

CHAPTER 1

HENRY RUPERT, WASHO SHAMAN

Author's Note

In 1964 I received an MA in Anthropology from McGill University for a thesis entitled, *West Indian Voluntary Associations in Montreal* (see Handelman 1967). A workmanlike job, brick on brick, uninspired and uninspiring, enabled mainly by the caring intelligence of my supervisor, the late Richard (“Dick”) Salisbury, a Papua New Guinea specialist, himself the student of S. F. Nadel. On my way to the University of Pittsburgh to begin PhD studies in anthropology I passed that summer in a field training program in Nevada. There I met the shaman, Henry Rupert, and, through Henry, I began to learn to perceive and, so, to learn. And to learn through serendipity, accident, surprise, and abduction. Elsewhere (see Chapter Two, this volume, and Handelman 1993) I’ve described how it happened that Henry (who literally had declared himself dead to anthropologists) agreed to tell me about his shamanism. That summer with Henry and his family changed my sense of selfness and through this my sense of what anthropology might become for me. Henry opened my horizons, expanded my vision. Above all, my discussions with Henry whetted my imagination (that until then had been devoted mainly to reading science fiction). Put simply, Henry opened to me a life in anthropology. I left Nevada a different anthropologist.

And there were resonances and reverberations. Matan Shapiro mentions at the outset of the Introduction to this volume that Henry came to me in 1998 while I was being healed in Copenhagen by the shaman, Jonathan Horwitz. At that time, while we were visiting Copenhagen, my beloved friend, the late Galina Lindquist, brought me to Jonathan. Galina had studied with Jonathan in preparation for her doctoral fieldwork on neo-shamanism in Sweden (Lindquist 1997, Handelman 1999). Jonathan and his partner at the time, Anette Host, greeted me as an old friend, though we had never met. Jonathan told me something of his own story. When he returned from soldiering in Vietnam, Jonathan decided to study anthropology and enrolled in the graduate program at Columbia University. There he read the essay on Henry, published in 1967, that is reprinted below. Jonathan told me that this text had had

a powerful effect on him and helped him decide to switch from anthropology to becoming a healing shaman, the healer I met in 1998. Then and there, Henry recursively returned to me, breathing life into me (once again) and telling me, “Know through your feelings, but know.” The injunction, its synergistic synthesis, penetrated me through and through. The Cartesian divide took its leave.

Yet Henry’s appearance did not close the circle. There were resonances and reverberations. His injunction pervaded the last fieldwork that I was able to participate in, in Andhra Pradesh together with M. V. Krishnaya and David Shulman (see Handelman 2014: 115–213) and, too, it has nudged me on and off, and perhaps is most prominent in this volume in Chapter Two on tracing bureaucratic logic and in Chapter Ten on the David Lynch film, *Mulholland Drive*. Too, I also should mention that while he was healing me in 1998, Jonathan had a vision, one that at the time made no sense whatsoever to me, and that I will not go into here. But over a year later that vision filled with significance . . .



This chapter presents the life history of the last shaman among the Washo Indians of western Nevada and eastern California. This man, Henry Rupert, presents us with a unique case of the development of a shamanic worldview through time. More specifically, he offers us an opportunity to examine the shaman as an innovator and potential innovator, especially with respect to the curing techniques and personal ideology relating him to the supernatural, the natural environment, and other men. While the anthropological literature is replete with descriptions of shamanic rituals and cultural configurations of shamanism in particular societies, as well as functional explanations purporting to explain the existence of shamanic institutions, little attention has been paid to the shaman as an innovator, although the idea was presented by Nadel (1946), exemplified by Voget (1950) in a somewhat different religious context, and briefly touched upon by Murphy (1964: 77). Henry Rupert exemplifies the shaman as a creative innovator and potential “cultural broker,” and his life history will be presented as an essentially chronological sequence of events, situations, and ideas.

In the period before White contact, the Washo occupied territory between Lake Tahoe, on the border of present-day California and Nevada, and the Pine Nut Mountains east of Reno and Carson City; in the north their territory extended to Honey Lake, and in the south to Antelope Valley (Merriam and d’Azevedo 1957; Downs 1963: 117). In terms of social organization, the Washo were composed of three bands, although the family, sometimes nuclear and sometimes extended, was the primary unit of social organization; and the family unit decided the yearly round of hunting and gathering activities, sometimes under the leadership of antelope shamans and rabbit “bosses.” A high prevalence of witches and sorcerers has also been reported among the aboriginal Washo (Leis 1963; Siskin 1941) in much the same configuration as has been reported for the neighboring Northern Paiute (Park 1939; Whiting 1950), with all shamans suspect as potential sorcerers. With increasing

White occupation of their territory during the late nineteenth century, their seasonal round was disrupted, and the Washo settled around White habitations and ranches, working as seasonal laborers, ranch hands, lumberjacks, and domestic servants. It was into this disrupted cultural milieu, and disorganized social situation, that Henry Rupert was born.

The Becoming and Being of a Shaman

Henry Rupert was born in 1885, the son of Pete Duncan and Susie John, both Washo, in Genoa, Nevada. Genoa was an area of lush farm- and ranch-land amidst the arid Nevada semi-desert which had been first settled by Mormon emigrants from Utah. In the shadows of Job's Peak, a 9,000-foot mountain in the Sierra Nevada range, the Mormons had farmed the desert and transformed it into the rich grassland it still is today. When Henry Rupert was still very young, about two to three years old, his father deserted the family. Henry did not meet his father again until he was twenty years old and his father, a complete stranger, was working as a handyman in a Chinese restaurant in Carson City. By this time Pete Duncan had remarried; and father and son remained strangers until Pete Duncan died.

Henry's mother, Susie John, worked as a domestic servant for a ranch in Genoa. Most of her time was taken up with her domestic chores, and Annie Rube, Henry's older sister, organized and managed the family household and acted as the family disciplinarian. Her husband, Charley Rube, worked as a ranch hand and fisherman, but he was also an antelope shaman, a man who in aboriginal times was entrusted with the task of "singing" antelope to sleep during the annual Washo antelope drives. Near the encampment of Henry Rupert's family lived Henry's mother's sister's husband, Welewkushkush, and his wife. Until the age of eight, when he was taken to school, Henry divided most of his time between Genoa during the winter and the shores of Lake Tahoe during the summer, usually in the company of either Charley Rube or Welewkushkush.

During his early years, Henry had a series of dreams which he still remembers with clarity, and which probably marked him early as having shamanic and mystic potential. As he describes the situation, he would go to sleep on the ground inside the family lean-to and dream of a bear who came and stood in the lean-to opening and stared at him. When he looked at the bear, it would vanish, and then Henry would fly up into the sky toward the moon. This dream recurred frequently over a fairly long period. As a youngster, Henry was also subject to spells of dizziness and fainting. These spells also occurred at bedtime, and both the lean-to and ground would whirl around in a circular motion. Henry would then tell his family to go outside the lean-to and build large fires to stop the ground from whirling about. However, no one paid any attention to his demands, and after a while he would recover.¹

Welewkushkush, a well-known shaman among the Washo, was already between sixty and seventy years old when Henry was born, and on a number of occasions

Henry was able to watch him healing. During one of these curing sessions, Henry observed Welewkushkush dance barefoot in a lean-to fire and emerge unscathed. Not surprisingly, the youngster respected his uncle greatly both for his curing feats and for his generous, kind attitude and demeanor toward his patients, relatives, and acquaintances. Henry maintains that he harbored similar feelings of respect toward his brother-in-law, Charley Rube, and that the same general attitudes prevailed in his family relationships. He was never severely disciplined at any time, and only his sister, Annie Rube, scolded him. Nevertheless, even within this milieu, Henry exhibited strong feelings of hostility and aggression as well as independence, as exemplified by the following incident, quoted verbatim:

Someone, I don't remember who, gave me a little puppy. I liked it very much. One evening that puppy made lots of noise, and he stole [*sic*] some of the food we were going to have for supper. My elder sister gave me hell about it. She said: "You don't need that puppy in here; it's no good; get rid of it." I made up my mind to kill that puppy. I took it to a fence made out of rocks and I threw a big rock on top of the puppy and killed it. My mind was made up. When I make up my mind, I don't change it. The next evening they asked me where the puppy was. I told them I killed it, because they told me it had been no good.

During these early years Henry had few friends. He spent much time by himself wandering over desert and mountain for days at a time, living off the land when he could, and going hungry when he could not. Given the *laissez-faire* attitude within his family, he had to report to no one, nor did he even have to be home at regular intervals. While not self-sufficient, he was able and independent. On one occasion, he "hopped" a freight train to Sacramento to see what lay on the other side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. He also exhibited a boundless curiosity about the natural world around him, a world filled with strange forces and beings, and their existence was often manifested to him. He still remembers sleeping in an abandoned campsite one night and seeing a strange object resembling a cloud pass close by his body while he was awake, and wondering what it represented. On another occasion, while walking down a deserted path at dusk, he saw a white object ahead of him. As he walked forward, it moved. When he stopped, the object also halted. He began to sweat heavily and was extremely frightened. Finally he gathered his courage, walked up to the object, and found an old nightshirt flapping in the evening breeze. Yet he wondered that the object flapped only when he walked forward and stopped when he desisted. Such incidents were not simple coincidences; they suggested an importance and significance that he was not yet able to unravel.

In 1892, at the age of seven, Henry received the first conscious intimation of what his future powers might be. A relative of his mother died; his mother was deep in mourning and quite despondent. Henry dreamt of the event which would follow, and the event came to pass during that winter. His mother went from the family

encampment to a slue on the frozen Carson River, and there she attempted suicide by trying to break through the ice and drown herself. But the ice was too thick, and her attempt failed. This was the first time that Henry began to feel that he too might be gifted in the manner of his beloved uncle, Welewkushkush.

Without becoming unduly analytic at this point, it is pertinent to indicate that during these first eight years of Henry Rupert's life many of the elements which resulted in his becoming a shaman were already present. During these early years Henry was a Washo, but a Washo who camped on the fringes of the dominant White society upon whom his mother depended for her livelihood. He spoke no English, only Washo; his mother worked as a menial, a domestic servant; and his father had forever deserted the family encampment. There is little doubt that these factors engendered much hostility in Henry. Yet, because of the great degree of freedom allowed him, much of this hostility was dissipated in his extensive and lengthy wanderings, which at times almost take on the attributes of a rudimentary vision quest. As a child of a culturally disrupted and socially disorganized Indian group, he differed little from many other Indian children in the area, but even at this early age his dreams, visions, and fantasy world were beginning to coalesce around the conception that he might have unusual abilities. Also, he had no peers with whom to identify. His models of socialization and learning were much older and more important; they included a shaman and an antelope shaman, both very well versed in Washo lore and tradition. Both of these men, and in fact his whole family, presented him with models of behavior based on kindness and sympathy, and to a lesser extent, understanding. The aforementioned incident involving the puppy was apparently the one occasion in which Henry's hostility was expressed within the family milieu, and even here it was met with sympathy. Up to the present time, Henry Rupert exhibits strong loyalties and deep affection toward his immediate family, their children, and grandchildren.

In the phase of his life just described, Henry had models of behavior, models of affect, that he admired and respected, and on the whole, this outweighed his aggressive and hostile sentiments. But even more important in the long run were the personal qualities that he exhibited at an early age—his curiosity, independence, and perseverance, which overcame his strongest fears. We shall find these themes recurring again and again throughout his life.

Some ten miles north of Genoa and two miles south of Carson City is the Stewart Indian School. Today it is a boarding school primarily for Indian children from the Southwest, but in 1893 it was a center for the "forced acculturation" of Indian children from the Great Basin under the supervision and control of the United States Army. As part of its pacification program in the area, the Army required all Indian children to attend and board at Stewart until they had completed the equivalent of an eighth-grade education. Children held back by their parents were forcibly removed from their families by the cavalry. At the age of eight, Henry Rupert was taken from Genoa to Stewart, where he lived until the age of eighteen. It was here that he received the "power dream" which marked him as a potential shaman; here, too, he met

his future wife, and here he began to formulate the basis of his philosophy of healing and his rationale for becoming a shaman, both of which were to be greatly expanded in later life.

At Stewart, Henry experienced an environment vastly different from that of his years of freedom and independence. Stewart was highly regimented and often brutal. This was Henry Rupert's first sustained contact with White society. Discipline was harsh, and every effort was made at forced acculturation. Order was maintained with a rawhide whip and detention cells. Children were not allowed to return home for short respites until they had completed three full years at Stewart. Classes were held in the mornings and in the evenings. In the afternoons the children were taught a trade. If a child was late for meals, he did not eat. Here also, Henry was introduced to White religion through a profusion of Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, and Anglican proselytizers. All the children were forcibly baptized. Every morning, before breakfast, the children attended services. At breakfast, prayers were sung in Latin. On Sundays the children went to church in the morning, and in the evening, they attended Bible classes and sang hymns. Some proselytizers even came on Saturdays and preached all afternoon.

The day after Henry arrived, he ran away, but he was quickly returned. All told he ran away three times. The second time he was severely whipped on his bare back. However, Henry did well in school, and he learned to set newspaper type. He found a friend in the school cook, who often gave him extra food to supplement the bare school rations. He also developed his own techniques for maintaining some symbolic degree of independence. On one occasion he accidentally broke a spoon and in consequence was forbidden to eat with a spoon for the next month; he then stole a spoon and used it. He resisted the blandishments of his schoolmates with regard to alcohol. The temptation was probably great, since his schoolmates went so far as to place a bottle of liquor under his pillow. At Stewart, Henry made his first close friend, Frank Rivers, another Washo; only to Frank did Henry confide his potential powers. It was also at Stewart that Henry first came to know intimately Indians from other tribes in the Great Basin—Northern Paiute and Shoshone—and his first girlfriend was a Paiute. One of Henry's strongest assets was his ability to absorb selectively those aspects of White culture which he felt were beneficial to him; thus he was able to master academic subjects, notably reading and writing, and learn an occupation, while resisting Christianity, regimentation, and alcohol.

In 1902, at the age of seventeen, Henry experienced his power dream, the event which marked him with certainty as shamanic material and which conferred certain abilities upon him. He described it to me as follows:

I was sleeping in the school dormitory. I had a dream. I saw a buck in the west. It was a horned buck. It looked east. A voice said to me: "Don't kill my babies any more." I woke up, and it was raining outside, and I had a nosebleed in bed.

Henry interpreted the dream in the following way. The conjunction of buck and rain suggested that he could control the weather, since the buck was the “boss of the rain.” The buck was standing in the west but looking east. The Washo believed that the souls of the recently dead travel south but that, soon after, the souls of those who have been evil turn east. The buck looking east was interpreted as a warning against developing certain potentialities which could become evil. The voice in the dream was that of a snake warning against the indiscriminate taking of life; previously Henry had killed wildlife, insects, and snakes without much concern. The rain, to which he had awakened, indicated that his major spirit power would be water. Awakening with a nosebleed placed the stamp of legitimacy upon the whole experience, since the Washo believed that this kind of physical reaction is necessary if the dream is to confer power. The fact that his spirit power was to be water was unusual, since most Washo shamans had animate rather than inanimate objects as their spirit helpers. Thus, while water baby was a fairly common spirit helper, water was not. In addition, weather control was highly unusual among the Washo, being more prevalent among both the Northern Paiute and the Shoshone.

The dream stressed certain potentials, specifically a Washo calling, that of shaman. It also confirmed the validity of Henry’s early behavioral role models, Welewkushkush and Charley Rube, and their philosophy of living in harmony with the natural world. In so doing, it de-emphasized those aspects of White society and culture which contradicted Washo values and behavioral expectations, but it did not forbid Henry the continuation of his quest for knowledge in the White world. Rather, it suggested that he pick and choose his way in relation to earlier models, thus serving as both a warning and a promise of greatness. That it was a power dream was congruent with Henry’s aspirations and expectations concerning himself and his future.

At this transition point in Henry’s life, shortly before he left the Stewart School, the dream served as a guidepost which integrated both his childhood years and his years at the school. His indecisions regarding the future were resolved, and his aspirations of becoming a shaman were crystallized. But his ideology of healing remained inchoate, for he had not yet acquired the requisite shamanic techniques. He felt the need to help his people when they were ill, but he knew not how. Nevertheless, he was aware and insightful, and in learning through what he called the “law of nature” he set the stage for years of thought and introspection, aware also that discoveries came slowly: “One little thing may come every eight or ten years; you can’t grab it in one bunch.”

When Henry graduated from Stewart, he took a job as a typesetter with the Reno Evening Gazette, and he lived in Reno for most of the next ten years. During this period, he mastered hypnotic techniques and began curing. But the most immediate power conferred on him by his power dream was control of the weather, and in 1906 he exercised this power for the first time. During that summer, Henry went to visit his family in Genoa. While there, he used to hang his pocket watch over his bed. One evening, before retiring, he had a vision in which snow slowly, but completely,

covered the face of the watch. That winter the snowfall was very heavy and too deep to enable him to cut firewood. One day, Henry concentrated on removing the snow. That night and all the next day it rained, resulting in fairly widespread flooding. Although he had told no one of what he had done, his older sister, Annie Rube, accused him of causing the floods.²

In the winter of 1908 he once again called down the rain, but in doing so he lost this power forever. The winter was again difficult, and one day he constructed a medicine bundle and dropped it into the Truckee River, which flows through Reno. That evening the weather turned warm and it rained. However, in tying his medicine bundle, Henry had used the buckskin from his shamanic rattle and replaced the buckskin on the rattle with a length of thread. This offended the spirit of the buck, the “boss of the rain,” and Henry was never again able to control the weather.

During this time, Henry attended an exhibition of hypnotism at the Grand Theater in Reno. He was greatly impressed but thought the performance had been rehearsed. He told his friend, Frank Rivers, that he, too, could master the requisite techniques, and he ordered from Chicago a book entitled *The Art of Attention and the Science of Suggestion*. In the evenings, and on Sundays, Henry would go into the sandy hills surrounding Reno where he would practice his techniques on the stumps and rocks “as if they were human beings; I imagined they were alive; if somebody caught me at that they would put me in the crazy house.” He mastered hypnotic techniques and held regular monthly sessions in the Reno Press Club, where he hypnotized people to the amusement and enjoyment of the assembled reporters. Interestingly, he felt no contradiction between acquiring power in a dream visitation and acquiring it from a book.

In 1907, Welewkushkush suggested that Henry hire another shaman to help him train and control his powers. The Washo believed that when the power, or spirit helper, first comes to a shaman he becomes ill, and that the novice shaman then hires an older experienced shaman to teach him how to extrude and control the intrusive spirit-power. Although Henry had experienced only a nosebleed in 1902 and did not consider this to be a “sickness,” he followed his uncle’s advice and hired the well-known Washo shaman Beleliwe, also known as Monkey Peter. The experienced shaman could also help the novice to renounce his power, if such was the latter’s desire.³ I do not know what the customary period of time was between the power dream and the hiring of another shaman to control the power, but in Henry’s case some five years elapsed.

Beleliwe, instead of giving Henry specific advice, told him what he could accomplish with his power. He spoke of the two old women who had first brought the power of healing to the Washo, and he warned that the power of blood is evil. He also described some of the feats which shamans could accomplish, citing the cases of an old woman who had walked up the perpendicular side of a cliff, of Welewkushkush who had walked under the waters of Lake Tahoe without drowning, and of Southern Washo who danced in campfires. Then he told Henry: “All kinds of sick-

ness will look pretty tough, but it will melt; it seems like you can't do anything with it, but it will melt." However, the actual content of the shamanic ritual had to be learned by observing other shamans at work. Significantly, Henry's attitudes toward Beleliwe were very similar to his attitudes toward Welewkushkush—respect and admiration for both their personal attributes and their work. He told me, "Beleliwe was a great man; he knew more than the rest put together." While Henry's feelings toward Welewkushkush changed somewhat during the next few years, Beleliwe's stature continued to grow. And when Robert Lowie, the distinguished anthropologist from the University of California at Berkeley, visited the Washo in 1926, Henry not only wished him to meet Beleliwe, but referred to him as a philosopher (Lowie 1939: 321).⁴

Henry performed his first successful cure in 1907. A brother of Frank Rivers had died of alcohol poisoning. His mother was deeply grieved and became very depressed. A White doctor was called in but was unable to calm the woman. A few days later Henry, as he was passing by, heard the old woman crying. He went in, washed her face, and prayed for her. She recovered. It is significant that this first cure was performed on the mother of his best friend—within a milieu where his confidence would be bolstered. It is also significant that Henry's family, with the exception of Welewkushkush, knew nothing of his shamanic power or his achievements with weather control until after this first cure. His reticence is an example of the self-doubt that always plagued him—doubt in his abilities and fear that he would not find the answers his curiosity demanded—but which drove him to greater efforts.

In his first cure, Henry used techniques generally similar to those utilized by other Washo shamans. Traditional Washo curing rituals required a shaman to work for three consecutive nights from dusk to midnight, and a fourth night until dawn. In the course of the ritual, repeated every night, Henry used tobacco, water, a rattle, a whistle, and eagle feathers. He began by smoking, praying, washing the patient's face with cold water, and sprinkling all his paraphernalia with cold water. He then blew smoke on the patient and prayed to come in contact with water. A peace offering followed, in which he paid for the health of the patient by scattering grey and yellow seeds mixed with pieces of abalone shell around the body of the patient; the seeds symbolized food, and the shells symbolized money. Next, he chanted, prayed, and again blew smoke on the patient and sprinkled his paraphernalia with cold water. Arising, he walked about blowing his whistle, attempting to attract the disease object or germ from the body of the patient and into his own body, whence it might be repulsed and captured by the whistle. Then he sat down again and blew a fine spray of cold water over the body of the patient. This ended the first half of the curing ritual, which was repeated each night.

At some time during the course of the ritual, Henry would receive visions relating both to the cause of the illness and the prognosis. They usually involved either the presence or absence of water. Thus, a vision of damp ground suggested that the patient was ill but would live a short while; muddy water suggested that the pa-

tient would live but would not recover completely; ice suggested that Henry must break through the ice and find water; burning sagebrush suggested that the patient would die quickly unless Henry could stamp out the fire. Over the four-night period the content of these visions, or occasionally dreams, tended to change. Thus, Henry might see a fire or a burned-over hillside on the first night, damp ground on the second, muddy water on the third, and on the fourth night a stream of clear, cold water or the Pacific Ocean rolling over the Sierra Nevada. The portent of the vision of the fourth night overrode those of the visions seen on the previous nights.

During 1907–08, Henry Rupert acquired his second spirit helper, a young Hindu male. At infrequent intervals, he used to visit a high school in Carson City which contained the skeleton of a Hindu, and on one of these visits the spirit of the Hindu “got on” Henry. Since the Hindu was a “White power,” this precipitated a major conflict in Henry’s fantasy world and in the most important area of his life, his healing. As a spirit helper, the Hindu demanded to be used in curing sessions. Henry’s problem was how to reconcile the opposing demands of his Washo and Hindu spirit helpers. The confrontation and its resolution came in a dream:

I saw this in a dream. The Hindu’s work says: “You will do great things if you make us the leader in this kind of work.” The two Indian women say no: “We started this with Henry Rupert; we were the first. He (the Hindu) has no right here; this work belongs to us.” I didn’t know what to make of it. I pondered on it for a long time. Finally I decided, and I told them what I decided: “We all do the same work; let’s help each other and be partners.” And that is the way it works today; nobody is the leader. The Hindu wanted to be the leader in this kind of work. The two women said no. I fixed it.

This dream dramatically illustrates the basic conflict between opposing themes in Henry Rupert’s life: his desire to expand his potentials for learning and healing by utilizing non-Indian resources and his desire to follow the childhood models he loved and respected. His resolution of this conflict was highly sophisticated; he utilized a more complex level of conceptualization and synthesis in which both opposing themes were subsumed under a common rubric, that of healing, which applied to both categories of spirit helpers. This rubric was neither Washo nor “White” but constituted an ethic which cross-cut different ethnic and racial categories. I prefer the term “ethic” to “principle” because the synthesis had definite moral connotations of aiding and succoring others, and because to Henry the fact that he had become a healer was more important than either his being born a Washo or his forays into non-Indian knowledge. It was the Hindu who first gave Henry his insights into the components of the “law of nature” and offered him the code of living which he has since followed: to be honest, discreet, and faithful; to be kind and do no harm. These conceptions often ran counter to the behavior of traditional Washo shamans, but they were consistent with the models of Welewkushkush, Charley Rube, and Bele-

live. The ethic of healing which Henry developed was an integrated and complete synthesis; he was never troubled again by this kind of acculturative conflict.

After Henry acquired the Hindu spirit helper, a number of changes occurred in his curing techniques—the first of his innovations of which I am aware. Before beginning a cure, he would now place a handkerchief on his head to represent the Hindu's turban, and when he blew water on the patient, he prayed to the Hindu to come and rid the patient of his illness. He also began to place his hands on the patient's head, chest, and legs in a symbolic attempt to encompass the whole being of the patient with his power. He also began to envision himself differently while curing; while sitting by the side of the patient he saw himself as a skeleton with a turban on its head moving quickly around the body of the patient.

Henry did not perform his second cure until 1909, two years later. It was this cure which established him as a legitimate shaman among the Washo. The patient was a Washo whose family was camping on the Carson River near Minden, Nevada. This man had been treated by both shamans and White doctors without success, although the doctors had diagnosed his case as typhoid fever. Henry, although a novice shaman, had been consulted as a last resort and was successful in curing the patient.

In 1910, when Henry was working as a gardener and general handyman for a banker in Reno, he suffered from rheumatism and from broken ribs which had never healed properly. He went to his uncle, Welewkushkush, to be cured, but the latter merely presented him with a warning:

He didn't work on me long. He just blew smoke on me, and we talked. He said: "The thing that is causing it is right here in your head, and you will forget all about your stiff joint; you don't have rheumatism. You might be very sick and your mind will go into the White people's world, and I can't go there and bring you back." He blew smoke on my forehead; that thing traveled in the smoke out of me, and I got well. The thing he drew out was a piece of printed matter. I didn't see it; he wouldn't show it to me. It was what I had in my head from studying books. He took out the Hindu's works. The printed matter belonged to the White people's world.

Welewkushkush suggested that Henry would receive no aid if he pursued his interest in the knowledge of White society and implied that he would become ill if he continued; the two worlds, Indian and non-Indian, must remain separate in terms of both intellect and affect. But the ethic of curing which Henry had synthesized from Indian and non-Indian elements prevailed over Welewkushkush's thinly veiled warning. His independence established Henry as a mature adult prepared to continue to develop his own philosophy of living and ultimately to restructure Washo cosmogony.

In October 1910, Henry married Lizzie, a Northern Paiute woman whom he had first met at the Stewart Indian School. Her father, Buckeroo John, a ranch hand and maker of rawhide lariats, had been a devotee of Jack Wilson, the apostle of the 1890 Ghost Dance. Buckeroo John did not approve of Henry as a prospective bridegroom,

nor did he think highly of Henry's curing abilities. It was, nevertheless, significant that Henry should take a Paiute wife at a time when intermarriage was infrequent and generally viewed with disfavor, especially by shamans and other conservative Washo. The union produced four children, three of whom today live with their offspring in the same community as Henry. After his marriage, Henry returned to work with the Reno Evening Gazette, melting linotypes. But he soon came to suspect that the lead fumes were poisoning him, and he returned with his family to Genoa, where he worked as a ranch hand until 1924. During this period, he continued his healing, becoming increasingly well known.

In 1924, with all their children away at school in Stewart, by now operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Henry and Lizzie decided to leave Genoa. Rather than choosing Dresslerville, the major Washo community of that time, Henry decided on Carson Colony, forty acres of land bought for the Washo in 1916 but unoccupied except for a few transient Northern Paiute and Shoshone families. In making this move, Henry isolated himself physically, and later also socially, when Lizzie died of tuberculosis in 1933 despite Henry's attempts to cure her. He became more of a recluse with greater opportunity to meditate upon the problems of healing. "Rupert, the sophisticated young Washo . . . was a mystic credited with shamanistic ambitions," says Lowie (1939: 321) of him at this time.

Henry also worked hard, planting and raising an acre of strawberries as well as a flock of turkeys. In the Depression years he earned as much as \$100 a week during the summer months, and his flock of turkeys was later sold for \$5,000. He also spent many evenings digging a large irrigation pond, which he later filled with goldfish.

But these were essentially years of thought, introspection, and self-examination. As a child, and later as a novice shaman, Henry had learned the tenets of traditional Washo religion. This included a conception of a spirit world populated by the departed souls of all animate beings which had populated the natural world. The spirit world resembled the natural world; it had the same people and a comparable round of activities. The age of a person in the spirit world was that at which he had died. The spirits of evil persons were segregated in one section of the spirit world, but they underwent no particular punishments because of their earthly transgressions. The spirits or ghosts of animate beings were feared as potential causes of illness because of their ability to intrude into the bodies of the living or to project inanimate disease-producing objects into them. When an individual died, consequently, his dwelling and possessions were burnt so that his ghost would be unable to retrace his path to the natural world.

The Washo had no coherent religious philosophy or theology, but they did have a number of creation myths and creator figures. Among the latter were the two old women who fought the Hindu in Henry's dream. However, these creator figures played but little part in the placation of the supernatural. In this respect the Washo dealt with the ghosts of animate beings, and these had the same motivations as living Washo, including revenge for present or past misdeeds and curiosity which brought

them back to the world of the living. Hence, for example, parents avoided striking or spanking a child for fear of angering a dead relative, whose ghost might kill the child to punish the parents (Downs 1966: 60).

In the process of evolving a general ethic of healing, Henry Rupert reformulated some of the traditional conceptions of Washo cosmology. According to his new formulation, the substance and composition of the spirit world is very similar to electric waves or pulses of energy. These are everlasting and ever-present, and all objects in the natural world are also partially composed of them. To Henry, therefore, spirit and mind are the same, both being composed of what he called “ethereal waves.” When an individual dreams, his “mind-power” travels to the spirit world, remaining connected to his material body by a thin lifeline of energy. If this thin thread of energy breaks, the individual’s mind-power is unable to return to its material shell, and death results. According to Henry, when a person dies his departing spirit or “ego” remains temporarily encased in a weak body shell, the “astral body,” but within one month the “astral body” falls away and the “pure” ego or spirit returns to the spirit world.

The spirit world itself has three planes—the first is a coarse level, the second a finer level, and the third was the finest or purest level. Normally, when a person dreams, his spirit or mind-power travels to the first level. Passage into the second level, either in dreams or death, is impossible unless the individual has been pure in mind and heart and has followed “the law of nature.” The third level is the domain of “God,” “creator,” and “omnipotent life.” All spiritual life from the highest to the lowest is a manifestation of some kind of energy, which has its ultimate source in the third level of the spirit world. This energy is an essence found in all animate life and inanimate objects in the natural world and may, in Henry’s terms, be called “soul,” “ego,” “spirit,” or “mind-power.” The same energy is also the essence of all spirits, in which it coalesces into certain forms found in the natural world, thereby forming a connecting link between the natural and spirit worlds. While there is no actual separation of good and evil spirits in the hereafter, only those spirits which are “purer” in essence can reach the second level. No spirits, however, can reach the third level, the ultimate energy source.

We thus find, in conjunction with Henry’s general ethic of healing, a general conception of “power” or “energy” which is the basis of healing. Henry makes no distinction between the miracles performed by the Old Testament prophets, those performed by Christ and his disciples, the healing powers of shamans, and his own work, since the basis of the power is the same in every case, though manifested at different times and in different social situations. All these people learned to tap the same source of energy and to channel it for purposes of curing and miracle-working. This power or energy is not, however, ethically neutral. It is positive and “good,” and this accounts for Henry’s disavowal of witchcraft and sorcery, which will be described later. Henry is aware that his conceptions are an act of faith. As he stated to me: “In my line of work I see it that way. Nobody told me this. Nobody can prove it. That is what I believe . . . the power is ever-present; it never wears out.”

Because Henry's ethic of curing was based on contact with the supernatural or paranatural, it was necessary for him to develop some conception of a general source of power for curing. His personal restructuring of the spirit world did not rest on a dichotomy of good and evil but rather on a conception of differing degrees of "good." In his ideology, no person or spirit could be completely evil, thus precluding belief in active malevolent supernatural agencies. It was no longer conceivable that ghosts, for example, could cause illness by intruding their spirit essence into humans. All mind-power derived from the same source, and both the source and the power it represented were beneficent and could not be utilized for malevolent designs. Consequently, traditional Washo beliefs in malevolent ghosts, witchcraft, and sorcery no longer had a place in Henry's worldview. However, while human ghosts could not cause illness, the spirits of animal life and inanimate objects could and did.

How did Henry explain this possible contradiction? Everything, animate and inanimate, has some form of life, "ego," or "soul." All living things require water as a minimal basis for existence. So, for example, when feathers are not sprinkled with water at regular intervals, they take water from the person owning them, "drying" him out and making him ill. Henry did not consider this a malevolent action, but he held that a person who transgressed, consciously or unwittingly, was accountable, since if the feathers were given water, the patient would recover. In one case I recorded, that of an old man who could neither speak nor eat, Henry had the following diagnostic vision on the fourth night of the curing session. He was sitting at the eastern end of a valley hiding from a whirlwind. Seeing it coming straight toward him, he was frightened and hid in the willows. The whirlwind stopped in front of him, and a magpie flew out and lit on a nearby willow. After he emerged from the trance state, Henry was told by relatives that the patient had at one time made feather headdresses and that he still kept a trunk of them in a deserted cabin. Henry said to me:

The trunk of feathers made him sick. I prayed to the feathers and the birds not to be angry; he thought he was doing right, but he didn't give them water. I said: "I will give you water; don't dry this fellow up." Next day he spoke and was okay.

Although the Washo attributed rattlesnake power, the power to sorcerize, to *Welewkushkush*, Henry maintained that *Welewkushkush* had been taught to handle rattlesnakes without personal harm, and that the Washo feared and mistrusted phenomena which they did not understand. In another case, an old female shaman was accused of killing both a Washo political figure and a promising young shaman because she coveted their positions of leadership. According to Henry, however, she was a fine old woman who understood "the law of nature" and lived according to it, and she could not be evil since her power was derived from a beneficent source. "They said she was a witch, but it was just coincidence. They blamed her for heart failure when she passed by. They couldn't prove it."

As Henry's fame as a healer spread, he began to receive patients from a wide variety of ethnic groups. Though not common, it was not unknown for Washo shamans to treat Northern Paiute and Shoshone patients, but Henry treated these and Hawaiian, Filipino, Mexican, and White patients as well. In this transcultural healing he was successful, doubtless because his ethic of healing gave him increased confidence in dealing with non-Indians. His status as a healer grew continuously, and he became known and respected as a successful shaman from the Shoshone Yomba reservation in central Nevada to Mexican enclaves in Sacramento. His increasing renown attracted non-Indian patients who had exhausted other alternatives. A number of cases will illustrate the diversity of his clientele.

In curing a Protestant minister, who came to him with severe headaches, Henry received the following diagnostic vision. He saw a large auditorium in which were seated on one side a group of Whites and the minister, and on the other a group of Indians representing various tribes. Between the two was a large stage on which dressed steers were falling, forming a large pile of meat ready to eat. Everyone in the auditorium ate of the meat, except for the minister. Henry told the latter that he would lose his headaches, but that he had made one mistake. The minister had been in the habit of serving tea and cake after his sermons, but while his congregation ate, he did not. This, said Henry, was the cause of his headaches, and the minister admitted the correctness of the assessment. The vision was a sophisticated reflection of the interrelationship between Henry's ethic of curing and his restructured cosmology. As he explained to the minister, the latter's abstention, in a congregation of both Whites and Indians who broke bread together, was inconsistent with both Henry's ethic of curing and the minister's status as a servant of God.

In 1942, Henry journeyed to Sacramento to treat an old Mexican woman who had been diagnosed as having a malignant tumor of the abdomen. On the first night, Henry was unable to find water. On the second night he saw a burned-over hillside of which a section had remained untouched. On the third night he saw a small lake between two hills, and on the fourth, a stream of running water. On the morning of the fifth day the lump had disappeared from the woman's abdomen, and she later recovered completely.

A number of other cases dealt with psychosomatic disorders. In one of these, a Shoshone boy from Austin, in central Nevada, was brought to Carson Colony to be treated by Henry. The boy had auditory hallucinations in which he heard three men, who were following him, constantly threatening to kill him. The cause of the illness was discovered to be a tooth of a spirit which had projected into the boy's head. At the end of the curing session the boy no longer heard voices. In another case, an ex-soldier who had fought in World War II was brought to Henry with severe lacerations around his neck. This man had visual hallucinations in which two German soldiers were attempting to strangle him with barbed wire, so that he tore continuously at his neck in the attempt to remove the wire. Henry treated him successfully. In the case of a White storekeeper from Fallon, Nevada, with an apparent history of heart trouble,

Henry found a butterfly in the man's chest and removed it. This man states to this day that he will not be treated by any other doctor than Henry.⁵

In 1942, at the age of fifty-seven, when Henry Rupert was working as a general handyman and night watchman at the Stewart Indian Agency, he decided to retire to Carson Colony and devote himself full-time to healing. He was acutely aware that "reality" in healing and living is a matter of relative perception, psychological set, and social situation. The Hindu spirit helper had told him: "What appertaineth unto one, another knoweth not." And on one occasion Henry stated to me: "You don't know what I am talking about, and the same is true for anybody who reads this thing you write. What is real for me is not real for you." As an example, he cited an occasion when he was walking across a bridge over the Truckee River in Reno. He saw a woman who wailed to him that her son had fallen into the river and pleaded with him to save the boy. Henry was about to plunge into the water when the woman's daughter appeared and told him that her mother had periodic hallucinations and there was no one in the water. Henry concluded: "It was real for that woman; she thought her son was in the water; but it isn't real for me. What I know is real for me, but it isn't real for anybody else."

We must remember, in considering the phenomenological basis of Henry's conception of "reality," that he was an adept hypnotist cognizant of the importance of gaining and holding a patient's attention during a curing session by the use of such instruments as a rattle and eagle feathers. "I use them," he told me, "only to gain the attention of the sick person, nothing more." When Henry was treating a sick old Washo woman in Woodfords, California, his Hindu spirit helper told him that her illness was being caused by the spirit of a dead mole which the woman kept as a gambling charm; the mole spirit wanted repayment for having been killed. The Hindu came to an agreement with the mole spirit: the woman would have to lose the sight of one eye, but she would live. Henry described what followed:

As I prayed, I looked to the mountains. One of my eyes started to get dim. It started to close. I couldn't see out of it. At the same time, one of her eyes started to close and started to dim, and that's the way she left. She could only see out of one eye for the rest of her life, but she lived a long time . . . Funny things happen in my line of work, but it's true.

"Suggestions" made by the shaman in the context of the curing session are clearly an important factor in the efficacy of certain cures. A case in point was that of a young Washo who was brought to Henry. He had been unable to walk for a week and believed that he was stricken with polio. Henry worked on him for a few hours and then, during a rest period, told the young man that he did not have polio. He cited a personal experience of his own as an example. When he was working in Reno he had attended a medicine show, where he was examined and told that he had "heart trouble due to indigestion." Henry bought a bottle of medicine and drank some of it, after which his heart began to beat quickly and his breathing became irregular, but

he then threw the bottle away and felt normal. After this illustration he again told his patient that he did not have polio, that his muscles were simply overworked, and that he should forget the matter. A week later the patient returned, saying that he had followed Henry's advice and felt fine.

In the course of his meditations and his dialogues with the spirit world, Henry also consciously restructured traditional Washo conceptions about the acquisition of shamanic power. The traditional Washo belief system required that an individual receive shamanic power involuntarily, through a dream or vision, after which he had the choice of either accepting or rejecting the power. While shamanic power tended to run in particular families, where children were socialized in an environment charged with the importance of dreams and the supernatural interpretations of events, shamanic power was never consciously transmitted from one person to another. Only after receiving power did a novice shaman hire an experienced practitioner to help him master and control it.

To Henry, however, living by "the law of nature" meant being closely attuned to the forces that created and controlled all beings and things of the world. Since power derived from a common pool of "energy," anyone who could tap this pool could use the resultant power for purposes of healing. In order to accomplish this, however, an individual had to possess certain personal qualities; he had to be honest, faithful, and discreet and live a pure life. It is significant that Henry first learned this possibility of the transmission of power from the Hindu, a non-Washo and non-Indian spirit helper. According to Henry:

Anybody could learn it, but you have to come under these three things, and be like a recluse, and follow the law of nature. You can't be happy-go-lucky. If you live by nature, you can understand a little of nature and help nature do her work. I had to live just so to get what I was looking for. You can't get it by being foolish. I got it just by thinking. It took me over sixty years to learn that. If I had a teacher, I could have learned that in a month.

Even if a person was not pure enough to tap the power source himself, he might still borrow another's power for the purpose of effecting minor cures. Henry lent his power at least twice, once to a sister and once to a daughter-in-law, with the clear understanding that their use of the power was only temporary.

During the years when Henry was developing his own philosophy of healing and conceptions of cosmology he also continued patiently to search for new techniques and more efficacious curing methods. But he had little success until 1956, when, at the age of seventy, he undertook to cure George Robinson, a Hawaiian, who had married a distant relative of his and was living in Hayward, California. Robinson was also a curer and had been a personal friend for a number of years. Henry regarded him with much the same affection and respect with which he had earlier held Welewushkush and Beleliwe.

George Robinson had asserted that nothing was impossible and that nothing could hurt him, and he paid the price of hubris. He gave a large feast for his children, but he did not invite a daughter of his wife Juanita by a previous marriage. Juanita, furious at this slight, decided not to live with George any longer. She began to fast and said she would die. She told George not to give her an elaborate funeral but to dispose of her body in the hills for the animals and birds to devour. He tried to cure her with all the methods at his disposal, but he failed, and she died. Henry attended the funeral. George buried Juanita with a gold ring, erected a headstone, and had a cement curbing built around her grave. He did not follow Juanita's instructions, and he fell seriously ill. Henry described his condition as follows:

He was dying; he was like a block of wood. Kids jumped on his belly and he didn't feel it. He couldn't pass food; he couldn't feel pain.

On the first night of the cure Henry was unable to receive any visions of either diagnosis or prognosis. On the second night he saw the cement curbing around the grave. On the third night he saw the brass medal on the headstone bearing Juanita's name. On the fourth night he saw the gold ring and received the following vision of prognosis. He was walking along the bottom of a deep gulch and saw coming toward him a herd of stampeding cattle. Frightened, he labored to climb the steep hillside. He saw one clump of sagebrush, grasped it, and sat down beside it. One steer galloped up the hill, jumped over the sagebrush, and said: "Tomorrow you gonna eat meat." George Robinson recovered, and on the following day he was again able to feel pain and eat. Henry warned him to stay away from Juanita's grave for four years, lest the grave dry out the water in his body and again make him ill.

In return for being cured, Robinson made Henry a gift of some of his power, in the form of a Hawaiian spirit helper named George. Although George lived in a volcano in Hawaii, his power was at its maximum in the vicinity of Henry Rupert's home. Consequently, Henry now preferred to cure at home and would no longer journey to visit patients except in emergency cases. Henry received from George a new set of instructions. The most important of these—"Everything comes quick and goes away quick"—emphasized the speed and efficacy of the new Hawaiian techniques. The content of Henry's dream themes also changed. He saw a dead and desiccated chicken which returned to life, and the skeletal remains of a horse which also came alive. Robinson had claimed that he could bring the dead back to life, and these dreams showed Henry knew that this ability might also be his.

A curing session utilizing the techniques now took place in daylight, and it lasted no longer than four hours and sometimes as little as a few minutes, depending on the nature of the ailment. Henry no longer needed visions of diagnosis or prognosis, and he could also eliminate chants, the blowing of smoke and water on the patient, and the use of the whistle to capture disease objects. Instead the patient was asked the location of the pain or swelling and was seated in a chair facing west, the direction of the Hawaiian Islands. Standing behind the chair, Henry twice called upon George

for help, each time placing his fingers on the patient's neck, with thumbs on spine, for about ten seconds. Then, with his hands again on the patient's neck, he called out: "Wake up my body, wake up my nerves and circulate my blood; let my whole body be normal; let my heart beat, my speech, my eyesight, and my breathing be normal; and give me strength." Next, standing in front of the patient, he stated: "This person says he was sick here; he had pains here; it's not there now; it's gone." Then he placed his hand on the "pain spot" for some five seconds and asked the patient to take a deep breath and move his head from side to side. Usually the pain departed, but sometimes it moved to a different part of the body, in which case Henry again invoked George and repeated the procedure three or four times. Then, placing his left hand on top of the patient's head and his right hand at the patient's feet, he called to George: "Please mend this." Finally, he removed his hands and said: "We will close this."

According to Henry, the key to these techniques is contained in the following statement by his Hawaiian spirit helper: "We help nature, and nature does the rest." The above is a description of "Hawaiian curing" in its simplest form, as applied by Henry to ailments which he regarded as easy to cure.

Henry did not discard his previous techniques completely. Though he worked for briefer periods in his cures, for severe ailments he would use both the Hindu and George, and he would search for visions of prognosis involving the presence or absence of water, as well as employing his newer methods. In effect, he had developed a set of functionally streamlined curing techniques, involving less reliance on ceremonial artifacts, from which he could pick and choose according to the nature of the ailment. At the advanced age of seventy, Henry relinquished willingly, without personal conflict, techniques that he had used for almost fifty years.

George posed no problems of integration for Henry. As a spirit helper, his power derived from the same general source as that of the Hindu, of water, and of the two old Indian women, and George's curing functions were incorporated into Henry's general ethic of healing, which overrode ethnic, racial, and cultural differences. The potential for innovation had not ended. From George he learned of a new way to stop bleeding in serious wounds quickly by placing his hands on the wound. However, the occasion to test this technique has not yet arisen, and Henry has doubts, not unreasonable or neurotic, as to his capacity to utilize it:

I am kind of afraid of it; I don't have enough confidence. I have the idea it can't be done. I don't try it because I don't have enough confidence.

Today, Henry Rupert lives quietly in Carson Colony, continuing to cure, meditate, and tend a flourishing orchard in the desert. The Washo, despite their traditional fear and mistrust of shamans, regard Henry in a different light, recognizing, perhaps indirectly, the changes he represents. Leis (1963: 60) states:

Only one [shaman] remained when we studied the Washo . . . and he was trusted and not feared by anyone. In other words, the sole remaining

shaman was “good” as opposed to the “bad” Indian doctors who practiced witchcraft.

My own experiences confirm this completely.

Exactly what the social consequences of Henry’s personal innovations are likely to be is uncertain. It is clear that the Washo have little knowledge of either the extent or content of these innovations, although they recognize that he does not doctor in the traditional Washo manner. At present there are no budding young shamans among the Washo, and it is unlikely that future shamans will take the traditional path to gaining supernatural power. Although Henry does not proselytize, he offers an alternative, but the regimen and qualities required are either unappealing or rare. Nevertheless, the potentiality exists, and this could open a fascinating new chapter on shamanic healing among the Washo.

Conclusion

The most striking fact in this life history, to me, is the coherence and integration of the innovations considered. The conceptions, both of an ethic of healing and of a coherent cosmology, are congruent with one another. Within this framework, Henry has been able to incorporate heterocultural spirit helpers, new techniques of curing, and proficiency in transcultural curing, as well as to explore the possibility of transmitting and teaching his healing abilities. Although his childhood models have greatly influenced his development, he has been able to resist their strictures and to reconceptualize his thinking on sorcery and witchcraft as causes of illness in terms of his reinterpretation of Washo cosmology. Throughout the material presented run themes of curiosity, experimentation, and perseverance, balanced by uncertainty of success. Henry’s personality unfolds, through the years, slowly and positively, with few contradictions. It takes the form of learning, testing, and integration, of working for maximal organization of all potentials within the framework of sophisticated general principles flexible enough to admit defeat in areas where spirit helpers are unable to operate. Thus, Henry has recognized, through experience, the illnesses he cannot treat, and has accepted these limitations while delving into potentially more fruitful areas.

It is highly inadequate to suggest that Henry Rupert adopted shamanism as a neurotic defense against personal aggression and instability, or simply that he made a successful adjustment to the acculturative situation in which he lived. The shaman has often been analyzed and typed as a neurotic or borderline psychotic who performs valuable social functions in a deviant role to which he is shunted to meet his own neurotic needs (cf. Kroeber 1940; Radin 1937: 108; Spencer and Jennings 1965: 151; Boyer 1962: 233; Lands 1960: 164; Devereux 1956, 1957: 1043, 1961a: 1088, 1961b: 63–64).⁶ The neurotic defense of the shaman is conceptualized as un-

stable, transitory, and inadequate; the experience of becoming a shaman is also often described as a revitalization experience.

These conceptions are not applicable in the case described. Henry Rupert presents us with a case of continuous psychological development, growth, and innovation throughout his individual life span. His first innovations included both a complex philosophical statement about the nature of the supernatural and natural worlds and a sophisticated approach to transcultural curing. All his other innovations were integrated into this psychological matrix, and this has remained stable through time and space. While his uncertainties and fears are considerable, Henry knows that one cannot face the unknown with certainty, unless it is rooted in rigidity. While man is fallible, Henry believes that the only path to knowledge is through experimentation, and his fears have never stopped him from experimenting.

Unfortunately, in anthropology, we have few ways of describing or analyzing the ego strength or ego integrity of individuals in the cultures we deal with, and ordinarily this does not concern us. We have good evidence of both social disorganization and psychological disturbance among acculturating peoples, and we can tentatively suggest that, in many ways, cultural processes have overwhelmed individual defenses in these cases by destroying traditional alternatives and failing to provide new ones. But what of the creative individual? What of the individual with great ego strength who is able to choose and combine traditional and new alternatives, not merely integrating them but developing new syntheses which may be both personally satisfying and socially transmissible? Of such persons and the roles they play we know little. And the same is true of the shaman who, as Nadel has suggested, can play a creative and innovative role. In the case of Henry Rupert, we gain a glimpse of what the quality and content of such a synthesis can be in an acculturative situation.

Notes

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I did this fieldwork in Nevada during the summer of 1964. All materials presented in this chapter were originally recorded verbatim through the cooperation of Henry Rupert and, unless otherwise cited, are based on that record.

1. In this account there is an interesting conjunction of elements of bear, flying, and fire, which Eliade (1964) maintains are basic to the shamanistic complex, especially in North America.
2. This may be indirect evidence that his family expected Henry to gain power and were quite ready to attribute the cause of unusual events to him.
3. According to Welewkushkush, the recipient of a power dream who wished to reject the power covered himself with ashes, prayed to the intrusive spirit to leave him, and then washed the ashes off with clear water. This ritual was repeated daily over a four-month period under the direction of an experienced shaman. It should be noted that Henry did not become ill after his power dream and that he waited five years before hiring Beleliwe at the suggestion of Welewkushkush. This may suggest that Henry performed the Washo ritual mainly to appease his family and not because he believed it to be necessary.

4. Bebeliwe died as the result of curing a tubercular patient in Carson City. He was able to take the tuberculosis “germ” out of the patient’s body and into his own, but the germ lodged in the back of his neck, affecting his speech and bodily movements, and finally killing him. I do not know how Welwukshush died, but he told Henry that he could cure anything but the common cold and that it would be the common cold which would finally kill him.
5. An interesting conclusion emerges from these and other cases. It seems possible that in a situation of culture change the doctor-patient relationship depends more on the faith inherent in the relationship than it does on common cultural background, cultural context, or cultural symbolism. In none of these cases did the patient know what Henry was doing; they accepted his efficaciousness as a matter of faith. It also seems likely that such doctor-patient relationships would not have been countenanced in traditional Washo society, where patients and their relatives were generally familiar at least with the techniques used, the paraphernalia required of a shaman, and the length of time required for a cure.
6. There are, of course, anthropologists who disagree with this formulation, e.g., Opler (1959, 1961), Honigmann (1960), Murdock (1965). Possibly the anthropologists’ often ungenerous view of the shaman as a person is related to the way in which they often tend to identify and sympathize with a whole culture, and thus with the attitudes the majority have toward the shaman, rather than treating the shaman as a legitimate subcultural variant. It is ironic that these anthropologists can then return to their own culture and their own subcultural niches and complain about how society treats the “egghead” and the artist.

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