
by

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It is the aim of this paper to consider, in a comparative and cross-cultural perspective, certain aspects shared by many of the contemporary American "marginal" religious groups and movements, but which appear to be virtually absent from the "mainline" religious institutions of modern Western society. That is, the "marginals" tend to foster religious experience of a particular intensity, a subjective verification of their religious truths through ecstatic and other states, which we might most generally term "altered states of consciousness." Such altered states are frequently interpreted by them as possession by spirits (The Holy Ghost, demons, spirits of the dead). I wish to report in this paper on a major cross-cultural study of institutionalized forms of altered states of consciousness and of possession beliefs, and to discuss the implications of this study for an investigation of minority religions in the contemporary United States.

We may begin with a definition of terms: We must distinguish two orders of phenomena, which are often confused: 1-altered states of consciousness and 2-beliefs concerning such states. These beliefs, in turn, affect the states since the interpretations tend to pattern the behavior. It is therefore often difficult to separate the interpretation from the behavior itself. (For a discussion of this


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and other difficulties of culling data from the literature, see Bourguignon and Fettay, 1964).

Altered states of consciousness (also variously termed "trance" or "dissociation") are a category of psychobiological phenomena, amenable to observation and other objective methods of study (Ludwig, 1968). Spirit possession, soul loss, etc., are cultural concepts, utilized, at times, to explain these phenomena. They can be discovered by interviewing informants and studying the socio-cultural context in which the behavior so explained takes place. Such native explanations and socio-cultural contexts have provided the basis for our broad classification of altered states institutionalized, for the most part, in a sacred or religious context. Thus, we distinguish between states interpreted by the people as due to possession (termed "possession trance" or IT) and those not so interpreted (termed "trance" or T). This latter is a residual category, but for the most part it is culturally interpreted as experiences of the (or a) soul and characterized by visionary experiences.

It should be noted that this classification excludes many types of altered states of consciousness: all those states which have only minimal cultural patterning, e.g., fever delirium, and all those states which, although culturally patterned and institutionalized, occur outside a sacred context: e.g., those resulting from secular drinking or drug usage. The categories included in our study are amenable to further subdivisions. I have suggested some refinements of classification elsewhere (Bourguignon 1968, 1969, 1971, 1972). However, even this first level carries with it some implications that are, I believe, worthy of consideration. I wish to stress, then, that at this level, the classification concerns itself only with the presence or absence, in a sacred context, of possession trance (IT) and/or trance interpreted by the participants in some other way (T). Also, it deals with possession beliefs linked to altered states (IT) or not so linked (T). Subforms, such as mediumistic possession trance or possession illness are not considered here for limitations of space. Nor are we concerned here with the manner in which
the states are induced (presence or absence of drugs) or with the problem of pathology, whether this be pathology from the point of view of a particular culture or from that of a presumably supra-cultural science of psychiatry. Indeed, the scope of the present report is quite modest.

In five years of research, our group investigated the ethnographic literature on over 1,000 societies in all parts of the world concerning reports on altered states of consciousness and on beliefs in various forms of spirit possession. Our statistical study, however, on which some of the figures to be cited below are based, was limited to a sample of 486 societies, taken from the universe of societies represented by the *Ethnographic Atlas* (Murdock, 1967). The societies in our sample are, for the most part, of the type anthropologists tend to study: traditional societies, mostly tribal in character, non-literate, non-industrial, relatively simple in political organization in comparison with modern nation-states. Yet, particularly in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, many traditional societies do, indeed, attain a considerable degree of complexity, and have sizable populations, sometimes reaching into the millions. Complex national societies are under-represented in our universe, and those which are included are represented by studies of village communities, of the type anthropologists conduct. On the whole, it is the peasant segment of complex societies which is represented, rather than the urban segment. While this does tend to distort some of the social and cultural realities of such societies, it provides a reasonable degree of comparability among the units of the study.

The generalizations which follow may therefore be of limited applicability to complex societies, the study of which, with respect to altered states of consciousness and beliefs concerning them, involves some special difficulties. We may briefly

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2Details concerning our sampling procedure are presented in Bourguignon (1968a) and Greenbaum (1970).
consider two of these complicating factors, particularly as they exist with reference to Western society: 1-the classical Graeco-Roman tradition and the Judaec-Christian tradition both include beliefs in types of possession by spirits and patterned forms of mystical practices. Consequently, in these societies, "possession" and "trance" are background factors; however, in modern times, these have been de-emphasized by the official proponents of, in Redfield's terms, the Great Tradition. Yet these beliefs and practices have been part of an important cultural stream present to a greater or lesser extent throughout the Western world. 2-How is one to assess the strength of such practices or beliefs? For the small-scale, non-literate societies of our sample, it has sufficed for us to find a record of the existence of given practices and/or beliefs. We did not attempt or presume to weigh their importance in the total scheme of things, merely noting "presence" or apparent "absence." As we look at recent times and particularly the contemporary scene, the sheer numbers of groups and grouplets, some ephemeral and some of longer duration, are impressive, and to make such an assessment is impossible.

As noted, altered states of consciousness are widely integrated into the religious institutions of the societies we have studied. In a given society there may be one or several institutions using such states and furthermore, a society may use either Trance or Possession Trance or both. To cite some examples virtually at random: the Azande (Evans-Fritchard 1937, 1964) utilize Trance among male diviners, and Possession Trance in a female spirit cult. The Fon of Dahomey (Verger 1957, 1969) utilize Trance in the form of deep unconsciousness to represent the death of the old personality, and Possession Trance, in later sequences of the individual's initiation, when a spirit has, it is believed, taken over his body. The Shakers of the island of St. Vincent, in the British West Indies, experience visionary trance states during a retreat known as "mourning" and Possession Trance, as possession by the Holy Spirit, during prayer meetings (Henney, 1972). Yet not all types of spirit possession are
linked to Trance: Haitian peasants experience Possession Trance in, or in connection with, vodû rituals but they interpret certain types of illness as possession by the spirits of the dead. Such possession, which is thought to be caused by witchcraft, is not expressed in altered states, but in illness and is revealed by divination (Bourguignon 1970).

On the basis of materials as varied as these, we coded societies as having, in institutionalized form, either Trance, Possession Trance, both, or neither, and as having Possession, Possession Trance, both, or neither. Note that this produces a typology of societies, not of cults or of individual religious institutions. Note also that we have attempted to deal with traditional religious institutions, not with religious movements of varying duration. As examples of movements I am considering such phenomena as the Ghost Dance among American Indians, or the various cargo cults of Melanesia. This choice is a conservative one. Revitalistic, or millenial movements or crisis cults typically include at least a phase of inspired leadership, with visionary trance or possession trance experiences, sometimes restricted to the founder or prophet or, on the other hand, widespread among the membership. The very large number and great variety of such movements and cults is strikingly demonstrated in the recent work of Weston La Barre (1970, 1971). By considering movements and cults of this type we would have very notably increased the incidence of patterned states of altered consciousness in our sample and would have raised it significantly beyond that found in relatively stable societies. I shall return to the matter of religious movements below.

What, then, did we actually find? Our sample of 488 societies showed a total of 90% (437) societies to have institutionalized one or more forms of altered states of consciousness. For the 10% which we coded as lacking such states, we must emphasize the caution: absent insofar as we were able to determine from the ethno-graphic data. It must be noted that "absence" of phenomena is rarely explicitly
specified in the literature and must be inferred from contextual materials as well as from lack of report.

Our 488 sample societies represented all major regions of the world. Here we followed Murdock (1967) in dividing the world into six major ethnographic regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, Circum-Mediterranean, East Eurasia, Insular Pacific, North America and South America. One of our most striking findings is the discovery of the existence of very great differences among these areas with reference to the phenomena we were investigating, a point which I hope to develop more fully in a moment. With respect to the distribution of altered states of consciousness, the incidence of institutionalization varies from 97% of North America (Indian and Eskimo) societies to a mere 80% of the societies in the Circum-Mediterranean area. The other areas follow in this order: Insular Pacific and East Eurasia (94% each), South America (84%), Sub-Saharan Africa (83%). There is also a broad range of variation in belief in possession by spirits, either linked to altered states of consciousness, or not so linked. This type of belief is found in 74% of our total world-wide sample, ranging from a high of 68% among the societies of the Insular Pacific and East Eurasia to a low of 52% in North America. The other areas show the following incidence of such beliefs: Sub-Saharan Africa (61%), Circum-Mediterranean (60%), and South America (65%).

Tables I and II present somewhat more refined breakdowns of this information. Thus, if we take a somewhat closer look at the different types of states, that is to say, Trance and Possession Trance, as I have defined them above, we find the following: Trance alone characterizes 38% of our world-wide sample, Possession Trance 28%, while a combination of the two is present in 24%, 10% of the societies having institutionalized neither form of the state of altered consciousness. Again, Trance alone has its highest incidence in North America, with 72% of the societies being so coded. This stands in most extreme contrast to Sub-Saharan Africa, where we found only 16% of our sample societies to have Trance alone. On the other hand,
<table>
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<th>South America</th>
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Table I

DISTRIBUTION OF TRANCE TYPES BY WORLD AREAS
Table II

DISTRIBUTION OF POSSESSION TYPES BY MAJOR ETHNOGRAPHIC REGION

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<td>12</td>
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<td>35</td>
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Possession Trance has its highest incidence in that area (46%), with another 20% of the societies found to have a combination of the two types of states. Again, in contrast to these figures, North America once more represents the other extreme, with only 4% of its societies having Possession Trance and 21% having both Possession Trance and Trance. The other world areas fall between these extremes, with South America most closely resembling North America.

Equally drastic contrasts between world areas are to be found in respect to possession beliefs (Table II). Such beliefs are altogether absent in 48%, that is almost half, of our North American sample, but on the other hand, absent in only 12% of the societies of the Insular Pacific. Again, South America is a close second to North America, with 35% of its societies lacking such beliefs. It is clear that in respect to both behavior and belief, the New World is, indeed, a world apart.

These findings, which can be sketched here only briefly, require some interpretation. How is it that altered states of consciousness are institutionalized in 90% of all the societies in the Ethnographic Atlas universe as indicated by our sample? How is it, that nonetheless, such a great range of variations exists between the several major ethnographic regions of the world with respect to the incidence of such institutionalization, and, even more strikingly perhaps, in the form which such institutionalizations take? Similarly, how is it that belief in spirit possession is so widely established in human societies, yet, in fact, considerably less than the incidence of altered states: 74% as opposed to 90% over all? How is it, then, that almost half the peoples of North America lack such a belief?

Obviously, only adumbrations of answers to these major questions can be offered at this time. While our study can hope to shed some empirical light on the second group of questions, i.e., the reasons for the regional variations, we can only suggest some educated guesses as to the why of the high incidence of both the institutionalization of altered states of consciousness and the widespread character of possession beliefs, and to me, most strikingly, the greater incidence of the former over the
latter. While I cannot hope to produce proof of my interpretations here, I should nonetheless like to offer some suggestions.

Altered states of consciousness are present in all human societies and undoubtedly have occurred since earliest times of human existence. They may occur in both normal and pathological forms, they are subject to modification through learning and suggestion. They represent, in other words, recurrent types of human behavior, available to be experienced by some, to be observed by others. As such, they represent raw materials for potential cultural utilization, much as is the case for dreams (see Bourguignon, 1972b). As such, they are available for cultural interpretation and cultural patterning, for possible integration within an institutional, often ritual framework, integration within a world view and a value system.

The vast majority of the societies in our sample have availed themselves of the opportunity for utilizing such raw material for cultural elaboration. What of the societies that have not done so? Aside from the fact that some may have been miscoded by us for lack of adequate information, there remain two other possibilities: societies that, in the course of their history, have never, as far as we can tell, developed this utilization, this cultural patterning of altered states of consciousness, and secondly, societies that had at some point in their history lost or rejected such ritual and religious utilization. We may go a long way toward documenting such a situation in the history of Western civilization, as has been shown by Max Weber (1930, 1963) and Erich Fromm (1941), among others. Capitalism, science and technology are linked to rationality, and as such to a suspicion of mysticism and other-worldliness.

In any event, in both types of absence, whether from lack of development, or acceptance or from rejection, we are dealing with the exceptional in human history rather than the typical if we are to define the typical by a head count of
societies for which data are available. We may expect to find in the detailed examination of such cases that the development of the institutional utilization of altered states of consciousness and attendant belief systems, or the acquisition of such behavior and beliefs through the process of diffusion, is inhibited in certain cases, because these practices and beliefs are in some way contradictory to the structural requirements of the societies in question. In order to accept such practices from their neighbors, for example, some profound social and cultural rearrangements might be required in a given case. Conversely, when societies having such practices and beliefs lose them, this appears to be linked to changes that have taken place in other aspects of the social and cultural system. Perhaps this point will become clearer when I discuss, as I shall in a moment, the social structural concomitants of Trance and Possession Trance as we have discovered them in the statistical analyses of our data.

While altered states of consciousness are universal psychobiological phenomena, available to all human societies for potential cultural elaboration, possession beliefs are the result of human invention. As symbolic expressions they are, in Le Barre's terms "adaptive man-made artifacts" (1971:27). The fact that they are so very widespread suggests that they are very ancient. The frequent linkage of such belief to trance phenomena similarly suggests that this linkage is very ancient also, particularly since both the beliefs in general and the type linked to trance states occur in all parts of the world. As Le Barre (1970) has pointed out persuasively it is likely that such practices and beliefs existed in the European Upper Paleolithic and thus have their roots in a very ancient layer of human cultural development. Furthermore, a belief in possession, as a belief in spirits, corresponds to certain basic aspects of human nature and thus, as a result of both diffusion and perhaps frequent re-invention has come to be as widespread as it is. Yet, the particular nature of the beliefs varies widely, and indeed it must very to remain coherent with
the larger world view and religious system of a society, as well as with its social structure. Spiro (1967), for example, has analysed in detail how belief in spirits, and in particular in possessing spirits, co-exists with Buddhism in rural Burma; he has shown, indeed, not only how such co-existence is possible but in fact necessary, that is, how within the existing framework of social, cultural and psychological facts, these two systems complement each other. Thus, the variety of contexts, into which possession beliefs are integrated, seems to me to explain the variety in the beliefs themselves, although we are only beginning to understand this in the particular case.

As indicated, the notion of possession by spirits, which is so widespread, is contingent on an even more widely accepted idea, that of spirit itself. The history of the study of religion, by anthropologists and others, is replete with attempts at accounting for the development of that concept, from Tylor's hypothesis that the concept of "spirit" constituted an answer to questions primitive man asked himself to Beattie and Middleton's proposal (1969) that the idea of spirits made problems of living amenable to the techniques used in social relations, or to the classical psychoanalytic conception rephrased by Spiro (1967) and La Barre (1970) that spirits represent projections and displacements of affective elements in the parent-child relationships.

Whatever theory or combination of theories one may wish to espouse in this respect, the problem of "possession" is one of greater specificity: possession, it seems to me, is one a limited number of possible solutions to the problem of communication between humans and spirits. An abstract concept of "spirit" satisfies, I suggest, none of the needs postulated to account for the development of the concept in the first place, whether intellectual, sociological or affective. If belief in spirits is to be of dynamic value, if it is to have, in other words, survival value, two-way communication with spirits must be established. Religious ritual and the broad variety of methods of divination
(Bourguignon 1968b) address themselves to these ends. Ritual tells the spirits of human obedience, expresses human wishes, etc. Divination, through the interpretation of signs, for example, reveals the will of spirits. However, these are indirect means, requiring the skill of practitioners. In contrast to such means, visionary states and possession trance states allow more dramatic two-way contacts in a setting of, frequently, heightened emotional intensity.

Visionary trance states provide communication between the visionary and the spirits he contacts. For the most part, this is a matter of private dealings, in which the society receives messages from the spirits at second hand, as it were.

Possession and Possession Trance involve bodily manifestation of spirits, producing the presence of spirits for all to see. This presence may take the form of illness or of the dramatic enactment of Possession Trance. In the latter instance the actor may be unconscious and amnesic with reference to the actions of the spirit, carried out before, and for the benefit of, an audience.

The nature of the spirits that are contacted or that are impersonated vary widely. They may be animal spirits, ancestors, enemies, but rarely if ever are they high gods. The character of the spirits and of the roles they play—punitive, helpful, ambivalent, etc.—reveals much of the nature of the society, as does the role assigned to the trancer or possession trancer. The complexity of the organizational structure within which these states are utilized reveals much of the complexity of the society. Thus, we may take as the prototype of visionary trance the form that is associated with the individual vision quest of North American Indians. We may take as prototypical of Possession Trance the cult groups of Africa and Afro-America, in which many individuals, members but not necessarily leaders of the group, engage in this behavior. The latter organizational structures and the societies in which they exist are, by any criteria, far more complex than the former.
Thus, while both visionary trance and possession trance represent modes of communication with spirits, the modes developed by a given society (and both may co-exist in the same society) will depend on a variety of societal and cultural variables, as well as on psychological ones. Both types are expressive of human dependence on spirit agencies, but different modalities of expression of this dependence are provided: in these modalities the importance of group participation is a significant variable.

The concept of possession, unrelated to the experience of altered states of consciousness, is, as we have seen, also widespread. It occurs both in those societies where Possession Trance exists and also in those societies where Possession Trance is absent. Similarly, it occurs in societies where Trance exists and in societies where such behavior is absent. The concept of possession by spirits provides a useful explanatory category for a variety of conditions: for illness, but also for superior skills or powers, enhanced vitality, etc. This concept, too, stresses human dependence of supernatural entities and man's potentially great affinity, or even identity, with them. As such, it expresses the idea of spirit presence and possible communication with spirits, but it does not involve the idea of impersonation or the enactment of multiple roles, as is the case in the practice of Possession Trance.

Possession Trance, it is suggested here, involves the enactment of multiple roles by human actors. This is not true of Possession which does not involve altered states of consciousness, as discussed above. Nor is this true of those trance states which are visionary in nature or are believed due to the temporary absence of the individual's soul, etc. The enactment of multiple roles, of the kind involved in Possession Trance, however, is more likely to exist in societies in which there is a large repertory of roles, actually or potentially. Consequently, it is more likely to exist in more highly complex and differen-
tiated societies than in simpler ones.

We have grouped societies into those having Trance, those having Possession Trance and those having both forms of altered states of consciousness, as well as a relatively rare fourth category, having neither. We have called these "Trance Types." As noted earlier (Table I), these types are quite unevenly distributed around the world; in particular, we have noted the great difference between the New World and the Old, epitomized in the contrast between North America with 71% of its societies having Trance and Sub-Saharan Africa, with only 16% in that category. On the other hand, while the latter area has 46% Possession Trance societies, North America has only 4% of its societies coded as such.

We also attempted to discover the relationship between the types and a series of societal characteristics, generally indicative of societal complexity.

Are the hypotheses stated above borne out by our empirical findings? We expect Possession Trance to occur significantly more frequently in more complex societies than in less complex ones. Trance not linked to Possession belief and Possession belief not linked to Trance experience, on the other hand, are not expected to be tied to societal complexity. Thus, in addition to occurring in simpler societies, we may expect mixed types, where these appear together with Possession Trance.

For the purpose of this test, we drew a smaller sample of 119 societies, based on the Standard Cross Cultural Sample (Murdock and White 1969). We found five societal variables to be significantly related to Possession Trance,

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3 These and other characteristics and their world wide distribution are taken, in modified form, from the Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1967) and are discussed by us at length in an earlier publication (Bourguignon and Greenbaum 1968).
that is, the chi square is significant at or below the .025 level. The variables are: Estimated Size of Population (more than 100,000); Stratification; Slavery (presence, or recent presence, of this institution); Settlement Patterns; Existence of a Jurisdictional Hierarchy above the Local Level. Thus we found that, societies having Possession Trance are likely to be numerically larger, to be stratified into social classes, to have, or to have recently had, slavery, not to be migratory or semi-nomadic but to live in permanent locations and to have a jurisdictional hierarchy which includes one or more levels of decision making above the local level. Societies having Trance only are significantly less likely to have these features. Societies having both Trance and Possession Trance are either intermediary between the other two types or are the most complex of the three types.

Comparing societies with Possession Trance with those having only Possession belief on the one hand, and with societies having both Possession belief and Possession Trance on the other, our findings were, on the whole, similar. With respect to the same five variables (Population Size, Stratification, Slavery, Settlement Patterns, and Jurisdictional Hierarchy above the Local Level), societies having both Possession belief and Possession Trance proved to be the most complex. The first four of these variables were related to our types significantly at or below the .05 level, the last only at or below the .10 level.

We added a further, independent test of our hypothesis: Marsh (1967) coded a sample of societies with respect to an Index of Differentiation, devised by him. He defines differentiation in this context as "the number of structurally distinct and functionally specialized roles and collectivities in a society" (p. 314). We have data for our variables for 288 societies coded by Marsh. Comparing societies of Index of Differentiation 0-3 with those of Index 4-7, with respect to the distribution of Trance types, we obtain the results shown in Table III. The relationship between Trance type and Index of Differentiation
TABLE III

RELATION OF INDEX OF DIFFERENTIATION TO TRANCE TYPES

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$^2_x = 17.70$

P = .001
is found to be significant at or below the .001 level. As expected, Possession Trance in most likely to be found in societies with high Index of Differentiation. It is interesting to note also that societies having neither Trance nor Possession Trance are much more likely to be among the societies with low Index of Differentiation.

This relationship between variables indicating societal complexity and the presence or absence of types of institutionalized altered states of consciousness and possession beliefs also contains a clue to a problem we have mentioned earlier: the uneven geographic distribution among the major world areas of the phenomena under investigation here. In an earlier study (Bourguignon and Greenbaum 1968) we had been struck by the characteristic regional profiles of each of the major world areas. Thus we note the association between, for example, a settlement pattern of a migratory or semi-nomadic type with Trance only. Such societies predominate in North America, where 74% of the societies have such a settlement pattern and 72% have Trance (see Bourguignon and Greenbaum 1968, Table 17). Another example is found in the institution of Slavery, the presence, or recent presence, of which is closely linked to the presence of Possession Trance. It is, or recently was, present in 78% of Sub-Saharan African societies (Bourguignon and Greenbaum 1968, Table 19). Possession Trance, we see in Table I, is found either alone or in combination with Trance, in 66% of African societies.

Thus, the claim is made here that the differential distribution of our phenomena is to be accounted for in part by the functional association with variables indicative of societal complexity. However, it must be recognized that cultural diffusion has undoubtedly also played a role, which must be considered in any explanation of distribution of cultural traits and complexes.

Before leaving the matter of functional associations and geographic distributions, a word must be added on the matter of slavery. It is tempting to
suggest, and the suggestion has indeed been made, that Possession Trance is a response to cultural deprivation (Lewis 1966). As such, we may expect to find it where some groups are deprived and subjected to discriminatory treatment. However, whatever the merits of this argument with respect to the East African societies and the low status of women among them, which is the context in which this theory has been propounded, it clearly does not account for our statistical findings. There is an association between Slavery and Possession Trance, much as there is one between Settlement Patterns and Possession Trance: both of these are variables indicating societal complexity. Nothing need be implied here regarding the psychological mechanism that leads the deprived to develop Possession Trance, possibly as a compensatory phenomenon. A closer look at the societies involved will show that the persons engaged in this behavior are not necessarily the slaves (or ex-slaves) but rather, as for example in the case of the Fon of Dahomey, the cult groups which support the worship of the clan ancestors and, in particular, those of the royal clan. Within the large number of societies having both Possession Trance and Slavery we can, I am sure, develop a series of types in some of which there exists an intimate relationship between the two variables, such that the theory of deprivation is supported, while this is not the case for other types. The statistical data presented here, however, should not be construed to offer support to such a theory.

We may now consider some implications of these materials for the study of minority religions in this country. We have shown that religious institutionalizations of altered states is very widespread among the societies of mankind, being present in 90% of our worldwide sample of societies. This suggests that we are dealing with an ancient as well as a widespread phenomenon. Since it exists in relatively stable societies, it cannot be explained merely in terms of social or individual psychopathology, of the type that gives rise to
millenial and other types of religious movements. Correlations between types of institutionalized altered states and societal variables suggests that societal factors play an important role in the shaping of the forms which altered states assume. Thus, they are subject to cultural influences, to learning and patterning, and should not be considered as merely expressive of personal disorientation or disorganization. If they have survived in stable traditional societies, we may suggest that they are indeed adaptive for these societies, apparently providing different functions for different types of societies.

We have stressed the importance of factors of social structure in the shaping of trance types. However, we have also noted the importance of diffusion. In this connection, it is interesting that some American minority religions, notable Mormons, Shakers, and Spiritualists, have claimed Indian influence on their beliefs. Indian spirits have played a role in both of the latter. Hall- owell (1957), reviewing the influence of the Indian on American culture, finds no evidence of actual borrowing of beliefs or behaviors. However, the belief in the possibility of possession by Indian spirits among the Shakers and of Indian guides among Spiritualists, appears to be a symbolic identification with the original inhabitants of this country. Interestingly, a similar belief exists in the Brazilian Umbanda cult (Pressel 1971).

We have distinguished between traditional, more or less stable societies, for which we have presented our statistical findings, and those other situations, which have variously been termed "revitalization movements" (Wallace 1956, 1970) and "trisis cults" (La Barre 1970, 1971). On the assumption that such movements or cults exhibit a disproportionately high incidence of patterned altered states of consciousness, we have not included them in our sample for the most part, so that we might be able to generalize about societies in a relatively stable state, as opposed to one which might be characterized as unstable, and as such as exceptional and atypical. These cults have been described by La Barre, who has recently
reviewed the vast literature dealing with them, as "new projective sacred systems" resulting from "culture shock and the strains of acculturation" (1971:4). Wallace, on the other hand, has defined revitalization movements as "deliberate, organized attempts by some members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture by rapid acceptance of a pattern of multiple innovations" (1970:188).

It may be possible and desirable to construct a typology of marginal religious movements in this country utilizing the concepts of "revitalization," "crisis cult" and "altered states of consciousness." In so doing we must note, however, that these marginal groups, whatever their origins, exist in the context of American society, with its institutional framework, its historical traditions and its current load of acute problems. Many, but not all, of the marginal groups undoubtedly concern themselves with the construction of "a more satisfying culture." There are, however, others who have such concerns, who do so in a secular, political framework and cannot be counted among our marginal religious groups. Some of those who do so within a religious context may perhaps be termed crisis cults, while others, that could be included under that latter heading do not, in fact, set out to construct a better culture but turn inward on themselves. Nor are all the minority religions "new sacred systems" although undoubtedly many are. Thus, we may begin by distinguishing established minority religions, such as the Mormons or the Pentecostals, from new groups arising in response to cultural stresses. Yet it does not appear appropriate to call these "strains of acculturation" in the traditional anthropological meaning of this term. Many of these new systems do reflect a rejection of the established forms of religion and of established ways of life in the larger society. These newer groups might be divided into those who set out to develop a more satisfying society (revitalization movements) and those who do not explicitly do so. Furthermore, for both of these, we might distinguish between
those who engage in ritualized forms of altered states of consciousness and those who do not. Among those who experience altered states of consciousness as part of their ritual, some experience possession trance and others trance, as we have defined them. Among the former are the newer pentecostal groups, appealing to middle class drop-outs, such as the so called "Jesus Freaks" and among the latter the various drug cultist. The type of interpretation of altered states will of course be part of the over-all structure of belief of the group, and this in turn, will relate to its intellectual level, its social orientation, and other factors. Also, however, the interpretation of the state may well be connected to the mode of induction. In this connection, it is interesting to recall that we have found, among American Indians, a high association between drug-induction and trance rather than possession trance.(Bourguignon 1966a).

In most of these groups, apparently, altered states are sought by all participants. One might well distinguish here between those groups of which this is true and those in which only an inspired leader enters an altered state from which he brings a supernatural message, whether this state be a dream, a vision or an inspired utterance. A distinction of this sort may help to differentiate between leader oriented and group oriented movements. Such a differentiation may have implications for the development of social action in such groups.

While, as we have seen, altered states are widely used in traditional societies, within the context of modern industrial mass society, the use of such states appears to acquire a rather special significance. Here such behavior characterizes particular individuals rather than the society as a whole. And within the context of the whole society, such behavior is not approved and supported but considered deviant, pathological, suspect. I should like to suggest that those who utilize these states then, are most alienated from the total society, most demanding of immediate gratification, requiring immediate exper-
iential evidence of the cult's promises, a down-payment, as it were, on the promised celestial rewards. The ethic of altered states, it seems, places itself at the polar opposite to the Protestant Ethic, with its postponement of gratification, of work for the future. Obviously, such immediate gratification makes the present more liveable, whether that involves the submission to the harsh realities of the world or the difficulties of constructing a new society, or perhaps a retreat into such gratification, into "paradise Now," as a substitute for action.

This, however, is the subject for another paper. At present, I merely wish to suggest that the use of the concepts of "revitalization," "crisis cult," and "altered states of consciousness" may help us in the development of a multifaceted typology of contemporary marginal religious movements.
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