessing spirit*. Still, I meant to keep with the program and just trusted what was happening. Edson led us into a deep trance where we imagined ourselves in a favorite place in nature. He evoked the Christ energy and all the helper and mentor spirits that were round about. Then he approached me and placed his hands above my head, as he pronounced the words, "I invite the spirit associated with Fran to come through our brother Matthew."

I first felt a pleasant warmth coming from Edson's hands and then from behind me and to the left I sensed a presence, a heavy cloud of light. Once again, I had a moment of truth, but this one was easier to resolve: my own commitment to this work had considerably deepened and I felt waves of love and support from all those present. I would step aside and allow the spirit in. Instantly, I went limp and felt a tightening in my throat as my body began to gently shake and sway.

In a moment, I heard a high-pitched whining sound issuing from my vocal chords and I became aware of a vast, insatiable hunger. Images of snow and a forest hovel drifted into my mind. M. who had been designated as the spirit's "director" repeated a request for the spirit to come forth and communicate verbally with those present. The spirit responded in its whiny voice and, under the prodding of M., related the following story.

She was Fran's mother in this past lifetime. They were members of an Indian tribe in a village on what looked to be the High Plains. There was a terrible snowstorm which had isolated the village and made it impossible to get anything to eat. As a result, the people in the village were starving, and she had decided to brave the snow and wind to try and find something to eat for her and her very young daughter. She became lost in the blizzard and when she finally made it back to the hut, she found her young daughter dead of exposure and hunger. At this point in the narrative, she screamed and I felt my whole body tense up with the profound grief, anger, and guilt which she felt as she held the limp body of her dead daughter.

She vowed never to leave her daughter again and carried the body out into the snow where she too soon died. Because of the traumatic nature of her death, she never quite realized that she was dead and certainly had no consciousness of the harm she was causing her "daughter" in this lifetime. M. conversed with her in a firm but compassionate tone. She got her to realize her state and to accept that it was time for her to move on. Accompanied by the mentor spirits which Edson evoked, the spirit moved on into a white light, professing her love for her daughter and for those present. Later, we were to find out that stories such as these are common for obsessing spirits: beneath the anger and hatred, there is often a misguided love. Edson explained that our work with this spirit was not over and that it would probably take several sessions to complete the disobsession.

The next day when I entered our meeting room, M. came up to me and said, "Did you hear about Fran?" She proceeded to tell me that the day after our disobsession, Fran came to her group with an uncharacteristic radiance; her tumor had visibly shrunk and she reported feeling more energized than she had in a long time. She did not know that we were going to perform the disobsession on her and was not present at the session so M. told her what had happened. She responded that she had felt a "presence" shadowing her for much of her life but never thought too much of it.

M. suggested that they do some psychodrama in which they acted out the reincarnational drama that had been related. M. played the role of the mother and Fran, the daughter. They were soon passionately engaged in dialogue: "Why did you leave me?" asked Fran, "I had to, my daughter, to find food for you!" M. responded. M. reported that they both felt transported back to that forest hut, and that the catharsis of feelings was intense and real. Fran reported a tremendous release of pent-up feelings. Interestingly enough, in this life, Fran was dealing with a senile mother who was confined to a rest home. Her greatest concern was always about what would happen to her mothers, both incarnate and discarnate, if she were to let go of them.

We see here a powerful interaction between the spiritual and physical planes which provides an important example of the possibilities of this kind of healing work: through the physical (the medium) the spiritual is healed (the obsessing spirit) which in turn heals the physical (Fran).

Edson Queiroz showed us how to set up a medium's table so that we could continue to do this work in his absence. He selected four mediums, two "grounds", two directors, and four "cleaners". Each applicant for healing was to provide a form with his or her picture, vital statistics, and a description of their problem. The director would choose a medium for each patient and after careful prayer and preparation, the medium would incorporate the obsessing spirit. The director's job was to orient the spirit, to help it to recognize its true state, and to get it to take its own place "in progression".

After each session which would last a few minutes, the cleaners would come to remove any negative energies remaining on the members of the table by applying "passes," special hand movements over their bodies. Then the next spirit was called and so forth. After a specified period of work, say an hour and a half, the session would be closed and the people would go home.

Our work with fluid therapy and disobsession has continued on this model to the present day and since my initial encounter, I have incorporated dozens of spirits. Although I hadn't really considered the possibility that I was a medium until my experience in Brazil, I find that this work is easy, natural, and actually feels good. Edson tells us that when an obsessing spirit departs, it takes some of our own lower energy with it. We are doing an enormous work of charity for our discarnate brothers and sisters, he tells us and greatly furthering our own spiritual advancement.

The patients we treat have had a variety of results: some feel nothing, others report improvements in their psychic and physical well being. One young man was sitting quietly at home on the night of the disobsession when the lights began to flicker. Thinking there was a problem with the power in his house, he went to another room and the lights stopped flickering in the first room and began to flicker in the one he had just entered. This continued for several minutes as he found the flickering in whatever room he happened to enter but nowhere else in the house. I must note that this particular fellow was a hard-headed rationalist and not someone prone to hallucination.

Other patients have reported that the reincarnational dramas that the spirits relate have an intuitive "rightness" for them and embody important issues for them in their lives. One man was obsessed by a number of entities whom he had mistreated as a prince in another lifetime. He began to look at his attitude of personal pride which proved a significant step in his growth process. He began to understand why he felt compelled to go out of his way to help all the "little people" he came across as a high-powered executive — this was a kind of compensation for his previous disregard of others. In a follow-up session, he related that he felt a great relief at having "appointed" the spirits who accompanied him as advisers. This case is typical.

Although we do not operate on the scale of some Spiritist hospitals in Brazil where hundreds of disobsessions may take place in the course of a week, we have the beginnings of our own Spiritist Center and feel a greater hand guiding our work. As to the ultimate truth of the obsessing spirit model, we can offer no scientific proof. Certainly, our work has historical precedent as in the work of Dr. Wickland (see *Thirty Years Among the Dead*). The work of Elisa Mendez has shown that disobsession can be more effective than conventional therapy in dealing with schizophrenia. Spiritists understand schizophrenics as undeveloped mediums and help them to consciously control their psychic openings.

On a return trip to Brazil in October of 1986, we had a chance to witness a disobsession meeting at Edson's center. This particular group has been meeting for seven years and worked quickly and efficiently. It was interesting to hear the spirits in Brazil telling exactly the same kind of stories that our spirits here had been telling. Although the cultural setting was different, the same traumas and karmic bonds were reported by the obsessors: unrequited love, murder, curses, and crimes against spiritual law kept coming up.

Each person must ultimately judge the value of this work and the validity of this report in their own terms. I am sharing this story in the hope that it will at least inspire the reader to consider this perspective on healing and the nature of being human. Certainly, there are vast possibilities of the human spirit Science does not yet understand which may be helpful to us in our personal quests.

For me, mediumship is a resource, independent of the ultimate status of the "spirits" that communicate with and through me. Through automatic writing and incorporation, I have learned many valuable lessons and established contact with guides and helpers, perhaps from my own psyche, perhaps not, who have contributed to my own life apparently, to that of others.

(Editor's Note: The first half of this paper appeared in the September 1987 issue of the *Newsletter*.)

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Continued from page 2:

terms of how one can get that kind of use out of nature. When he went to a bubbling brook he enjoyed laying down and listening to it, whereas the white man goes there and tries to figure out a way that he can dam up the water and make it work for him. As such, he wasn't really in favor of either nuclear or solar power, especially since the sacred pipe provided him with all his worldly needs.

Because of the sacredness of the pipe, it requires special attention in handling. In order to properly handle a sacred pipe Wallace teaches that one must develop four personal attributes: courage (of the heart), patience, endurance, and alertness. If you lack any one of these, then that is a weakness you pray for development of. As for the sacred pipe itself he explains:

"The sacred pipe was carved by Tunkashila. In it He implanted one drop of Wisdom, and Grandmother one drop of Knowledge. The stone represents the universe, and also the woman. We all come from a woman -- we are all part of a woman. The stem of the sacred pipe represents the tree of life. That tree is rooted in the fire, rock, water, and green. It sprouted four branches painted four colors -- black, red, yellow, and white -- the four races of man. It also gave rise to all other life, but it has only one root. It is only one tree. That is

why we always say 'Mi Tkuye Oyacin' -- all my relations -- instead of 'amen'."

It is interesting to note here that in Lakota cosmology the four cardinal directions are also associated with these same four colors -- black for west, red for north, yellow for east, and white for south.

The "way of life" referred to earlier is termed by Wallace the "red road." It is the same term found in the writings of Nick Black-Elk. Those who follow the "red road" follow the teachings of the sacred pipe. Any other way of life is referred to as following the "black road." From Wallace's perspective the members of our culture, rather than following the "red road" enter the university to be trained in a totally other manner of living. To begin with, all of these individuals have become skilled in the use of the English language. For Wallace, the English language per se is dangerous -- it pollutes our minds. Because English is a composite language, Wallace sees it as having lost its roots -- its essential connection to nature. This sense of connectedness to nature is inherent in the structure of the Lakota language. Wallace is quick to point out that one cannot speak the Lakota language without acquiring a sense of a spiritual connection between oneself and the rest of creation. For example, the Lakota word for the bag in which the sacred pipe is carried literally translates as "heart bag" ("cantojuha -- "cante" = heart, "ojuha" = bag), while the Lakota word for water ("mni") stems from "ni," which is the breath and essence of life.

There is an even deeper evil inherent in the English language than this. The Lakota language is a very precise language, and it renders exact meanings when heard. English, on the contrary, is laden with hedge-words that give one the ability to evade any issue at hand. Such words as "but," "maybe," "perhaps," "possibly," are just a few examples. For this reason Wallace sees the English language as teaching one to inadvertently lie all the time. That is, speaking with a "forked-tongue" is inherent in the very nature of the English language per se. To make matters even worse, Wallace feels that when it comes to higher education the English language divides itself out into four basic linguistic patterns he labels: the scientific language; the psychological (including medical) language; the legal language; and the religious language. Each one of these linguistic subsets predisposes its speaker to a certain pattern of thinking. As such, the culture is divided into four main patterns of thinking, with each pattern containing an inherent inability to communicate with the three other patterns of thought. Wallace often gives the following illustration:

"So the scientist wants to get more energy, and packs that sacred fire into a power plant. That results in the creation of threat residues that the wind carries in all directions, contaminating all the green and water and everything. So what is left behind by these scientists causes frustration, anger, argument, and confusion. So the say, that's not our

problem. We're hired and paid in the name of "In God We Trust." We're just doing our job. So that's a psychological problem. Let the medical doctors solve that problem.

"But these medical scientists haven't come up with any remedy up to this time. They is time. They find out there is no way of neutralizing that radioactivity and stopping the cancer. So, now, these people say, well, this is not our problem, it's a legal problem.

"So all the law—making people assemble their most intelligent people together under that gold dome. Well, let's enact a law — clean air act, clean water act, get tough act. But nothing happens. This is a law! This is an order! Like that. But the air never clears up, the water never clears up, and we don't get tough. So finally, well, this not a legal problem, this is a religious problem.

"So this is up to Billy Graham, Schuller, Jerry Falwell, Oral Roberts, and all these big T.V. operators. They're supposed to say hogie—pogie, and it's supposed to cure everything. Well, nothing happens. So, well, this is not our problem, this is a scientific problem. So the pass the buck back.

"Well, if we had any real communication going on out there we wouldn't be in this mess in the first place."

The problem of communication between people worsens with the drawing of imaginary national boundary lines all over the planet. From Wallace's view we box ourselves in by drawing national boundaries, then state boundaries, then county lines, then city limits, then house lots, and finally, we put locks on our doors and lock ourselves in. In his way of thinking, this is a far cry from living the freedom fighter image we like to carry of ourselves. For Wallace, the bottom line in all of this is his adage that "pollution begins in the mind." To get rid of the pollution one needs to follow the "red road," meaning a deeply spiritual way of life. Only then does one become a true being, what Wallace calls an "earth man." When this happens Wallace declares that your "mind's eye" will open. When that event occurs, it doesn't matter what language you speak, everyone in that state of being speaks "the same mind." As such, Wallace is an advocate of what we have come to term the "perennial philosophy," whereby fully—actualized or realized humans all carry the same, inherent set of moral values. Unlike our philosophers, however, Wallace lives in a world of supernatural powers rendered by the spirits.

So for Wallace Black—Elk there is a vast difference between his world and our world. Our world he sees as being based on gold. He sees that such a philosophy only produces a world full of frustration, greed, anger, and pain. His world is based on the teachings of the sacred pipe, and the spirit contained therein.

"There is a time I have to endure — when I pray. When I pray, Grandmother, she comes with a stick. There is a crystal on the top, and light all the way around me. Then there is a perfume smell that comes. Then there is a cold and lukewarm air come in. She was just beautiful then. I'm revived again. I'm whole again. So that's how my Grandmother is sacred. That's how sacred She is. So I learned this from my Grandmother. The spirit she comes — she talks. So I learned all this from the pipe. I learned that way."

(Editor's Note: This paper was read at the *Third Annual Meeting of the AASC*, Pacific Palisades, California, March 8, 1987.)

BOOK REVIEWS

The Miracle of Existence, by Henry Margenau, (Boston: Shambhala New Science Library) 1987. 143 pages, no index. \$9.95 paper. Reviewed by **Robert S. Gable**, Psychology Department, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA 91711

The author, Henry Margenau, is professor emeritus of physics and natural philosophy at Yale University. This book originally appeared in 1984 in hardcover.

Except for some metaphysical orientation, the title doesn't give much clue to its contents. After reading the book, the title still doesn't seem to be very informative. There are ten brief chapters dealing with evolution, the mind—body problem, consciousness, science and religion, and the mind.

Theoretical physics and philosophy are intellectual cousins. From the interstices of these disciplines, Margenau spins out a theology of consciousness. His approach is scholarly, with chapter endnotes and references, but no mathematics or previous knowledge of physics or philosophy is necessary. An intelligent layman willing to proceed slowly can follow Margenau's arguments. His principal thesis appears to be that "the concept of mind and consciousness resembles what physicists call a field" (p. 91) — not mechanical force fields of classical physics, but immaterial probability fields of quantum physics. In quantum theory, "probabilities" have the status of being primary or real "observables" in much the same way that an actuary in a life insurance company sees the probability that a particular person will die within the next twenty years as a "reality." Statisticians, demographers, sociologists, and some anthropologists and psychologists will also be comfortable with the impact of this abstraction.

The realities of quantum mechanics and consciousness are not observables in the way that a tangible object is. "The futility of assigning visual attributes to nonvisual entities [is] one of the basic messages conveyed by quantum mechanics" (p. 35), says Margenau. On the personal level, Margenau notes that "every person feels instinctively that his mind can direct his bodily movements, and this instinctive awareness is as clear and basic as any sensory impression, such as seeing an external

object" (p. 35).

Nevertheless, a tough problem presents itself. Every entity which we call "real" must satisfy the basic procedures of (1) having a quantifiable sensation, (2) being validated, often by operational definitions, and (3) being convertible into a construct by "metaphysical" principles such as consistency, causality, elegance, etc. Can individual consciousness or mind be shoehorned into verifiable realities? Margenau believes that Eastern philosophies (of the Universal Mind) and the psychology of Carl Jung (of archetypes, synchronicity) provide the best options at present.

Brief suggestions are made throughout the book as to how paranormal phenomena such as clairvoyance might be inight be integrated into quantum mechanics. (Margenau was a sympathetic acquaintance of Eileen Garrett.) There is also a one-chapter critique, mostly negative, of physics-based conjectures about mind as proposed by other writers (e.g., Walker, Herbert, Bohm, Burr-Northrop, Inyushin, and Dudley).

If you believe that probability is real, you'll probably really like this book.

Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing, by Michael Taussig, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 518 pp. 1987. Reviewed by **Lisa Ann Mertz**.

This book is like Don Benito's book of *magia* which "weighed close to thirty pounds and gained five more when the moon was full" (p. 264).

Weaving a journey of *pintas*, paintings, healing visions, like those imparted to the patient by the shaman in séance, Taussig explores the principle of montage, conceptualized by Walter Benjamin, but lived by the *yagé*-drinking shamans of the Putumayo. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man* recreates the history of the region intertwining the past and past and present in stops and starts, telling stories, drawing surprising connections, reflecting on anthropology as writing, and bringing to the surface the underlying theoretical basis in Derrida, Foucault, Benjamin, Brecht, and Artaud.

Stanley Mitchell described montage in his introduction to Benjamin's *Understanding Brecht* (1973) as "the ability to capture the infinite, sudden, or subterranean connections of dissimilars, as the major constitutive principle of the artistic imagination in the age of technology" (quoted, p. 396).

Taussig paints with words, for example, a picture of Roger Casement, the British consular representative who journeyed down the Putumayo River in 1910, and who, due to the coincidences of imperialist history, knew Joseph Conrad in the Congo, Joseph Conrad who wrote against him in the end when he was tried and hanged for treason, running guns from Germany to Ireland. "It was as if what was soon to become the maligned ghost of Casement would have in addition to bear the brunt of what Conrad needed

to kill in himself," says Taussig. "It is this same death wish that can come to haunt the anthropologist, still if not even more than ever before society's embodiment of romance and science south of the equatorial line" (p. 15).

Casement was an Irishman and a homosexual who, in his own words, saw "through the eyes of another race of people once hunted themselves, whose heart was based on affection as the root principle of contact with their fellow men, and whose estimate of life was not something eternally to be appraised at its market price."

"The eyes of the hunted were many," Taussig says, "the Congolese mutilated for rubber, the Irish and the Putumayan Indians, and the homosexuals, too" (p. 53).

The Putumayan Indians were hunted by the rubber-barons, especially Julio César Arana and his hideous side-kick Aquilo Torres, who contributed mightily to the debt-peonage system, based on a fluctuating market price of human labor, creating a "gigantic piece of make-believe, the debt was where the gift economy of the Indian meshed with the capitalist economy of the colonist" (p. 128).

The presence of Capuchin monks from Barcelona in the late 1800s served to reinforce an enmeshed church and state; "...the potential wealth of rubber demanded a strong and visibly Christian presence to keep Arana's brutal rubber company ensconced in Peruvian territory south of the Napo River" (p. 307).

Taussig depicts as an effect of the missionary activity in the region, the creation of *magia*, the power that even now is believed to be had through a pact with the devil. Bishop Peña Montenegro, the 18th century Franciscan leader, prohibited the dances and songs, destroyed the drums, deerheads, and feathers, and other "instruments of evil," because they "bring on the memory of paganism" (p. 143).

The early 20th century Capuchin Father Gaspar, on the other hand, concluded that "to erase the pagan-stimulating function of memory, the rituals should be maintained so that the memories they embodied could be intertwined with the images -- the oil paintings -- of Christian suffering and redemption: the death of the sinner, the Last Judgment, and heaven and hell" (p. 391).

Father Gaspar's companion Father Bartolomé took the maintaining of the rituals further by participating in them himself, even taking *yagé* with the shamans and finally becoming a legendary medicine man. "But the irony is obvious enough," says Taussig. "Poor old Gaspar! Could he have envisioned that now, many decades later, it would be the white colonists not the Indians, who would be inculcating into their traditions what they held to be Indian magic and religion?" (p. 386).

Taussig shows contemporary whites journeying to the shamans for healing, and often begging the shamans to come to them:

Now sixty years later, as that history emerged in stops and starts with the jolting of the bus as it made its way toward the frontier, we were conscious, in so slight a way, of the historical irony of our progress retracting, yet also contracting, opposing yet also affirming this colonial endowment: the legendary white man, the original colonizer, the holy man, Father Bartolomé, wandering in the dank Putumayo forests baptizing wild Indians and drinking hallucinogens with them, supposedly, while the just-baptized young 'wild' Indian, Santiago, destined to become a *yagé* shaman was pressed into the priests' service in the convent, emptying their commodes. Added to which it was now the Indian, not the priest, who was traveling to the frontier to drink hallucinogens with the poor white colonists there, and, if not exactly baptize them, then at least heal and thereby consecrate them (p. 414).

Taussig also took *yagé* with Santiago. He finds the *yagé* night to be a night of montage, lived. Montage, here described as a principle of the artistic imagination in the age of technology, becomes as well, fundamental to the power of the shamanic séance, "the oldest form of art" (p. 329).

BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

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

The Infinite Boundary: A Psychic Look at Spirit Possession, Madness, and Multiple Personality, by D. Scott Rogo, (New York: Dodd Mead & Company), 1987

TRANSITION

CHONGYAM TRUNPA: PRACTICAL MYSTIC

by **Felicia Campbell**, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Buddhists see death as a passage: hence, there were few long faces among the 2,000 celebrants gathered in the Vermont Hills for the May 26th funeral of Chogyam Trunpa Rinpoche. His death in Nova Scotia on April 4, 1987, at the age of 47, marked the end of one phase of a remarkable career.

In a ceremony designed to aid him toward his next incarnation, his body, embalmed in salt and seated in a meditative posture, was placed in a box on top of a two story high structure and cremated in a ceremony that involved the cacophony of Tibetan instruments and the throwing of offerings, including rice and butter into the fire, while Zen archers performed, a canon was fired and a bagpipe played.

His autobiography, *Born in Tibet*, as told to Esme Cramer Roberts, first published in England in 1966 and later released by Shambhala Books in 1977 with a new epilogue, gives a fascinating account of his life through 1959 when he fled the Chinese Communists, crossing the Himalayas to India. Fortunate signs had greeted his birth: an unseasonable rainbow, a pail of water somehow became a pail of milk, and his mother's relations dreamed of lamas visiting their tents. At the age of one, he was declared the reincarnation of the tenth Trunpa Tulku and his training began. *Born in Tibet* is slow going until one becomes accustomed to the Tibetan names and immense amount of detail regarding times and places. Even so its descriptions of life as an incarnate lama are fascinating, humanizing the ancient tradition, providing factual glimpses of day to day living, and illuminating the spiritual teachings.

The sections dealing with the flight from Tibet over the Himalayas to India are particularly poignant -- lessons in impermanence.

The Epilogue carries us to 1976, by which time he has become, perhaps, the major influence on Buddhism in America. In 1969, feeling that he could do more good in the secular world, he renounced his lamastic vows, subsequently married, and became the father of three sons.

After a modest beginning in Vermont, he launched the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado in 1974. Twenty-three hundred students, instead of the 450 who had been expected, showed up to the first Summer Institute. In addition, according to the *New York Times*, he founded the more than 100 meditation centers of the Vajradhata International Buddhist Church, which numbers approximately 5,000 members.

He was both artist and writer. In addition to numerous scholarly articles and translations of Tibetan classics, his books include: *Meditation in Action*, 1969; *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, 1973; *The Myth of Freedom and the Way of Meditation*, 1976; *Buddha in the Palm of Your Hand*, 1982; *First Thought, Best Thought*, 1983; and *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, 1984 -- all published by Shambhala.

The Myth of Freedom is based on a series of lectures given across the United States from 1971-1973. It is divided into eight sections: "The Myth of Freedom, Styles of Imprisonment, Sitting Meditation, Working with the Emotions, Meditation in Action, The Open Way, Devotion," and "Tantra." Buddhism, he makes clear, involves "the willingness to be realistic through the practice of meditation," which he describes as "the creation of a space in which we are able to expose and undo our neurotic games, our self-deceptions, our hidden fears and hopes" (p. 2). Buddhism is neither glamorous or a cult. Wisdom becomes, in his terms, "a domestic affair."

In order to be free, we must rid ourselves of the

freight of misconceptions and misperceptions, a freight which includes the notion of freedom itself. We must acknowledge the path in its chaos, its fruition and its endlessness, even after realization. We learn that, "The whole world is symbol -- not symbol in the sense of a sign representing something other than itself, but symbol in the sense of the highlights of a the vivid qualities of things as they are" (p. 156).

This is a book to which one can return again and again. I found it as fresh on rereading after a number of years, as I did on its publication.

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior, a more recent work, is designed to adapt the Buddhist tradition to the West. The path described is open to anyone who seeks a genuine or fearless existence.

In using the legendary kingdom of Shambhala as the basis for the imagery in this work, he makes clear that he is not presenting the traditional *Kalacakra* teachings on Shambhala. Shambhala presents a simple, non-sectarian way to work with ourselves and share with others. Warriorship here refers, not to making war on others, but to fearlessness in dealing with ourselves. It involves convincing ourselves that we can experience the good that is part of the world. In attaining that good, we must retain our senses of humor, "appreciating reality with a light touch." Inherent in the Shambhala ideal is the belief that we can save the world and build an enlightened society.

The approach is magical. The chapter entitled, "How to invoke Magic," begins: "When you express gentleness and precision in your environment, then real brilliance and power can descend into that situation. If you try to manufacture that presence out of your own ego, it will never happen. You cannot own the power and the magic of this world. It is always available but it does not belong to anyone."

The authentic presence of genuine warriors challenges others to be authentic or true. The book presents guideposts to lead the reader to authenticity. An appendix gives the addresses of Shambhala training centers that some have found objectionable. Be that as it may, the book presents a worthwhile and enlightened mode of behavior.

It is fitting to close this short analysis of Trunpa's legacy with his own words, the last two stanzas of a poem called "Enthronement," which introduces *The Myth of Freedom*.

The warrior without a sword,
Riding on a Rainbow,
Hears the limitless laughter of transcendent joy.
The poisonous snake becomes amrita.

Drinking fire, wearing water worlds,
Holding the mace of the wind,
Breathing earth,
I am lord of the three worlds.

Sources in addition to the works cited are *Time*,

Feb. 14, 1977, p. 86 and *The New York Times*, May 27, 1987, p. 16.

REQUESTS

I am currently working on a book, *Haunted Houses in America*, that will be published by Simon & Schuster in late 1988 or early 1989. All of the places included in the book will be ones that are open to the public, e.g., shops, museums, historical houses, etc. I would be very interested in knowing about any good ghost stories that would fit into the book. Any assistance you can give me will be greatly appreciated and will be credited in the book. Please contact **Joan Bingham** at K-6 Sand Spring Park, Schnecksville, PA 18078, (215) 799-2397.

RESOURCES

Audiotapes from the national and regional annual meetings of the American Society of Dowsers, Inc. are available from **Alphasonics**, P.O. Box 271, Nashua, NH 03061-0271.

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Geri-Ann Galanti
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