In his paper, "The Self and Its Behavioral Environment," Dr. Hallowell opened an area of investigation that had long been neglected by anthropologists. In this paper, he considers the continuity and the maintenance of personal identity in the perception of the self and states: "...it can be deduced that psychopathological phenomena that affect the maintenance of personal identity and continuity must necessarily be considered abnormal in any society" (1955). I now wish to raise the question whether this comment, by implication, may be applied to those dissociational states variously known in the anthropological literature as "trance" or "spirit possession." I wish to examine this proposition in relation to data on self-perception and self-concepts derived from a study of Haitian peasant society.

Before approaching the data to be discussed, a few remarks may be in order on the present state of research dealing with the subjects of trance and spirit possession. Quite a large number of recent anthropological publications deal with what appears to be a group of related phenomena. Among these publications are Jane Belo's detailed study of trance in Bali, Alfred Metraux's study of the vodou cult in Haiti, which includes a lengthy discussion of spirit possession, and M. J. Field's study of shrine cults in Ghana, which also deals with spirit possession. Other examples of studies in which terms such as "spirit possession" and/or "trance" are used are those by Teicher on the windigo psychosis as well as those by Leiris by Messing, and by Haberland on the sär cult of Ethiopia. In connection with his Ethiopian study, Leiris introduces the concept of shamanism. The question arises whether
all these authors are indeed speaking of related matters. Is windigo psychosis in some way similar to spirit possession in Ghana or in Haiti, is the cult similar to Siberian shamanism? It is evident that some clarification of concepts and terminology is called for as well as some systematisation of what appears to be an extensive and widely dispersed area of investigation. When we ask about the significance of the phenomena of "trance" and "spirit possession" even in a more narrowly defined group of related cultures, as those among whom Afro-American cults flourish, we find wide disagreement. Herskovits tells us (p. 194) that spirit possession is "normal," Dorsainville (1931) says it is a definite sign of pathology—hereditary pathology at that, while Roger Bastide (1948) prefers to consider the phenomenon as "prophylactic." Mettraux (1960), like Leiris (1958) in another cultural context, is impressed by the theatrical aspects of possession.2

In spite of the rich source materials available and the evident psychological problems posed by them, it is striking that the subjects in question have not been dealt with in any textbooks, books of readings, or other systematic treatments in the field of culture and personality or psychological anthropology. They have been given only limited attention in cross-cultural studies of religion, where they are usually dealt with in the context of shamanism or "unusual states" (e.g., Norbeck; 1961). Wallace's important paper on hallucination (1959) deals with a neighboring problem. There has been no systematic treatment of this neglected area since T. K. Oesterreich's monumental work in 1922. A preliminary analysis of terms appears to be in order.

We may distinguish, first of all, between the terms "trance" and "spirit possession," which often appear to be used interchangeably. While some types of spirit possession do indeed involve trance, others do not. Conversely, while some types of trance are interpreted as possession by spirits, others are not.
To put it differently, trance is a psychiatric term, indeed one now rarely used in the clinical literature, while a belief in spirit possession involves a cultural theory, which accounts for a variety of phenomena, often, but not always, those included under the heading of trance. In their well-known dictionary of psychological terms, English and English (1958) define trance as following:

A sleeplike state marked by reduced sensitivity to stimuli, loss or alteration of knowledge of what is happening, substitution of automatic for voluntary activity. Trances are frequent in hysteria, and they may be hypnotically induced. In extreme form trance resembles (or is) coma. Religious or emotionally marked trances are called ecstacy.

However, Brennan and Gill (1947), in a review of the literature, find hypnosis itself to be a most poorly understood phenomenon, and in a more recent work (1961) they prefer to speak of "altered states of consciousness." The term "hysteria" occurs with greater rarity in psychiatric textbooks; indeed the most recent Statistical and Diagnostic Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (1956) dispenses with the term altogether.

In the literature dealing particularly with the shamanism of Northern Asia we find references to epileptic and epileptoid seizures; we hear of cataleptic states in connection with trance and also of multiple personalities and fugues. M. J. Field (1960) in her study of shrine cults of Ghana, in which priests are "possessed," prefers to speak of "dissociation." This she defines (p.19) as:

Mental mechanism whereby a split-off part of the personality temporarily possesses the entire field of consciousness and behavior." She states (p.56) that there appears to be "no reason to suppose that dissociation is necessarily hysterical" (Field's emphasis). It is clear that we are dealing here with a complex variable phenomenon, which is perhaps not fully understood.

In contrast to trance, the term "spirit possession" refers to a cultural theory, which exists in diverse forms in many societies, but surely not in all.
It holds that certain spirits exist, which may enter the bodies of human beings—sometimes also those of animals and of objects. Trance states may be taken to be evidence for the occurrence of such possession. However, possession may be thought to occur under other circumstances as well. For example, among some American Indian groups given types of mental illness may be interpreted as due to possession by spirits. This is true in certain instances of windigo psychosis (Teichner:1960) and also serves as an explanatory category among the Mohave (Devereux:1961). However, in neither of these cases is there any reference to states of trance or dissociation.

On the other hand, dissociational states are clearly not limited to those societies in which theories of spirit possession are held. Hysterical and hypnotic states—the one "pathological," the other "normal"—exist in Western society, without, nowadays, any attendant theory of spirit possession. Among "non-inspired" shamans (Loeb: 1929) e.g. among the tribes of California, dissociational states exist, but these involve communication with spirits, rather than possession by them.

It would appear, then, that dissociational states are to be found in all parts of the world, and indeed, perhaps, in all societies. Conceivably, they may represent a very old phenomenon, if we are to believe Eliade (1940) or Kirchner's interpretation (1952) of the "dead man" at Lascaux as a shaman in a trance. Since trance-like states can be produced in animals by restricting their field of attention, we may easily accept the capacity for trance, or better, dissociation, as part of man's psychobiological heritage.

Cultural attitudes toward dissociational phenomena vary widely, from seeking such states to fearing them, from gaining prestige through dissociation to receiving social and even physical punishment, as in many types of exorcism. Where dissociational experiences are valued, often techniques for inducing them exist. These techniques again vary widely, from the breathing patterns of whirling
dervishes (Coon, 1951) to the use of drugs (Nuxley, 1954), to the use of music, dance, or certain herbs (Verger, 1957). Similarly, "trance" behavior varies widely, from the highly stylized dancing of the Balinese trance dancer (Belo, 1960) to the chaotic howling and running about on all fours in the Kentucky revival (Clark, 1949), to the full-fledged development of secondary personalities among the Yoruba and Fon peoples, as described by Verger (op. cit.) and the fugue states of the Ashanti shrine priests (Field, op. cit.) to cite only a few contrasting examples.

As there exists a variety of attitudes toward dissociation, a wide variety of attitudes toward possession by spirits is also to be found, in those societies where some form of this belief exists. In the Afro-American cults of Brazil and of the Caribbean, spirit possession is usually desired, as it is among the West African peoples, particularly Fon and Yoruba, from whom these patterns derive. Again, among the Pentecostal groups in the United States, who seek "to get the spirit" this experience is sought. On the other hand, in the sër cult of Southern Ethiopia (Haberland, 1960), among the Wata of Kenya (Harris, 1957), among 19th-century East European Jews and medieval Christians, spirit possession is and was undesired and exorcism may be resorted to. In the latter case, spirit possession is used as an explanation for a variety of physical and mental disorders and cure is attempted through the driving out of the spirit. It would be interesting to investigate whether any relationship exists between high evaluation of the trance experience and the desirability of spirit possession and low evaluation of trance experience and undesirability of such possession. Yet in some groups, as among the Pentecostalists of the United States, both types of possession are found, by the Holy Ghost, and by devils. In the New Testament, which provides the authority for the Pentecostal groups, we also have evidence of a belief in evil spirits to be driven out—which can possess pigs as well as humans—and in a positive type of possession in the Pentecost.
Spirit possession may then be desired or feared, and in some societies it may be both, depending on the type of spirit and the manner in which its presence is perceived. A study of the geographical distribution of these types should throw some light on possible diffusions. A study of the specific behavior of possessed persons, ritual surrounding possession and the terminological context should be similarly revealing. This has been done impressively by Simpson and Hammond (1960) who have shown the African antecedents of spirit possession in Jamaica, contrasting these patterns in some detail with those associated with Scottish and \\textit{evangelical} revivalist possession.

Where spirit possession is diagnosed as the course of a given disease, reaction to this diagnosis may vary, as may the symptoms. In the example cited from the New Testament, as in many medieval cases of "spirit possession" the presence of evil spirits is seen in the behavioral pathology and recourse is to exorcism. Some, but not all, of this behavioral pathology may have involved dissociational states. On the other hand, Leiris (\textit{op. cit.}) tells us that in Gondar, Ethiopia, many types of disease and other troubles may be explained as due to possession by a spirit (sâr) and trance is induced in the patient in order to question the sâr as to his wishes. Induced trance is then part of the cure, where trance need not have taken place during the illness. The induction of such states helps the patient to alleviate his (or her) condition, and in some cases, to become a curer, making use of controlled trance in the performance of the curer's role. Similarly, K. J. Field tells us, concerning the shrine cults of rural Ghana, that shrine priests are people who have learned to "control" trance after an initial illness and often fugue. They are able to induce a dissociational state at will, during which the spirit is believed to use the priest as his vehicle. The priest acts as curer while in trance and by virtue of possession.

The Ghanaian shrine cults and the Ethiopian sâr cult are reminiscent of shaman-
nistic initiation in many tribal groups. The California shaman experiences seizures and must learn to control them. Yet these states are not interpreted as possession by spirits but rather as encounters with the spirits, in dreams or visions. Other shamanistic specialists, such as the Saulteaux conjurers (Hallowell, 1942) are similarly of the "inspired" type (Loeb, 1929) in that the spirits speak to them rather than through them. In the case of the Saulteaux, visions may have existed, but there is no reference to trance states, either in the "call"—which occurred in dreams—or in the conjuring itself.

As to our second question concerning the "normality" of spirit possession, we must now ask what tangible form this presumed possession by spirits takes, since, as we have already seen, spirit possession and dissociational phenomena are not synonymous. If we ask about the "normality" of trance, it is obvious that this is not a unitary phenomenon either. Certainly, hypnotic trance can be induced in "normal" individuals and some types of trance associated with theories of spirit possession may be much like hypnotic trance. (Salo 1960, Gill and Prenman, 1961)

While the comment is frequently read that classic cases of hysteria, of the kind described by the French psychiatrist of the late-nineteenth century, are rarely met with today (Fenichel, 1945:224; Monroe, 1955:282), it has also been stated that in so-called primitive societies hysteria in its grand form may still be found, but that it occurs often not in a medical context but in a religious one. Thus Arieti and Meth (1959:555) state:

"It must be kept in mind that hallucinations and delusions, which we consider almost pathognomonic of psychoses, are normal and frequent occurrences in many exotic people during their trance states. Hallucinations in these states, however, have a different character and significance from those occurring in psychosis. They are generally benign and not persecutory in content, last only as long as the trance does and are more often visual, not auditory."

Yet these same authors also assert that shamans are often mentally ill, since they are more apt to achieve the dissociative states of trance and possession which are required in the ceremonies of many primitive people (p. 554).

Arieti and Meth here combine a discussion of hallucination with one of trance and spirit possession, which are not further distinguished. Wallace (op. cit.) has
lucidly analysed this type of terminological confusion. Furthermore, it would appear that the issues raised by Arieti and Meth are not as definitively settled as they suggest. As we have seen earlier, even in the restricted Afro-American field there is wide disagreement among authors on the normality or pathology of spirit possession and/or trance, the two usually not being clearly distinguished in the literature.

The Brazilian psychiatrist and anthropologist Rene Ribeiro (1956) has studied in detail a number of individual cult members in Pernambuco who undergo possession trances. In their case histories he was able to show clearly that the significance of the experience varies from individual to individual, and that the blanket statements characterising trance as "normal," "prophylactic," or "pathological" hardly come to grips with the reality of the situation. What may superficially appear to be the "same" phenomenon obviously implies different things for different people.

It is important to realize here that a great deal of individual variation is found in the Afro-Catholic cults of Brazil, Haiti, Trinidad, and other parts of the Caribbean area. These groups allow "choice" of the particular deity or disties that will possess the individual and some degree of affinity between the individual and the spirits that possess him as recognized (for Brazil see Bastide 1958). Such possibilities of accommodation to express the possessed person's individuality leaves much room for the expression of differences in personal history and personal need.

Dissociational states of this type must clearly be distinguished from those in other societies, where behavior is by far more stereotyped and leaves minimal room for individual differences. Shamanistic trances which require the report of fairly stereotyped visions and no acting out obviously represent quite a different phenomenon in psychological terms.

The foregoing brief discussion may indicate that, to the extent to which the problem of dissociational states has been dealt with in the literature, this has been done in terms of the description and analysis of particular societies, and many
of these are indeed excellent. However, so far—a framework for comparative analysis has not emerged. Nor has a consensus been reached on the subject of the normalcy or pathology of these states.

It is hoped that it may be fruitful to analyze the phenomenon of dissociation, as institutionalized in the Haitian vodû cult, with its attendant theory of spirit possession, from the perspective of the self and its behavioral environment, as formulated by Dr. Hallowell. Such an analysis could provide a framework for future cross-cultural analysis.

Most Haitian peasants, members of the urban proletariat, and some others, believe in the existence of a large number of spirits—variously referred to as loa, sanges, saints—who must be attended through ritual and who may choose to appear at such rituals in the bodies of their worshippers. It is said that the loa "mounts" his worshipper, who is known as the loa's "horse" (cheval). The loa is also said to be "in the person's head," -- the head being the seat of the loa—or else to "dance on" the person.5

A woman among the faithful is addressed by a male loa as his wife, and women initiates are referred to as hunsi (Fon, lit., wife of spirit), although the original sense of this term is probably not understood. The faithful refer to most of the male deities as "papa" (father) and address them as such. Several female loa are addressed as "grandmother" (gran).4

Possession, or "mounting," is manifested by alterations in behavior, speech, voice, facial expression, motor behavior as well as by changes in clothing and in the manner in which the individual is responded to by others. The observer may be led to believe that a "genuine trance" or dissociation has taken place, or that some individuals may be playing, or he may indeed observe no particular change.

There appears to be wide variation in depth of dissociational state from a passing dizziness, in which the individual is said to be made "drunk" by the loa (sâoulé)
to total unconsciousness. However, a transitory, childlike state (étre) reported for Trinidad, Brazil, and the Yoruba (Herskovits, 1937; Simpson, 1962; Bastide, 1958; Verger, 1957) has never been reported from Haiti.

The putative state of possession may last from a few minutes to several hours to, reportedly, several days. When the individual returns to his customary mode of behavior and expression, he claims to know nothing of the intervening events and must be told of the behavior of the loa, even to the extent that loa leave messages for their "horses," the cultural tradition demands such ignorance and in many cases this post-dissociational amnesia is undoubtedly genuine. There is thus discontinuity in personal identity. Moreover, a person may be "mounted" by several loa in succession, each with different attributes. This is in contrast to belief and practice as found among related peoples in West Africa, such as the Fon of Dahomey and the Yoruba of Nigeria (Verger, op. cit.) or Afro-American people of more orthodox West African tradition, as in the cult centers of Brasil (ibid.) where possession is by one deity only.

The loa which appear in succession may be of the same sex or of different sexes and of same or different sex as the person possessed. The personality of each of the loa may be well differentiated and continuous from one visit to the next. While the "horse" knows nothing of the loa's behavior, the amnesia is not reciprocal and the loa is fully informed of his "horse's" behavior, that of his social environment and of other loa possessing the same "horse." Beyond that, he is expected to know what he, the loa, has said and done in other manifestations, when "mounting" other "horses" or in his own, nonmanifested identity.

We may briefly examine the theory which underlies such expectations. The loa are immaterial spirits who may manifest themselves when and where they choose. In practice, however, this usually means that they appear in response to an expressed human appeal or a clearly felt human need. While each loa has multiple manifestations,
varying in some detail, there is thought to be continuity, and indeed identity among these manifestations. Therefore, any manifestation of, e.g., the loa Guedj is in some sense continuous with other such manifestations, whether present in the "head" of a particular human vehicle or in his nonmaterial identity. The human being (chrétien vivant, lit, a living Christian) consists of a body and two spiritual principles (or "souls"). One of these, the gros bon ange (lit, guardian angel) may be displaced by the loa "mounting his horse." Thus, the events which occur during the period of putative possession are perceived by the audience and by the subject himself as continuous with the identity of the loa, not with the identity of the human vehicle.

Thus, with reference to spirit possession, the Haitian concept of the self clearly involves a continuity of the body and one of the souls, but not a continuity of personal identity, memory, or responsibility for actions carried out by one's body, when it becomes the temporary vehicle and residence of another, more powerful spirit. It is even expected that there will be no continuity in the body's physiological response, since that response is an attribute of the possessing spirit, rather than of its vehicle: a person who is made ill by alcohol is possessed by deities who drink freely, a person crippled by rheumatism will dance with agility, dancing on burning embers will cause no pain or harm, etc. The expectation of physiological discontinuity may go beyond this: Maya Deren (1963) reports the possession of a woman by a male deity, who produced semen! In another manner this loose connection between the body and the self, the individual's identity, is also seen in the widespread belief in zombis (Bourguignon, 1959). This involves not only the possibility, on the one hand, that bodies of dead people may be partially revived
by sorcerers for their own nefarious purposes, but from the point of view of this discussion, even more interestingly, the possibility that people may be turned into animals. These beliefs, which incidentally are held not only by vodú cult members but also by some Catholic and Protestant converts, imply the possibility of a partial continuity of the self in the absence of continuity of memory, sense of identity, or even under circumstances of gross bodily alteration. Indeed, there is more continuity of self in a zombie, even in the guise of an animal, than in the case of a man or woman with a loa in his head.

The essential underlying theme here is not only that the self and the body are only partially and loosely connected, but even more basically, that appearances may be deceptive and things—people, animals—often are not what they appear to be: an animal may be a person; a snake or a tarantulla may be a loa; a person, whether seen in waking life or in a dream, may be a loa; while familiar people are thus potentially dangerous, strangers are even more so, for they may be zombies or sorcerers.

The relation between man and loa develops in early childhood. Babies are carried along to ceremonies and there is no time when they are too young to have witnessed the impersonated presence of the loa, or have heard stories concerning them. Yet, interestingly, there exists no formal mythology. While there are story-telling sessions, in which a rich store of secular folk tales is presented by highly skilled raconteurs, there is no body of sacred myths. Rather, the myths of the gods find their expression in the acting out of possessed individuals who embody the characters of the Haitian pantheon with all their varied individual characteristics which are constantly elaborated. Anecdotes, bits of songs, dreams, accounts of possessions round out the picture.

Early encounters of children with the spirits are instructive. One of my informants, A. C., told as her earliest memory how, as a small child she had at a ceremony greedily taken food from a dish presented to the marassa, the spirits of the
twin. Immediately, large numbers of small snakes appeared and frightened her. The vodun priest, her father's half brother, was called and he explained that the snakes were the twins come to punish the greedy child, and caused them to go away. Only upon specific questioning did it become clear that the snakes were visible only to the child, and, she believed, to the priest; not, however, to others present.

Children play at spirit possession and are encouraged in doing so by their elders. Groups of children may engage in such activities, or a single child may engage adults in its play, as in the following account, taken from my field notes:

In the afternoon, while her mother, A.C., was boiling water, and her mother's sister, J.C. was roasting coffee, the five-year-old girl, T., began to say she was Papa Ogu and did a pretty good job of imitating a possession, i.e., she made her voice sound deeper, she shook hands with everyone in the typical fashion and started beating herself on the chest and singing the appropriate songs—all to the enormous amusement of the two sisters, as well as their brother who had arrived meanwhile. J.C. responded to the songs, and when T. forgot for a moment that she was playing Papa Ogu, they reminded her teasingly. At one point she burnt herself, and her mother corrected her, saying that loa never burn themselves, which T. repeated ten times.

This game was continued on several subsequent days. On the fourth day T. was teased about it by her mother's aunt, who was visiting from another hamlet and who had already heard of T.'s little game. And a week later:

All evening T. was again playing at possession, mostly Ogu but also Ougă. While T. was playing Ogu her aunt, J.C., kept asking what he, Ogu, thought of his "wife T.," and complained that she was no good. With this incitement by her aunt, T. tried to beat herself, and then claimed that since Ogu no longer liked T., he must look for another horse—namely their neighbor, Altida. Her mother, A.C., kept saying: "show us how you'll mount the head of Altida" and finally, in desperation, and to the great amusement of all, she literally tried to climb on top of Altida.

A number of features of this account are noteworthy. The little girl continued this activity off and on for more than a week. Encouraged by the adults around her, she kept returning to the same game, developing a pattern of activities and alternate identities. Impersonating the loa she learned to speak of herself in the third person and was encouraged in this and in criticism of her own behavior; in this she attempted to dissociate her identity as the deity from her identity.
as a little girl and, furthermore, she attempted to develop a continuity between Ogú mounting the little girl with Ogú "mounting" the neighbor.

Actual dissociation states, considered to be possessions, are rare in children. Typically, first possessions occur among teenagers, although sometimes later. Old people are rarely possessed. It is said that the gods do not wish to tire them. Also, as people acquire more spiritual control over the gods, by gaining esoteric knowledge and by feeding the gods, it is said that they are more rarely possessed. It is not necessary for the officiating priest to go into a dissociational states and V.C., the priest of the family under discussion here, did not go into such states anymore, though he had done so when younger.

A.C., the little girl's mother, claimed that her own first possession occurred during a childhood game, in which she lost consciousness. First possessions are expected to be "wild" (boséal) and disorderly and identification of the possessing deity and subsequent initiation rituals are necessary to bring the "wild" deity under control. For example, boséal possession involves rolling about on the ground, because the loa, it is said, have not as yet learned to stand and to dance. For that to happen, they have to be baptized and established in the head of their "horse." Identification is made by the vodú priest, in this case, by V.C., the girl's father's half-brother, who earlier in the subject's life had chased away the punishing snakes. It is clear that by identifying the possessing god, the priest can influence the choice of the deity, to conform with the deities which are worshiped in the subject's family and the priest's cult house. This interpretative and directive role of the priests needs further investigation.

In spite of this potential intervention by the priest, there is considerable room for innovation. Deities vary in their manifestations from individual to individual, in their activities, tastes, demands, tractability, etc. Even totally new deities may appear, either identifying themselves to their elected servant in dreams or possession of their servant. Thus the Haitian pantheon is indeed
constantly in a state of flux and modification. On the other hand, deities may be inherited, either by the possessing of a new "horse" at the death of a previous one or by having their service taken up by an heir of the deceased servant. In Haitian theory, service of the loa is partly at the choice of the loa, partially at the choice of their human servants. The pattern of succession has not been studied, but it appears that there is some variety, thus some freedom of choice.

Once the deity is identified, some expectations as to his behavior and his tastes are, of course, developed. The first initiation ritual (lavet tete or washing of the head) is called a baptism, in which other gods, having "mounted" other people, act as godparents. Cuts are made in the initiate's scalp and the person's principal deity (ma't tete or master of the head) is established. By means of this ritual, and of a preparatory retreat, the behavior of the deity is brought under control. The initiation ritual involves a three day retreat and A.C. spoke of her experience as follows:

After three days you go home. They are speaking langue in your head. You spill a pot (of water) at the threshold and then you tie your head. You go home right away, early in the morning, before the sun beats down.

The pouring of the water represents a customary libation, which is made upon entering or leaving a cult house. Langage is the esoteric language of priests and loa which laymen and initiates do not know. A.C.'s comment appears to mean that she experienced her own confusional thoughts as words spoken in her head, in an unintelligible language by supernatural beings, housed in her head. Langage is more of a supposed esoteric language than a real one, consisting of some African fragments as well as nonsense syllables. However, it is called on as an explanation of phenomena of glossolalia, when these appear in possession states. Also, if people speak incomprehensibly in their sleep, this may be interpreted as a supernatural visitation, in which the loa was speaking in langue.
As stated above, each of the loa is clearly thought to have a personal identity and continuity independent of his "horse" or "horses." Yet certain affinities between the loa and their vehicles are believed to exist: on the one hand, a person is thought to be "for" a given deity, whose character traits resemble his own, e.g., a vain and flirtatious woman will be said to be "for" Erzili. Yet it is also recognized that deities may choose "horses" who appear to be their very opposites. In the case of A. C., both propositions appear to hold true: one of her important loa was Ogú, a powerful aggressive male deity, given to drinking and smoking and angry outbursts, whereas A. C. was a small, shy, apparently quiet and fearful woman. Among her other deities was a Guede, known for his cowardice.

Like the dreams of the Iroquois (Wallace 1958), it appears clear that the possessions of the Haitians may express the "wishes of the soul" although the Haitians themselves hardly would formulate matters in this manner. Possessions may occur spontaneously, as protective measures. The emergencies may be physical or emotional. Danger may bring on the dissociational state in which no pain is felt and in which the deity may frighten away the potential aggressor. Like numerous other informants, A. C. too had experienced a frightening encounter with a zombi, in which her family deity, Loko, took over by "mounting" her and rendering the suspected zombi incapable of harm. The compliant, self-serving nature of the visitations of the loa is also clearly seen in the following abbreviated excerpt from field notes, reporting on an occasion in which A. C. wanted me to meet Ogú. This took place on the day after I had told her that I was considering a visit to her kin in a rural area, an announcement which pleased her visibly. I had never previously met Ogú "in her head."

Having sent her little girl to buy a candle and her neighbor to buy a cigar, A. C. explained to me that she was going to call Papa Ogú to please me. She put some water in a cup and placed it on the floor, the lighted candle and the cigar on a plate beside it. She called her neighbor to sing, tied a red kerchief (Ogu's color) about her head, sat on a chair, resting her arms on the table.
Both A. C. and her neighbor began to sing; A. C. explained that Ogu was very busy and it might take as much as three or four songs for him to come. The singing was quite slow and rather sloppy. A. C. stared at the candle, but looked away again; breathed quickly, then heavily, then began to shake her head violently, then calmed down again. Then raised her head with totally altered expression. This was Ogu who began to smoke the cigar, pour the water as a libation. Ogu greeted the two neighbors who were now present and myself, giving me special attention, making me turn about to induce possession, and took three hops backward on each leg. This was repeated toward the four directions. Then Ogu started various songs which the others would pick up, usually the same song repeated for quite a while. After a while he began to talk, in a somewhat altered voice. He talked a great deal in all but it came unevenly, as though he were looking for things to talk about, each time a subject was exhausted. He made me a great many compliments, saying he loved white women, that he did not like his old woman Erzili anymore and might leave her, etc., that it was a good idea for me to go to L. with his cheval. He got angry about being called to such a small room but was quickly restrained and calmed by the women. He criticized one of the women and blamed her principal deity, Guede, for her behavior, insulted Guede and warned me against him, saying that he was jealous, etc. After about 20 minutes he decided to depart after profuse leave taking. At that, A. C. sat down, with her head on her arms on the table. She was breathing heavily, then quietly. After about two minutes she began to talk quickly, in a high voice, unintelligibly. One of the women removed the red kerchief and a few moments later A. C. got up, with a changed expression, laughing and hopping about. She was now possessed by Guede. The neighbor quickly got a cigar and clairin which Guede downed quickly. He began by complaining about Ogu and people who malign him, i.e., Guede, saying that it was Ogu who was the vagabond, while he himself could speak French, Spanish and anything else. He insisted it was he rather than Ogu who would protect me. After some banter he said he had to leave so he could accompany me past the cemetery on my way, and with some affectionate leave taking he departed. A. C. sat down as when Ogu had left. When she came to she inquired about Papa Ogu's visit and was surprised to hear that Guede, too, had come.

Here we see that the ritual with which the loa are invited may be of a highly abbreviated sort, outside the context of any ritual occasion, indeed, for purely personal purposes, in this case "to please" the fieldworker. There is great readiness here for dissociation, a readiness established at least in part by frequent dissociations on earlier occasions. A preparatory mood was well established prior to my arrival, and while all of the specific elements which helped to establish it are not known to me, the motivation for
the calling of the loa was clear: A. C. wished to confirm me in my plan of going to the country with her, and apparently felt that the loa would help me make up my mind to do so. She also expressed the idea that it would please me to meet them.

The act of calling Ogû, by songs, by symbolic dressing of the part, if only in token fashion, the preparation of an offering in the form of a candle, a cigar, and water indicate a conscious desire to take on Ogû's identity, to let him speak for her. Some degree of control is exercised in carrying out the preparatory steps. Yet where Guéde is concerned, this control is lacking. He appears seemingly uncalled, spontaneously. It is up to the neighbor's initiative to remove the red kerchief of Ogû and provide the necessary offering. Yet the neighbor's presence is incidental; indeed, accidental. Guéde's arrival seems to be prompted by Ogû's uncomplimentary reference to him, and he responds by criticizing Ogû and claiming me in opposition to Ogû. Yet while some conflict is expressed between these spirits, this does not appear to touch on any intrapsychic conflict in A. C., rather the conflicting spirits reinforce each other and her own everyday self in their attempt at persuasion.

As far as awareness is concerned, Ogû knows about me and my plans and about the neighbor's behavior and her relation to Guéde. Guéde, in addition, knows about Ogû's visit. A. C., on the other hand, upon returning from the dissociated state, knows about neither visit.

The identities of the gods reveal another aspect of the Haitian behavioral environment: that of a class-structured society. The attributes of the gods identify them as members of the several classes: Ogû powerful, dominant, at times drinking rum and speaking French; Guéde, the lower-class individual, parodying upper class pretensions, drinking clairin, eating lowly foods. He lives in the cemetery and represents the dead and the cemetery, yet he is obscene and is associated with fertility and birth. Indeed, he helps at difficult
deliveries. There are others, such as Erzili, the light-skinned woman with straight hair, who flirts with all the loa except the lowly Guédé; Zaza, called "cousin" rather than "Papa" like the other male gods, the peasant with his peasant costume and his ignorance of city ways, etc.

It is interesting that the gods are approached with a very considerable mixture of banter and respect. There is respect, indeed, reverence and awe, in asking the gods for help, yet it is recognized that when they come during ceremonies, they wish to enjoy the drums and the dancing, the food and drink and generally to have a good time, and a great deal of ribald talk and banter takes place. Not only do the spirits themselves approach their faithful in this manner, but they accept and expect such talk in return. Religious activity is not a solemn faced affair, but one in which there is a good deal of humor and verbal fencing, aspects of behavior which are not foreign to everyday human social interactions.

While spirit possession, with its dissociated behavior and amnesia shows discontinuity of memory and personal identity, in the example under discussion, there seems to be obvious continuity of motivation. This is also seen clearly in another incident in A. C.'s life. When the father of her children, with whom she was living in consensual union (plagage) had become ill, some two years before this field work, Erzili, possessing A. C., undertook to cure him. In order to do so, Erzili required that the man marry both her and her "horse", A. C. The man complied, to the extent of marrying Erzili, i.e., Erzili while "in the head" of A. C., in a vodu ceremony. However, he later refused to marry A. C. It appears clear, that possession by Erzili and Erzili's demands were strictly in accordance with A. C.'s wishes. Indeed, in Erzili's offer to cure him, may there not be A. C.'s (unconscious) wish that he get well only on condition that he marry her? Yet the motivation was not questioned; it was Erzili who was involved, not A. C., even though it was A. C.'s presence that impersonated the deity.
The self-enhancing nature of possession is not limited to this case, where motivation admittedly appears to play almost too obvious a role. A. C.'s father, for example, is a mild-mannered man, generally ignored and pushed around by his kin. Yet he has one of the most powerful duties of the family, and when possessed, he is given great deference by his wife, who has left him, by his children, by his successful half-brother, and by others. Significantly, his possession on ceremonial occasions appears to linger on longer than most others. One of his half-brothers is considered somewhat dim-witted, yet his principal deity is crucial to the annual ritual at Christmas and without him, the brother who is a successful vodu priest could not conduct his ritual.

I do not wish to claim that all cases of possession show such obvious continuity with conscious motivation. Cases are cited where the gods punish individuals, so that the possessed person inflicts pain and harm on himself, or does things which the individual upon returning to his ordinary state of consciousness considers to be contrary to his will or interests. An example of this is found in people who are possessed although they do not wish to be. Women claim that by tying their hair in a particular manner they can prevent possession; reasons for this vary from the observation that possession is tiring to a desire not to spoil one's clothes and are usually rather superficial. Yet it is also believed that if the individual attempts to prevent the gods from coming, they may come with much greater violence, so violently as to kill the "horse." The presumed greater violence of undesired possessions is interesting. One would suspect that a closer inspection would reveal continuity of motivation in such apparently negative cases also.

Impersonation of the loa involves the possibility of assuming other social roles, of dressing the part. This theme of disguise and role playing goes beyond
the ceremonial impersonations which are taken seriously. Here the gods are believed to come and conscious impersonation is feared as sacrilegious in genuine ceremonies. Yet there is some elasticity in this situation. I recall a ceremony performed for a visiting American who wanted to have a set of drums baptized. Not only was the ceremony much abbreviated, but the officiating priestess took advantage of the situation to impersonate a possession by the frequently foul-mouthed Guédi to let loose a stream of obscene talk at the expense of the visitor, to the great glee of the participating members of her cult house.

The theme of impersonation, disguise, role playing runs through much of Haitian life, be it the impersonation of carnival, the dressing up of Rada bands during Holy Week, or of the Guédi for All Saints Day. The same pattern of impersonation is expressed in the art of the raconteurs, where voices are imitated and performance verges on the theatrical.

It is interesting that the themes of disguise, mask and costume appear frequently in Haitian Rorschach records (Bourguignon and Nett; 1955:124). In the analysis of the content of projective test protocols, such disguises have been discussed under the heading of "distanciation" (e.g., W. Klopfer; 1954), which is said to represent an indirect expression of psychological themes. Holt and Havel have suggested the term "remoteness" about which they say:

When an unacceptable impulse is expressed in a response, it may be made more acceptable if S puts distance between himself and the response by making the latter remote in time, place, person or level of reality (Holt and Havel; 1961:299).

In the Haitian context, impersonation and disguises make it possible to act out impulses which, when carried out in one's own name and with one's own identity are socially unacceptable. Where dissociation occurs and the gods are assigned the responsibility for such behavior, the social significance of the behavior is changed. Where disguise may make behavior excusable, "possession"
in the context of a vodû world view, in which the loa are creative innovators.

The Haitian peasant does not consider states of "possession" to be abnormal, in the sense that the discontinuity of personal identity is not thought of as pathological or evaluated negatively. Rather, it is a sign of the choice of the gods, of their approval. This, however, does not mean that the mechanisms encountered here are other than those familiar to us from psychopathology. There is dissociation; actions are carried out many, if not all, of which are unacceptable to the self in its everyday social roles; frequently they are unacceptable to the social group, if carried out by the individual on his own responsibility. The group, in requiring that certain actions may be carried out by gods but not by men, plays a significant role here. Yet the aims that are furthered in the dissociated states may be clearly the aims of the self. This was illustrated by the examples from the life of A.C. cited above, as well as from the experience of others. The actions of the deities are frequently—perhaps always—self-enhancing to the "horse." Yet their self-enhancing nature is clearly dependent on the social consensus, on the shared perception by the impersonator's group of the situation as one involving supernatural beings. Where group support fails, such people clearly become pathological. Examples of such unsupported, pathological dissociations are quoted by the Haitian psychiatrist Louis Mars (1947). However, admittedly, the relationship between those dissociational states which have group support and those which do not, requires further investigation.
Conclusions

As far as the relation between "trance" and "possession" is concerned, several points may be noted in the Haitian case: in the ritual context, "possession" is always expected to involve "trance," i.e., post-dissociational amnesia, anesthesia, etc., although degrees of dissociation vary from profound states of unconsciousness to dizziness to theatrical involvement to outright faking. Yet speaking in one's sleep is thought of as a sign of possession and people seen in one's dreams are thought of as possessed by spirits. Once more, then, the terms "trance" and "possession" should not be thought of as synonymous. On the other hand, in contrast to some of the examples discussed in the introductory portion of this paper, spirit possession is not used as an explanatory or diagnostic category for mental disease. That is to say, spirits may cause insanity or illness, by sending it, by confusing the individual, etc., but a person is not said to be ill because a spirit is possessing him. Patients may be taken to vodun priests for cures, but these cures do not involve exorcism, as the illness does not involve possession. In this respect the Haitians and apparently other Afro-Americans are different from many East and West African groups. In the Haitian context, while possession is a prerequisite for becoming an initiate and later a priest, illness and cure is not such a prerequisite as in many parts of Africa as well as in classical Asiatic shamanism.

Discontinuity in personal identity, the temporary substitution of other "selves" in the context of a belief in ritual possession by spirits can not be considered deviant in the reference system of Haitian culture. While such discontinuity surely does not represent the statistical norm, it does represent the opportunity for acting out certain positively evaluated social roles, does provide the individual with a wider field for social action and social effectiveness, it lends the individual support for varieties of actions and enhances his self-esteem.

Yet even within the limited range of Haitian society, I believe, there are considerable individual differences in the motivations leading to the assumption of dissociational roles. Thus the person who uses the capacity for dis-
association, together with other talents, to become a vodun priest or priestess, one who literally "makes a career" of it, acquires power in the "real" world outside the ritual context, and in local terms, wealth as well - such a person surely must represent a personality organization different in significant respects from that of A. C., discussed in the preceding pages.

Admittedly, dissociation, supported by the group and its world view, may turn the individual away from "realistic" solutions to his problems or keep the dissociated desires and behaviors "split off" from the everyday roles of the self. Prince has argued that possession behavior of the Yoruba is not integrated into the personality of cult members. Yet in the Haitian examples cited above, the self-serving nature of the supposedly "dissociated" wishes and desires is perhaps their most notable aspect. I should like to argue that ritualized dissociation provides the self with an alternate set of roles, in addition to his everyday inventory of roles, in which unfulfilled desires, "unrealistic" in the context of the workaday world, get a second chance at fulfillment, a fulfillment which is surely not merely vicarious because the glory goes to the possessing spirit rather than to the "horse." As in the admittedly unsuccessful case of A. C., the supernatural role may influence the "real" behavior of others toward the "horse" and the unwilling common-law husband, to cite only one example, may be pressured into legal marriage. Furthermore, the dramatic enactments of ritual are more than theater, since the roles are not merely "played", but are lived: all the participants consider the events of the ritual drama as real or more so than the events of everyday life. And there is no sceptical, dispassionate, incredulous audience. In a world of poverty, disease, and frustration, ritual possession, rather than destroying the integrity of the self, provides increased scope for fulfillment.
Notes

1 The Haitian data drawn on in this paper were collected during a field trip to Haiti during 1947-8. The study was supported by a grant from the Graduate School of Northwestern University and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Comparative material, some of which is drawn on in this paper, was analyzed with a group of graduate students in a seminar held at the Ohio State University during the summer of 1962.

2 This list could indeed be lengthened considerably. Note, e.g., among the most interesting discussions by non-anthropologists: Sargant (1957) who includes trance states in a discussion of brainwashing, and Gill and Brenman (1961) who compare trance in Bali with hypnosis in their clinical practice. In another context, note also Ernesto de Martino (1962) on tarantism in Southern Italy.

3 Since completing this paper, the writer, together with Drs. Pettay and Haas, has undertaken to explore some of these problems in greater detail. This research is being made possible by a two year grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (MH 07463-02).

4 See also Jane Belo's discussion of the problem of the normalcy and pathology of trance (op. cit.) as well as Verger's (op. cit.). Both of these authors review various points raised in the literature.

5 The symbolism of this relationship is of interest, as is the fact that representation of the god and his worshipper as a rider and his horse appears to be very widespread in Africa, far beyond the region of the provenience, ancestors of the Haitian and other New World Negro populations. The historical problems raised by this observation are however
far beyond the scope of the present paper. For comparative material, see particularly Nadel (1946) who tells us that the Nyasa of the Nuba Hills speak of the spirit "mounting" a shaman, but not riding him, rather "enter(ing) his head." The parallel is astonishingly exact.

Another interesting difference between Haitian cult life and that of the other groups mentioned is in the fact that Haitian periods of initiation are very short, lasting no more than a week in the regions with the most complex practices, whereas in West Africa initiations lasting a year have been reported. Verger particularly, while giving few details, speaks of a lengthy process of re-education in which full secondary personalities are developed (op. cit. pp. 71-73).

Compare Hogg's report of the Convince Cult in Jamaica, in which a photograph is included of a Bongo man, possessed by a spirit, climbing on the back of another man, literally "riding" him (Hogg; 1960).

The hungan may indeed be possessed, but he need not be. There is great individual variety here and I would question Ari Kiev's characterizations, contrasting types of possession into those of hungan and those of hunsì (Kiev: 1961).

For a discussion of the role of the priest in identifying deities in the Brazilian cults, see Bastide (1958).

Haitian loa frequently attempt to speak in foreign tongues, the most frequent of which are French, English, and Spanish. One middle class subject was reported to have been possessed by the Archangel Gabriel who spoke Hebrew, the spirit himself explaining to bystanders what
language he was speaking! Another phenomenon discussed by May (1956) also occurs in Haiti; these are phonations frustes, the production of inarticulate sounds while in trance. A.C., at one ritual occasion, was possessed by a Guede who could not speak and who desperately attempted to communicate by phonations frustes.

For a discussion of such ceremonies and the resulting marriage contract between men and female deities, see Rigaud in Deren (1953) and Metraux (1959).

Metraux (1959, p. 274-281) speaks of “possession” by the dead as causes of illness and insanity. This is behaviorally and conceptually distinct from the ritual possession trances discussed in this paper. A sick person whose illness is thought to be due to such “possession” by the dead does not exhibit impersonating or trance behavior. The state is thought to be brought about by the activity of a sorcerer, who sends a dead person (or a zombi) against the victim. While the dead is said to be “on” the patient, he is not said to “mount” the patient, to be “in his head” or to “dance on” him, all expressions used with ritual possession by the loa. Nor is the patient the dead person’s “horse”! The dead have no volition or personal characteristics and diagnosis serves to identify the sender, not the identity of the “possessing” dead, nor does it involve a questioning of the dead person himself. A person who thinks, as A.C. did, that a dead person (or zombi) is sent against him by someone, may have encounters with living persons that are interpreted as encounters with the attacking dead.
REFERENCES CITED

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION
1956: Statistical and Diagnostic Manual

ARIETI, SILVANO and J. M. MATH

BASTIDE, ROGER

BELO, JANE

BOURJUIGNON, ERIKA

BOURJUIGNON, ERIKA and EMILY W. NETT

CLARK, E. T.

COON, CARLTON S.

DEREN, MAYA
DEVEREUX, GEORGE

1961: "Mouve Ethnopsychiatry and Suicide: The Psychiatric Knowledge
and the Psychic Disturbances of an Indian Tribe," Bureau of
American Ethnography, Bulletin 175.

DORSAINVIL, J.C.

1931: Vodou et Nevrose (Port-au-Prince, Haiti; Imprimerie La Presse).

ELIADÉ, MIRCEA

1948: Le chamanisme et les Techniques Arcaiques de l'extase (Paris,
Payot).

ENGLISH, H.B. AND A.C. ENGLISH

1958: A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytic
Terms; a Guide to Usage (N.Y. Longmans, Green).

FENICHSL, OTTO


FIELD, M. J.

1960: Search for Security: An Ethno-psychiatric Study of Rural Ghana

GILL, MERTON AND MARGARET BRENNAN


1961: Hypnosis and Related States: Psychoanalytic Studies in
Regression (N.Y. International Universities Press).

HABERLAND, ERICH

1960: "Besessenheitskulte in Sud-Athiopien," Faible, Mitteilungen
zur Kulturkunde 6:142-145.

HALLOWELL, A. IRVING

1942: "The Role of Conjuring in Saulteaux Society" (Philadelphia;
University of Pennsylvania Press).

1955: Culture and Experience (Philadelphia; University of Pennsyl-
vania Press).

HARRIS, GRACE

59:106-1066.
HERSKOVITS, MELVILLE J.


HOOG, DONALD


HOLT, ROBERT R. AND JANE HAVEL


HUXLEY, ALDOUS


KIEV, ARIS


KIRCHNER, HANS


KLOPFER, WALTER G.


KIRS, ERNST


LEIRIS, MICHEL


LOEB, E. M.

Nabel, S. F.


NORBERG, EDWARD


OSTENREICH, T. K.

1922:  Die Besessenheit (Halle:)

PRINCE, RAYMOND H.


RIBEIRO, RAME


WRIGHT, ALLAN


SIMPSON, GEORGE E.


SIMPSON, GEORGE E. and PETER HUMPHORD

MARS, LOUIS


MARTINO, ERNESTO di


MAY, L. CARLYLE


MESSING, SIMON


METRAUX, ALFRED


MONROS, RUTH

1955: Schools of Psychoanalytic Thought (N.Y.: Dryden).

NADEL, S. F.


NORBECK, EDOUARD


OSTERREICH, T. J.

1922: Die Bessessenheit (Halle:)

RIBEIRO, RENÉ


SARGANT, WILLIAM


SIMPSON, GEORGE E. and PETER HAMMOND

SIMPSON, GEORGE E.


TEICHER, M. I.


VERGER, PIERRE

1957: "Notes sur le culte des Orisha et Vodun a Bahia, la Baie de tous les Saints au Bresil et a l'ancienne Cote d'Esclaves en Afrique," Memoires de l'Institut Francais d'Afrique Noire, No. 51, (Tokar).

WALLACE, A. F. C.
