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IV.

The Cultural Construction of Gender and Personhood

We all live in a world of symbols that assign meaning and value to the categories of male and female. Despite several decades of consciousness raising in the United States, advertising on television and in the print media perpetuates sexual stereotypes. Although "house beautiful" ads are less prominent as women are increasingly shown in workplace contexts, body beautiful messages continue to be transmitted. In children's cartoons women are still the helpless victims who the fearless male hero must rescue. Toys are targeted either for little boys or little girls and are packaged appropriately in colors and materials culturally defined as either masculine or feminine.

To what extent are these stereotypes of men and women and the symbols with which they are associated universal? If they are universal, to what extent are they rooted in observed differences about the biological nature of men and women that are made culturally significant? These questions have interested scholars as they have attempted to account for both similarity and difference among the people of the world.

Making the assumption that the subordination of women exists in all societies—a "true universal"—Ortner (1974:67) sought to explain the pervasiveness of this idea not in the assignation of women to a domestic sphere of activity, but in the symbolic constructions by which women's roles are evaluated. Ortner argues that women, because of their reproductive roles, are universally viewed as being closer to nature, while men are linked with culture. She defines culture as "the notion of human consciousness, or . . . the products of human consciousness (i.e., systems of thought and technology), by means of which humanity attempts to assert control over nature" (1974:72). That which is cultural and subject to human manipulation is assigned more worth than that which is natural; hence, women and women's roles are denigrated or devalued, whether explicitly or implicitly.

The nature-culture dichotomy is a useful explanatory model in the United States where, according to Martin (1987:17), "women are intrinsically closely involved with the family where so many 'natural,' 'bodily' (and therefore lower) functions occur, whereas men are intrinsically closely involved with the world of work where (at least for some) 'cultural,' 'mental,' and therefore higher functions occur. It is no accident that 'natural' facts about women, in the form of claims about biology, are often used to justify social stratification based on gender."

While this model may be applicable in some cultures, its universality has been challenged not only by those who point out that nature-culture is a dichotomy of western thought in particular (Bloch and Bloch 1980; Jordanova 1980; Moore 1988), but also by those who provide ethnographic data to indicate its lack of salience in other cultures around the world (Strathern 1980). Similarly, the assumption that women are universally subordinated while men are dominant (Ortner 1974:70) appears questionable through the lens of recent ethnographic reanalyses. The critique of the concepts of universal subordination and of the nature-culture dichotomy has stimulated significant research on how gender identity and gender roles are constructed in particular cultural contexts (Errington and Gewertz 1987; Ortner and Whitehead 1981; Weiner 1976). Whether and under what conditions social asymmetry between men and women emerges in the process of this construction is open to empirical investigation.

The cultural construction of gender in a particular society involves definitions of what it means to be male or masculine, female or feminine, and these definitions vary cross-culturally. While masculinity is thought to have a powerful biological component in the United States, among the Sambia of New Guinea, it is constructed in the context of ritual. The Sambia, like many other societies in New Guinea (Brown and Buchbinder 1976; Herdt 1982; Meigs 1984), are characterized by a high degree of segregation and sexual antagonism between men and women, both of which are reinforced by powerful taboos. These taboos, and other facets of Sambian male identity including that of the warrior, are inculcated during a series of initiation rituals whereby boys are "grown" into men. As Herdt (in this book) observes, the Sambia "perceive no imminent, naturally driven fit between one's birthright sex and one's gender identity or role" (1982:54). Indeed, Sambian boys and men engage in what some societies would label homosexual activity, yet they do it to create masculinity. It is precisely for this reason that an analytical distinction is often made between "sex" as a biological classification and "gender" as a set of learned social roles.

Through the rituals of manhood Sambian boys are progressively detached from the world of women, a world they occupied for the first six or seven years of their lives and which they must now learn to both fear and devalue. This process of detachment has been identified by Chodorow (1974) as a major phase of human male development. If it is unmarked and therefore ambiguous in most western cultures, it is marked in many nonwestern cultures and often associated with male circumcision. Among the Mende of Sierra Leone (Little 1951), for example, boy initiates are seized from their homes by the force of spirits—men wearing masks and long raffia skirts. In this act they are dramatically and suddenly separated from their childhood, carried into the bush where they will spend several weeks in seclusion and transition, before they reemerge as men.

Initiation rituals that prepare girls for their roles as women and instruct them in what it means to be a woman in a particular cultural context can also be found in various societies around the world (Brown 1963; Richards 1956). However, the transition to womanhood is often part of a more subtle and continuous process of enculturation and socialization. In a description of Hausa socialization Callaway (in this book) demonstrates how girls in this society learn how to behave in culturally appropriate ways. The Hausa are an Islamic people who live in northern Nigeria. Historically, ruling class Hausa women had significant authority and social standing, but with the expansion of Islam this position was eroded and a sexually segregated society characterized by female subordination emerged. Hausa girls marry young, generally upon reaching puberty. At that time they enter *kulle* or seclusion. In seclusion, the social roles of women are specifically defined and their sexual activities are limited. Though a Hausa woman becomes part of her husband's family, her place is secured only by bearing sons, and all her children belong to her husband. Hausa women are taught the expected life course from early childhood.

In Hausa society, Callaway (1987:22) claims, "the reproduction of 'masculine' and 'feminine' personalities generation after generation has produced psychological and value commitments to sex differences that are tenaciously maintained and so deeply ingrained as to become central to a consistent sense of self." This self is defined by reproductive roles and by deference to men; thus a good daughter-in-law gives her first born child to her husband's mother, an act that strengthens family ties.

Conceptions of the self or personhood are, as Henrietta Moore (1988:39) has observed, "cross-culturally as variable as the concepts of 'woman' and 'man.'" Personhood is constituted by a variety of attributes. In addition to gender, it may comprise age, status in the family and in the community, and physical appearance or impairment. In many cultures naming is also an important mechanism for constructing personhood. In the United States, for instance, the use of Ms. to replace Mrs. and Miss is an acceptable option. It is increasingly common for married women to retain the name that they were born with rather than replace it with one that only gives them an identity in relation to someone else—their husband.

Among the Chambri of New Guinea initial identity or personhood is gained through a totemic name given by a child's patrilineal and matrilateral relatives. According to Errington and Gewertz (1987:32, 47), "these names both reflect and affect the transactions which constitute a person's fundamental social relationships and identity. . . . Totemic names allow both men and women to pursue respectively their culturally defined preoccupations of political competition and the bearing of children. The totemic names available to men, however, convey different sorts of power and resources than do those available to women. . . . Men seek to augment their own power through gaining control of the names of others. . . . The power conveyed by [women's] names cannot shape social relationships as does the power of names men hold, but, instead, ensures reproduction."

Women's names among the Chambri work in different ways from those of men, but they nonetheless enable women to claim personhood in Chambri society. The married Chinese women described by Watson (in this book) have an entirely different experience. They are denied individuating names, and through this denial their personhood is in question. They remain, says Watson, "suspended between the anonymous world of anybodies and the more sharply defined world of somebodies." In contrast with the namelessness of Chinese women, men in Chinese culture acquire numerous names as they pass through the life cycle. Nowhere is the difference more apparent than at marriage—a time when a man acquires a name that symbolizes his new status and public roles and a woman loses her girlhood name and becomes the "inner person." Like the Hausa women who assume an identity with respect to their husbands, Chinese women begin newly married life by learning the names and kinship terms for all their husbands' ancestors and relatives. Namelessness follows them to the grave—anybodies in life, they become nobodies at death.

In many societies personhood for women is also associated with conceptions of the body and often centers on reproductive functions. One reproductive process that has particular salience is menstruation. Understandings of the symbolic meanings of menstruation influence men's and women's ideologies of gender. Buckley and Gottlieb (1988:3) suggest that "while menstruation itself has at least a degree of biological regularity, its symbolic voicings and valences are strikingly variable, both cross-culturally and within single cultures."

Among numerous groups in New Guinea, men engage in a range of symbolic behaviors to cleanse themselves of what they believe are the harmful effects of contact with women—for example, tongue scraping and smokehouse purification. Menstrual blood, a natural female substance, is culturally defined as one of the most powerful pollutants. The Mae Enga, for exam-

ple, believe that "contact with [menstrual blood] or a menstruating woman will, in the absence of appropriate counter-magic, sicken a man and cause persistent vomiting, turn his blood black, corrupt his vital juices so that his skin darkens and wrinkles as his flesh wastes, permanently dull his wits, and eventually lead to a slow decline and death" (Meggitt 1964:207).

Male beliefs about the dangers of menstrual blood can be found in a number of other cultures around the world (Buckley and Gottlieb 1988). In some contexts men appear to devalue female reproductive roles by defining menstruation as the unfortunate lot of women. For example, a creation story of a group of pastoral nomads in northern Iran goes as follows: "In the beginning men had menstruation and not women. But blood would go down their pants and it was very uncomfortable. So they went to God and complained about their situation, asking Him to give menstruation to women who had skirts. At the time of childbirth, it used to be men who had pains. Again they complained to God, and He gave the pain to women, as He had done with menstruation" (Shahshahani 1986:87).

This creation story, like many beliefs about menstrual pollution, represents a male view that not only associates women with nature and men with culture, but also helps to explain and support sexual asymmetry in that culture. Buckley (in this book) addresses a different form of male bias in his discussion of menstrual beliefs and practices among the Yurok Indians of North America—that of the western male ethnographer who is working with his own construction of "the curse." In his reanalysis of Yurok data Buckley found that while precontact Yurok men considered women, through their menstrual blood, to be dangerous, Yurok women viewed it as a positive source of power. Rather than looking on the forced monthly seclusion as isolating and oppressive, women viewed it as a source of strength and sanctuary. This female voice, expressing the power and position that is sometimes associated with menstrual taboos, has begun to emerge in other cultural descriptions (Gottlieb 1982; Keesing 1985; Lawrence 1988). As Rosaldo (1974:38) has put it pollution beliefs can form the basis for solidarity among women.

What Buckley is suggesting is not that the male point of view is wrong or unimportant, but that it is only a partial representation. Gender roles and gender identities are constructed by both men and women in any society.

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Rituals of Manhood: Male Initiation in Papua New Guinea

Gilbert H. Herdt

Sambia are a mountain-dwelling hunting and horticultural people who number some 2,000 persons and inhabit one of New Guinea's most rugged terrains. The population is dispersed through narrow river valleys over a widespread, thinly populated rain forest; rainfall is heavy; and even today the surrounding mountain ranges keep the area isolated. Sambia live on the fringes of the Highlands, but they trace their origins to the Papua hinterlands; their culture and economy thus reflect a mixture of influences from

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both of those areas. Hunting still predominates as a masculine activity through which most meat protein is acquired. As in the Highlands, though, sweet potatoes and taro are the staple crops, and their cultivation is for the most part women's work. Pigs are few, and they have no ceremonial or exchange significance; indigenous marsupials, such as possum and tree kangaroo, provide necessary meat prestations for all initiations and ceremonial feasts (cf. Meigs 1976).

Sambia settlements are small, well-defended, mountain clan hamlets. These communities comprise locally based descent groups organized through a strong agnatic idiom. Residence is patrivirilocal, and most men actually reside in their father's hamlets. Clans are exogamous, and one or more of them together constitute a hamlet's landowning corporate agnatic body. These men also form a localized warriorhood that is sometimes allied with other hamlets in matters of fighting, marriage, and ritual. Each hamlet contains one or two men's clubhouses, in addition to women's houses, and the men's ritual life centers on their clubhouse. Marriage is usually by sister exchange or infant betrothal, although the latter form of prearranged marriage is culturally preferred. Intrahamlet marriage is occasionally more frequent (up to 50 percent of all marriages in my own hamlet field site) than one would expect in such small segmentary groupings, an involutional pattern weakened since pacification.

Sambia male and female residential patterns differ somewhat from those of other Highlands peoples. The nuclear family is an important subunit of the hamlet-based extended family of interrelated clans. A man, his wife, and their children usually cohabit within a single, small, round hut. Children are thus reared together by their parents during the early years of life, so the nuclear family is a residential unit, an institution virtually unknown to the Highlands (Meggitt 1964; Read 1954). Sometimes this unit is expanded through polygyny, in which case a man, his cowives, and their children may occupy the single dwelling. Girls continue to reside with their parents until marriage (usually near the menarche, around fifteen to seventeen years of age). Boys, however, are removed to the men's clubhouse at seven to ten years of age, following their first-stage initiation. There they reside exclusively until marriage and cohabitation years later. Despite familial cohabitation in early childhood, strict taboos based on beliefs about menstrual pollution still separate men and women in their sleeping and eating arrangements.

Warfare used to be constant and nagging among Sambia, and it conditioned the values and masculine stereotypes surrounding the male initiatory cult. Ritualized bow fights occurred among neighboring hamlets, whose members still intermarried and usually initiated their sons together. At the same time, though, hamlets also united against enemy tribes and in staging war parties against them. Hence, warfare, marriage, and initiation were interlocking institutions; the effect of this political instability was to reinforce tough, strident masculine performance in most arenas of social life. "Strength" (*jerundu*) was—and is—a pivotal idea in this male ethos. Indeed, strength, which has both ethnobiological and behavioral aspects, could be aptly translated as "maleness" and "manliness." Strength has come to be virtually synonymous with idealized conformity to male ritual routine. Before conquest and pacification by the Australians, though, strength had its chief performative significance in one's conduct on the battlefield. Even today bitter reminders of war linger on among the Sambia; and we should not forget that it is against the harsh background of the warrior's existence that Sambia initiate their boys, whose only perceived protection against the inconstant world is their own unbending masculinity.

Initiation rests solely in the hands of the men's secret society. It is this organization that brings the collective initiatory cycle into being as jointly performed by neighboring hamlets (and as constrained by their own chronic bow fighting). The necessary feast-crop gardens, ritual leadership and knowledge, dictate that a handful of elders, war leaders, and ritual experts be in full command of the actual staging of the event. Everyone and all else are secondary.

There are six intermittent initiations from the ages of seven to ten and onward. They are, however, constituted and conceptualized as two distinct cultural systems within the male life cycle. First-stage (*moku*, at seven to ten years of age), second-stage (*imbutu*, at ten to thirteen years), and third-stage (*ipmangwi*, at thirteen to sixteen years) initiations—bachelorhood rites—are collectively performed for regional groups of boys as age-mates. The initiations are held in sequence, as age-graded advancements; the entire sequel takes months to perform. The focus of all these initiations is the construction and habitation of a great cult house (*moo-angu*) on a traditional dance ground; its ceremonialized building inaugurates the whole cycle. Fourth-stage (*nuposha:* sixteen years and onward), fifth-stage (*taiketnyi*), and sixth-stage (*moondangu*) initiations are, conversely, individually centered events not associated with the confederacy of interrelated hamlets, cult house, or dance ground. Each of these initiations, like the preceding ones, does have its own ritual status, social role, and title, as noted. The triggering event for the latter three initiations, unlike that for the bachelorhood rites, is not the building of a cult house or a political agreement of hamlets to act collectively but is rather the maturing femininity and life-crisis events of the women assigned in marriage to youths (who become the initiated novices). Therefore, fourth-stage initiation is only a semipublic activity organized by the youths' clansmen (and some male affines). Its secret purificatory and other rites are followed by the formal marriage ceremony in the hamlet. Fifth-stage initiation comes at a woman's menarche, when her husband is secretly introduced to additional purification and sexual techniques. Sixth-stage initiation issues from the birth of a man's wife's first child. This event is, de jure, the attainment of manhood. (The first birth is elaborately ritualized and celebrated; the next three births are also celebrated, but in more truncated fashion.) Two children bring full adulthood (*aatmwunu*) for husband and wife alike. Birth ceremonies are suspended after the fourth birth, since there is no reason to belabor what is by now obvious: a man has proved himself competent in reproduction. This sequence of male initiations forms the basis for male development, and it underlies the antagonistic tenor of relationships between the sexes.

It needs stating only once that men's secular rhetoric and ritual practices depict women as dangerous and polluting inferiors whom men are to distrust throughout their lives. In this regard, Sambia values and relationships pit men against women even more markedly, I think, than occurs in other Highlands communities (cf. Brown and Buchbinder 1976; Meggitt 1964; Read 1954). Men hold themselves as the superiors of women in physique, personality, and social position. And this dogma of male supremacy permeates all social relationships and institutions, likewise coloring domestic behavior among the sexes (cf. Tuzin 1980 for an important contrast). Men fear not only pollution from contact with women's vaginal fluids and menstrual blood but also the depletion of their semen, the vital spark of maleness, which women (and boys, too) inevitably extract, sapping a man's substance. These are among the main themes of male belief underlying initiation.

The ritualized simulation of maleness is the result of initiation, and men believe the process to be vital for the nature and nurture of manly growth and well-being. First-stage initiation begins the process in small boys. Over the ensuing ten to fifteen years, until marriage, cumulative initiations and residence in the men's house are said to promote biological changes that firmly cement the growth from childhood to manhood. Nature provides male genitals, it is true; but nature alone does not bestow the vital spark biologically necessary for stimulating masculine growth or demonstrating cold-blooded self-preservation.

New Guinea specialists will recognize in the Sambia belief system a theme that links it to the comparative ethnography of male initiation and masculine development: the use of ritual procedures for sparking, fostering, and maintaining manliness in males (see Berndt

1962; Meigs 1976; Newman 1964, 1965; Poole 1981; Read 1965; Salisbury 1965; Strathern 1969, 1970). Sambia themselves refer to the results of first-stage collective initiation—our main interest—as a means of "growing a boy"; and this trend of ritual belief is particularly emphatic.

Unlike ourselves, Sambia perceive no imminent, naturally driven fit between one's birthright sex and one's gender identity or role.[1] Indeed, the problem (and it is approached as a situation wanting a solution) is implicitly and explicitly understood in quite different terms. The solution is also different for the two sexes: men believe that a girl is born with all of the vital organs and fluids necessary for her to attain reproductive competence through "natural" maturation. This conviction is embodied in cultural perceptions of the girl's development beginning with the sex assignment at birth. What distinguishes a girl (*tai*) from a boy (*kwulai'u*) is obvious: "A boy has a penis, and a girl does not," men say. Underlying men's communications is a conviction that maleness, unlike femaleness, is not a biological given. It must be artificially induced through secret ritual; and that is a personal achievement.

The visible manifestations of girls' fast-growing reproductive competence, noticed first in early motor coordination and speech and then later in the rapid attainment of height and secondary sex traits (e.g., breast development), are attributed to inner biological properties. Girls possess a menstrual-blood organ, or *tingu*, said to precipitate all those events and the menarche. Boys, on the other hand, are thought to possess an inactive tingu. They do possess, however, another organ—the *kere-ku-kereku*, or semen organ—that is thought to be the repository of semen, the very essence of maleness and masculinity; but this organ is not functional at birth, since it contains no semen naturally and can only store, never produce, any. Only oral insemination, men believe, can activate the boy's semen organ, thereby precipitating his push into adult reproductive competence. In short, femininity unfolds naturally, whereas masculinity must be achieved; and here is where the male ritual cult steps in.

Men also perceive the early socialization risks of boys and girls in quite different terms. All infants are closely bonded to their mothers. Out of a woman's contaminating, life-giving womb pours the baby, who thereafter remains tied to the woman's body, breast milk, and many ministrations. This latter contact only reinforces the femininity and female contamination in which birth involves the infant. Then, too, the father, both because of postpartum taboos and by personal choice, tends to avoid being present at the breast-feedings. Mother thus becomes the unalterable primary influence; father is a weak second. Sambia say this does not place girls at a "risk"—they simply succumb to the drives of their "natural" biology. This maternal attachment and paternal distance clearly jeopardize the boys' growth, however, since nothing innate within male maturation seems to resist the inhibiting effects of mothers' femininity. Hence boys must be traumatically separated—wiped clean of their female contaminants—so that their masculinity may develop.

Homosexual fellatio inseminations can follow this separation but cannot precede it, for otherwise they would go for naught. The accumulating semen, injected time and again for years, is believed crucial for the formation of biological maleness and masculine comportment. This native perspective is sufficiently novel to justify our using a special concept for aiding description and analysis of the data: masculinization (Herdt 1981:205 ff). Hence I shall refer to the overall process that involves separating a boy from his mother, initiating him, ritually treating his body, administering homosexual inseminations, his biological attainment of puberty, and his eventual reproductive competence as *masculinization*. (Precisely what role personal and cultural fantasy plays in the negotiation of this ritual process I have considered elsewhere: see Herdt 1981: chaps. 6, 7, and 8.)

A boy has female contaminants inside of him which not only retard physical development but, if not removed, debilitate him and eventually bring death. His body is male: his tingu contains no blood and will not activate. The achievement of puberty for boys requires semen. Breast milk "nurtures the boy," and sweet potatoes or other "female" foods provide "stomach nourishment," but these substances become only feces, not semen. Women's own bodies internally produce the menarche, the hallmark of reproductive maturity. There is no comparable mechanism active in a boy, nothing that can stimulate his secondary sex traits. Only semen can do that; only men have semen; boys have none. What is left to do, then, except initiate and masculinize boys into adulthood?

NOTE

1. I follow Stroller (1968) in adhering to the following distinctions: the term *sex traits* refers to purely biological phenomena (anatomy, hormones, genetic structure, etc.), whereas *gender* refers to those psychological and cultural attributes that compel a person (consciously or unconsciously) to sense him- or herself, and other persons, as belonging to either the male or female sex. It follows that the term *gender role* (Sears 1965), rather than the imprecise term *sex role*, refers to the normative set of expectations associated with masculine and feminine social positions.

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Hausa Socialization

Barbara J. Callaway

The Hausa ethos of male domination and the Islamic emphasis on male supremacy combine to structure distinct conceptions of life for men and women. Perceptions of a woman's life cycle stress her current status in relation to men and her reproductive status as well as her approximate age—*jinjiniya* (female infant), *yarinya* (girl), *budurwa* (maiden or virgin), *mata* (woman or wife), *bazarawa* (divorced or widowed), or *tsohuwa* (old woman). The corresponding terms for males stress biological age—*jinjiri*, (infant), *yaro* (young boy), *miji* (young man), and *tsoho* (old man) (Schildkrout 1981, 96).

Married Muslim women in Hausaland live in seclusion (*kulle*). In Kano State—in contrast to other Islamic areas in West Africa—the practice appears to be increasing as the city and the countryside become more involved in the national cash economy (Abell 1962; Hill 1977; M. G. Smith 1955).

Hausa culture emphasizes siring large numbers of children, and in Kano the average number of living children per woman is seven.[1] Countries with Islamic majorities generally have the highest population growth rates in the world today. Nigeria has one of the highest (3.5 percent annually). While pronatal tendencies are strong in all Nigerian societies, they are most evident in the Islamic north, where family planning is not considered a legitimate focus of public policy. In Kano, a metropolitan area of over five million people, no family planning office or publicly available information on either planning or birth control was available as late as 1983.[2]

The number of children born to a given woman is not necessarily indicative of the number for whom she is responsible. Widespread fostering and the practice of a woman's avoiding contact with her firstborn child (*kunya*) creates a great deal of fluidity in children's lives. Eighty percent of 500 Hausa children surveyed in Kano State for one study were not raised by their biological parents (Hake 1972, 23–24). Of these, 41.5 percent were raised by paternal grandmothers, 16.7 percent by stepmothers, 19.8 percent by other relatives, and 5.5 percent by "friends of the family." The giving of children for fostering indicates the strength of the bonds linking spatially dispersed kin. The firstborn child generally is given to an older woman who has no child currently living with her. A good daughter-in-law demonstrates that she is "polite" by giving her first child to her husband's mother, and in so doing strengthens ties between the two families (Interview #16, Kano, October, 1982).

Childhood is generally a mixture of good-natured freedom and harsh corporal punishment and deprivation. When 175 students at the Advanced Teachers College (male) and Women's Teachers College in Kano were asked if their childhoods had been happy or sad or both, 57.4 percent of the 102 men and 56.8 percent of the 73 women replied "both." One-third of these translated "sad" as referring to harsh punishment by parents or other adults. One-fifth complained of lack of sufficient food or clothing as children. "My brother was kind—but his wife was not good; she often gave me too little to eat." "I was not fed properly in my uncle's house where I went to live." "I lived with a stepmother, who had many children, and so I was neglected most of the time." Sixty percent of these students claimed never to have had a conversation

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with an adult while growing up. Eighty percent of the girls claimed to have been "often afraid" (questionnaire administered by Aisha Indo Yuguda, 1983).

While the birth of a new baby is cause for celebration in nearly all families, no matter what the economic status, the birth of a son is usually celebrated on a more lavish scale than that of a daughter. Among wealthier families, when a boy is born it is customary to slaughter *sa* or *sanuja* (a cow or an ox) for the *radin suna* (naming ceremony). When a girl is born, it is customary to slaughter a lesser animal, such as *tunkiya* (sheep) or *akuya* (goat) (Kabir 1981). In the home little girls are assigned domestic duties from about age five. By age six they are dressed in imitation of adult women and begin to be viewed as future wives. They go outside only for specific reasons, such as running errands for their mothers who cannot go out, selling food and handicrafts from bowls or baskets on top of their heads, and carrying messages; they do not go out to play. Little boys, at about age six, are sent out to play and sleep with other boys in the *zaures* or *soro* (entranceways) to their homes. They are ousted from their mother's rooms at night and virtually become visitors in her space during the day. By age ten, boys cross the line into female space less often. They eat with other boys, seldom with sisters or mothers. Boys whose fathers are artisans or traders may be apprenticed to their fathers or other adult men by age eleven or twelve. Even those going to school beyond the primary years spend little time "at home" and avoid contact with women as they approach adulthood. Adulthood means separation, even avoidance, between male and female. "The transition to manhood means moving out of the domain of female authority, into the world of men, and ultimately into marriage, where male dominance is as yet unchallenged" (Schildkrout 1978, 131).

As she grows up, a girl is made aware of her second-class status. In addition to housework, she is assigned child-care responsibilities, and she is made aware that her sex is a potential source of shame and dishonor. A girl's inferior status vis-à-vis her brothers, father, or male kin is early and constantly emphasized. She is told *ki dinga yin abu kamar mace*, "to behave like a woman." A girl should sit quietly, talk softly, cover her head, and never disagree with a male. *Ba ki ganin ke mace ce, she namiji ne*, meaning "Can't you see you are a woman while he is a man?" (and thus superior) is a refrain repeated to her from her earliest years. She will also hear *ke mace ce, gidan wani zaki*, ("after all, you are a woman and you are going to someone else's house"), or *"komai abinki, gidan wani zaki"* ("No matter what you do you are going to someone else's house") (Kabir 1981).

When a girl shows signs of independence of character, she will be snubbed by her peers and told that *tunda ke mace ce, a karkashin wani kike*, "You are a woman and you are under someone's (male) authority." The girl seeking to join boys at play may be greeted with a popular children's song:

> *Mai wasa da maza karya*
> *Tunda na gan ta na rena ta.*
>
> ("She who plays with boys is a bitch
> When I see her, I detest her.")

Finally, girls are repeatedly admonished that *Duk mace a bayan namiji take*—"Every woman is inferior to a man" (Interviews #6, Kano, January 20, 1982; and #21, Kano, February 24, 1983).

For the overwhelming majority of girls, it is almost inconceivable to aspire to anything other than the role of wife or mother. Normally, girls are expected to be married by the time they reach puberty. The widespread introduction of Western education (*boko*) is beginning to postpone the age of marriage for girls who go to school, but even in this event, there is great pressure to marry young, before age sixteen. Girls who are not married while in secondary school (all such noncommercial schools in Kano are single sex) are viewed with suspicion and it is said that *an gama da ita*, meaning, "They have finished with her," implying that she is no longer a virgin and therefore not a good candidate for a first wife (Interviews #11 and 12, Kano, March 8 and March 12, 1982).

Although they may have heavy household responsibilities, girls are sent out to hawk wares for their mothers and are relatively free until they are abruptly married and secluded. After that, even though they are still very young, like adult women they can leave their houses only for naming ceremonies, marriages, funerals, and medical care. If they go out, it is usually at night and an older woman generally accompanies them as escorts. They must cover their heads and be accountable for their visits (Schildkrout 1979).

Since most girls are married by age twelve to fourteen, they are virtually confined to the female quarters of their compounds all their lives. If a girl is married as young as ten, she will not be expected to cook or have sexual relations with her husband until puberty begins, but she enters *kulle* and loses the freedom associated with childhood. For all practical purposes, the house or compound is a woman's world. From the time she marries and enters *kulle* until after her childbearing years, a woman has virtually no freedom of movement or association. This socialization process is pervasive and thorough. Opportunities for broadening one's experiences or raising one's expectations are few.

Unlike girls, boys do not reach adult status until they become economically productive, usually in their late twenties or early thirties, because it is one of the requirements of Islam that men do not marry until they can provide shelter, clothing, and food for their wife or wives. While in 1982, ninety percent of the 92 Muslim women students at Bayero University were married, only fifteen percent of the 2000 men students were married (Bayero University 1982).

Even in matters of religion, a woman's inferiority is underscored. While all Muslims are equal before Allah, menstruating or pregnant women are considered "religiously impure." In addition, women cannot lead the community in prayer, do not officiate at religious festivals, and rarely attend mosque. Even at the mosque on the campus at Bayero University in Kano, women may attend only by standing in a separate room out of sight of the male worshippers and may not be in public areas of the mosque during Friday prayers. Hence, the thrust of socialization through religion is to emphasize a properly subordinate place for women.

Unlike other urban settings, Kano provides no specifically female organizations for Hausa women. The one exclusively women's club in Kano, the Corona Society, a British-based international service organization for women, had no Hausa Muslim Kano women as members. The National Association of Women's Societies of Nigeria (the federally recognized umbrella organization for women's associations) had no Kano chapter, although it asked the Corona Society to help organize one; no interest in affiliation with such an organization was expressed in Kano. Although interested in the idea of women's organizations, elite Kano women preferred to avoid the visibility entailed in membership. They seemed to perceive some advantage in their current status and not many advantages in radically changing it.

At Bayero University no northern Nigerian woman holds a position of regular faculty rank (there was one female teaching assistant in sociology), nor do women generally participate in University-sponsored conferences or symposia. As of 1983, the University had never sponsored a program dealing with women's issues or concerns; no course in the curriculum deals specifically with women's history or issues.

If women are absent from the public realm, within their own restricted but private world they enjoy considerable autonomy. Houses are a woman's domain. Women can enter virtually any house, but men can enter few and then they rarely go beyond the entranceway, or, in the case of wealthier homes, the man's sitting room. Women are secluded, but men are excluded from women's space. Even kinship does not open the door, for a man would not normally enter the house of a younger married sister or the female section of his younger brother's house. He might, with the husband's permission, enter the house of an older married sister (Schildkrout, 1978a, p. 115). "It shall be no crime in them as to their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their women, or the slaves which their right hands possess, if they speak with them unveiled" (*Qur'an* 3:33 and 33:55). Thus, young men and women are not thrown together in situations where they could form relationships that could lead to marriage; the system of arranged marriages, in which girls are married early and boys much later, means that relationships between unrelated young people of equal status but opposite sex are almost nonexistent. The fact that men and women live in separate and distinct worlds has profound psychological implications for women. While men's authority over women in the public domain is nearly complete, in the private domain, where interaction is highly limited and age differences between men and women are great, the differences in their interests are also great and thus the authority of men is quite precarious.

Hausa households are large and multigenerational abodes. Women are constantly surrounded by female consanguineal and affinal relatives and the children of all. The average number of persons in the households visited during the course of this study was twenty, but it was not unusual for fifty persons to be eating at a particular house or compound. Often, while fifteen to twenty people might actually be resident in a particular house, many others might be eating and sleeping there. In Kano it is exceedingly rare to visit a Hausa woman in her home and find her alone—women appear to be never alone. Thus, the large city does not provide the alleged anonymity and lower visibility attributed to urban life. Within seclusion, women maintain wide networks, through which news of the world and changing events moves in an unending flow. Marriages, naming ceremonies, and other rituals are constant. Goods, services, and money flow rapidly, and visiting of extended kin is incessant; large families ensure movement and wide-ranging networks of exchange. Nothing is as simple as it looks. Kano City, although rapidly industrializing, is nonetheless reminiscent of nonindustrial towns, where the sense of a small, face-to-face community is maintained in the midst of an urban area. When a woman leaves her compound or receives visitors to it, all her neighbors know; the many men standing outside their compounds speculate as to the identity of a stranger and the nature of his or her business.

To the casual observer, life behind the mud wall of the compound appears secure and peaceful, but time spent there brings hundreds of sad stories. Women complain of heavy labor, of marriages of young daughters against their wills, of child brides brought into the household, of forced sexual cohabitation at puberty regardless of mental or emotional development, of early motherhood and infant death. There is no sewage system, running water is unreliable, and animals roam freely. Illness, needless death, and especially female and infant mortality are commonplace. Said a mother of a twelve-year-old on her wedding day, "may the day be cursed when she was born a woman."

NOTES

1. Reproductive histories of 82 women with children in two Kano wards (Kurawa and Kofar Mazugal) were taken by Schildkrout in 1977. Of these, seventy-nine had children and three were "caregivers" (i.e., they had been given children to foster). The 79 women had given birth to a total of 164 children, or an average of 8.2 each. Women without children are assumed to be unable to conceive.
2. As of 1983, the president of the Planned Parenthood Society of Nigeria, a member of a distinguished Kano family, saw nothing disconcerting in the fact that no office of the organization existed in the city. He asserted that Kano women knew he was president of the society and were free to come to his house and request a note from him to the appropriate doctor in the city hospital if they wanted information on birth control assistance (Interview #23, 1983).

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The Named and the Nameless: Gender and Person in Chinese Society

Rubie S. Watson

In Chinese society names classify and individuate, they have transformative powers, and they are an important form of self expression. Some names are private, some are chosen for their public effect. Many people have a confusing array of names while others are nameless. The theory and practice of personal naming in Chinese society is extremely complex and unfortunately little studied.

For the male villagers of rural Hong Kong, naming marks important social transitions: the more names a man has the more "socialized" and also, in a sense, the more "individuated" he becomes. To attain social adulthood a man must have at least two names, but most have more. By the time a male reaches middle age, he may be known by four or five names. Village women, by contrast, are essentially nameless. Like boys, infant girls are named when they are one month old, but unlike boys they lose this name when they marry. Adult women are known (in reference and address) by kinship terms, teknonyms, or category terms such as "old woman."

In Chinese society personal names constitute an integral part of the language of joking, of boasting, and of exhibiting one's education and erudition. The Chinese themselves are fascinated by personal names: village men enjoy recounting stories about humorous or clumsy names, educated men appreciate the elegance of an auspicious name, and all males worry about the quality of their own names and those of their sons. To a large extent women are excluded from this discourse. They cannot participate because in adulthood they are not named, nor do they name others. Until very recently the majority of village women were illiterate and so could not engage in the intellectual games that men play with written names. Women were not even the subjects of these conversations.

The namelessness of adult women and their inability to participate in the naming of others highlights in a dramatic way the vast gender distinctions that characterize traditional Chinese culture. The study of names gives us considerable insight into the ways in which gender and person are constructed in Chinese society. Judged against the standard of men, the evidence presented here suggests that village women do not, indeed cannot, attain full personhood. The lives of men are punctuated by the acquisition of new names, new roles, new responsibilities and new privileges; women's lives, in comparison, remain indistinct and indeterminate.

In his essay "Person, Time, and Conduct in Bali," Clifford Geertz argues that our social world "is populated not by anybodies . . . but by somebodies, concrete classes of determinate persons positively characterized and appropriately labeled" (1973:363). It is this process by which anybodies are converted into somebodies that concerns me here. Do men and women become "somebodies" in the same way? Are they made equally determinate, positively characterized and labeled?

Although this discussion is based primarily on field research carried out in the Hong Kong New Territories, examples of naming practices have been drawn from other areas of Chinese culture as well. It is difficult to determine the extent to which the patterns described in this paper are indicative of rural china in general.[1] Available evidence suggests that there is considerable overlap between Hong Kong patterns of male naming and those of preliberation Chinese society and present-day rural Taiwan (see for example Eberhard 1970; Kehl 1971; Sung 1981; Wu 1927). Unfortunately, there have been no studies that specifically examine the differences between men's and women's naming, although brief references in Martin Yang's study of a Shantung village (1945:124) and in Judith Stacey's account of women in the People's Republic (1983:43, 131) suggest that the gender differences discussed here are not unique to Hong Kong. In making these statements I do not wish to suggest that there are no substantial differences in personal naming between rural Hong Kong and other parts of China. A general survey of personal naming in China, especially one that takes the postrevolution era into account, has yet to be done.

This paper draws heavily on ethnographic evidence gathered in the village of Ha Tsuen, a single-lineage village located in the northwest corner of the New Territories. All males in Ha Tsuen share the surname Teng and trace descent to a common ancestor who settled in this region during the 12th century (see R. Watson 1985). For most villagers postmarital residence is virilocal/patrilocal. The Ha Tsuen Teng practice surname exogamy, which in the case of a single-lineage village means that all wives come from outside the community. These women arrive in Ha Tsuen as strangers and their early years of marriage are spent accommodating to a new family and new community. The Teng find this completely natural; "daughters," they say, "are born looking out; they belong to others."

Patrilineal values dominate social life in Ha Tsuen. Women are suspect because they are outsiders. As Margery Wolf points out, Chinese women are both marginal and essential to the families into which they marry (1972:35). They are necessary because they produce the next generation, yet as outsiders their integration is never complete. Women are economically dependent on the family estate, but they do not have shareholding rights in that estate. Half the village land in Ha Tsuen is owned by the lineage (see R. Watson 1985:61–72), and the other half is owned by private (male) landlords. Women have no share in this land; they do not own immovable property nor do they have rights to inherit it.

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Few married women are employed in wage labor, and since the villagers gave up serious agriculture in the 1960s, most women are dependent on their husbands' paychecks for family income. At the time I conducted my research (1977–78) Ha Tsuen had a population of approximately 2500—all of whom are Cantonese speakers.

NAMING AN INFANT

Among the Cantonese a child's soul is not thought to be firmly attached until at least 30 days after its birth. During the first month of life the child and mother are secluded from all but the immediate family. After a month has passed, the child is considered less susceptible to soul loss and is introduced into village life. The infant is given a name by his or her father or grandfather at a ceremony called "full month" (*man yueh*). If the child is a son, the "full month" festivities will be as elaborate as the family can afford; if, on the other hand, a girl is born, there may be little or no celebration (except, perhaps, a special meal for family members). The naming ceremony for a boy normally involves a banquet for neighbors and village elders, along with the distribution of red eggs to members of the community. The first name a child is given is referred to as his or her *ming*.[2]

This name (*ming*) may be based on literary or classical allusions. It may express a wish for the child's or family's future, or it may enshrine some simple event that took place at or near the time of the child's birth. Examples of this kind of naming are found not only in Ha Tsuen but in other areas of China as well. Arlington, in an early paper on Chinese naming, describes how the name "sleeve" was given to a girl of his acquaintance who at the time of her birth had been wrapped in a sleeve (1923:319). In the People's Republic of China, people born during the Korean War might be called "Resist the United States" (Fan-mei) or "Aid Korea" (Pang-ch'ao). Alternatively, children may be given the name of their birthplace, for example, "Born in Anhwei" (Hui-sheng) or "Thinking of Yunnan" (Hsiang-yun). In the past girl babies might be named Nai ("To Endure"). This name was given to infant girls who survived an attempted infanticide. One way of killing an infant was to expose it to the elements. If a girl survived this ordeal, she might be allowed to live. In these cases the name Nai commemorated the child's feat of survival.[3]

A child's name may express the parents' desire for no more children. For instance, in Taiwan a fifth or sixth child may be named Beui, a Hokkien term meaning "Last Child." Alternatively, a father may try to assure that his next child will be a son by naming a newborn daughter "Joined to Brother" (Lien-ti). There are several girls with this name in Ha Tsuen. A father or grandfather might express his disappointment or disgust by naming a second or third daughter "Too Many" (A-to)[4] or "Little Mistake" (Hsiao-t'so) or "Reluctant to Feed" (Wang-shih). A sickly child might be given the name of a healthy child. My informants told me that a long-awaited son may be given a girl's name to trick the wandering ghosts into thinking the child had no value and therefore could be ignored (see also Sung 1981:81–82). For example, a Ha Tsuen villager, who was the only son of a wealthy family (born to his father's third concubine), was known by everyone as "Little Slave Girl" (in Cantonese, Mui-jai).

In most cases the infant receives a *ming* during the full month ceremony but this name is little used. For the first year or two most children are called by a family nickname ("milk name" or *nai ming*). Babies are sometimes given milk names like "Precious" (A-pao), or A-buh (mimicking the sounds infants make) or "Eldest Luck," or "Second Luck," indicating sibling order.

Some care and consideration is given to a child's *ming*, especially if it is a boy. By referring to the Confucian classics or by alluding to a famous poem, the name may express the learning and sophistication of the infant's father or grandfather. The name, as we will see, may also save the child from an inauspicious fate. Commonly girls' names (*ming*) are less distinctive and less considered than are boys' names. And, as we have seen, girls' names may also be less flattering: "Too Many" or "Little Mistake." Often a general, classificatory name is given to an infant girl; Martin Yang reports from rural Shantung that Hsiao-mei ("Little Maiden") was a "generic" girls' name in his village (1945:124).

Most Chinese personal names are composed of two characters, which follow the one character surname (for example, Mao Tse-tung or Teng Hsiao-ping). One of the characters of the *ming* may be repeated for all the children of the same sex in the family or perhaps all sons born into the lineage during one generation (for example, a generation or sibling set might have personal names like Hung-hui, Hung-chi, Hung-sheng, and so on.). Birth order may also be indicated in the child's name. In these cases part of the name indicates group affiliation and sibling order. However, one of the characters is unique to the individual and so the child is distinguished from his siblings. A variation on this theme occurs when a parent or grandparent selects a name for all sons or grandsons from a group of characters that share a single element (known as the radical—a structured component found in every Chinese character). For example, Margaret Sung (1981:80) in her survey of Chinese naming practices on Taiwan notes that in some families all son's names may be selected from characters that contain the "man" radical (for example, names like "Kind" [Jen], "Handsome" [Chun], or "Protect" [Pao]).

Individuation of the name, Sung points out, is very strong in Chinese society (1981:88). There is no category of words reserved specifically for personal names and care is taken to make names (particularly boys' names) distinct. The Chinese find the idea of sharing one's given name with millions of other people extraordinary.[5] In Taiwan, Sung notes that individuation of one's name is so important that the government has established a set of rules for name changes (1981:88). According to these regulations a name can be changed when two people with exactly the same name live in the same city or county or have the same place of work. "Inelegant" names or names shared with wanted criminals can also be changed.

In Ha Tsuen a boy might be named, in Cantonese, Teng Tim-sing, which translates Teng "To Increase Victories"; another person could be called Teng Hou-sing, "Reliably Accomplish" (Teng being the shared surname). Parents, neighbors, and older siblings will address the child or young unmarried adult (male or female) by his or her *ming* or by a nickname. Younger siblings are expected to use kin terms in addressing older siblings. It should be noted that, in contrast to personal names, Chinese surnames do not convey individual meaning. When used in a sentence or poem, the character *mao* (the same character used in Mao Tse-tung) means hair, fur, feathers, but when it is used as a surname it does not carry any of these connotations.

THE POWER OF NAMES: NAMES THAT CHANGE ONE'S LUCK

Names classify people into families, generational sets, and kin groups. Ideally, Chinese personal names also have a unique quality. Personal names carry meanings; they express wishes (for more sons or no more daughters), mark past events ("Sleeve" or "Endure"), and convey a family's learning and status. Beyond this rather restricted sense there is, however, another level of meaning. According to Chinese folk concepts each person has a unique constitution—a different balance of the five elements (fire, water, metal, earth, and wood). When the child is about one month old a family will usually have a diviner cast the child's horoscope. The horoscope consists of eight characters (*pa tzu*)—two each for the hour, day, month, and year of birth. The combination of these characters determines in part what kind of person one is (what kind of characteristics one has) and what will happen in future years. However, the *pa tzu* do not represent destiny; one is not bound to act out this fate.

By means of esoteric knowledge a person's fate can be changed. Perhaps the most common method of accomplishing such a change is through naming. For example, if one of the five elements is missing from a person's constitution or is not properly balanced with other elements, the name (*ming*) may then include a character with the radical for that element. In the event of illness the diviner may suggest that the patient suffers from an imbalance of wood and that the radical for this element be added to the child's name. In such a case the character *mei* (plum), for example, may replace one of the original characters of the *ming* and thus save the child from a bad fate, illness, or perhaps death. *Mei* achieves this astounding feat not because there is anything intrinsically wood-like about *mei* but because the written character *mei* has two major components: *mu*, the radical for wood and another symbol that is largely phonetic. It is the written form of the character that is important here; in spoken Chinese there is nothing that suggests that *mei* has within it the element wood. I will return to this point later.

Significantly, it is not only one's own horoscope that matters; one must also be in balance with the horoscopes of parents, spouses, and offspring. It is particularly important that the five elements of mother and child be properly matched to ensure mutual health.[6] If conditions of conflict arise and nothing is done to resolve this conflict, the child may become ill and even die. A name change, however, can rectify the situation. It is obvious that Chinese personal names *do* things: they not only classify and distinguish but also have an efficacy in their own right.

GENDER DIFFERENCES AND THE WRITTEN NAME

As noted above, even in childhood there are important gender distinctions in naming. Girls nearly always have less elaborate full month rituals than their brothers, and less care is taken in choosing girls' names. The greatest difference between the sexes, however, pertains not to the aesthetics of naming but to the written form of the name.

Until the 1960s in Ha Tsuen and in rural Hong Kong generally births were seldom registered with government agencies. Except in cases of a bad fate, there was no compelling reason for girls' names ever to appear in written form. There was rarely any need to attach their names to legal documents. Girls did not inherit land, they had no rights in property, and their given names were not entered in genealogies (on this point see also Hazelton 1986) or on ancestral tablets (see below). Until the 1960s girls rarely attended primary schools. Consequently, nearly all village women born prior to 1945 cannot write or recognize their own names.

Commenting on the role of nicknames, Wolfram Eberhard makes the point that in spoken Chinese with its many homonyms, a two-word combination may fail to express clearly what the speaker wants to convey. The intended meaning of a name (that is, the two-character *ming*) is only apparent when it is written. Nicknames, Eberhard notes, are not normally meant to be written and, hence, are usually longer (often three or four characters) than a person's *ming* (1970:219). Given the ambiguities, a great deal of play is possible with the spoken form of names. For example, Hsin-mei can mean "New Plum" or "Faithful Beauty" depending on the tones that one uses in pronouncing the characters. In the written form the meaning of this name is perfectly clear, but in the spoken form it can be misunderstood or misconstrued, sometimes with disastrous consequences. The Manchu (Ch'ing) authorities played the naming game when they changed the written form of one of Sun Yat-sen's many names. During Sun's long political career, he used a variety of names and aliases (see Sharman 1934), one being Sun Wen (*wen* translates as "elegant," "civil," "culture"). In Manchu attacks on Sun the character *wen* pronounced with a rising tone (elegant, culture) was replaced by another character *wen* pronounced with a falling tone (which translates as "defile"). The change was effected simply by adding the water radical to the term for elegant. *Wen* (defile), it should be noted, was also the name of a famous criminal in southern China during the last years of Manchu rule.

Upon seeing a person's written name, the beholder may comment on the beauty, the refinement, the auspicious connotations of the characters. As long as it is simply spoken, however, it is in a sense "just a name." Although women have names, these do not convey as much information as do men's names, for the obvious reason that the former were rarely written. Until recently New Territories women were not given names with a view to their written effect. The written form of "Too Many" may be offensive or unpleasant in a way that the spoken form is not.

Given that it is the written form of names that has force, that informs, that can be used to change a bad fate, there is justification for thinking that those whose names are rarely or never written are at some disadvantage. Girls, it would appear, did not have names in the same way that boys did.[7] It is also clear that girls' names are less expressive, less individuating than their brothers' names are. Fathers strove to make son's names distinctive, unique—whereas girls' names tended to classify (for example, Endure, Little Maiden) or to be used as a vehicle for changing circumstances external to the girl herself (for example, Joined to Brother). Many girls of course had names like Splendid Orchid, Morning Flower, Resembling Jade, but in general they were more likely than were their brothers to be given negative names, stereotypic names, or goal-oriented names. These gender distinctions are significant, but the contrast between men and women becomes even more dramatic when we consider adult naming practices.

MEN'S NAMING

When a Ha Tsuen man marries, he is given or takes (often he chooses the name himself) a marriage name, or *tzu*. Considering the importance of the written name it is significant that *tzu* is the same character that is commonly used for "word" or "ideograph." The marriage name is given in a ceremony called *sung tzu*, which literally means "to deliver written characters." This ceremony is an integral part of the marriage rites and is held after the main banquet on the first day of wedding festivities.

In Ha Tsuen, the marriage name (always two characters) is written on a small rectangular piece of red paper and is displayed in the main reception hall of the groom's house (alternatively, it may be hung in the groom's branch ancestral hall). This name is chosen with regard to its effect in the written form. Great care is taken in choosing the characters; they often have origins in the Confucian classics. In Ha Tsuen one of the two characters of this marriage name is usually shared by a lineage generational set. In some kin groups a respected scholar may be asked to choose a poem or aphorism to be used in generational naming. Each generation will then take in turn one character of the poem as part of their (*tzu*) name. Of course, this makes the selection of an auspicious, learned name more difficult and also more intellectually challenging. Naming at this level can become a highly complicated game.

In choosing a marriage name (*tzu*) the groom demonstrates his sophistication, learning, and goals. Among the people I studied, the possession of a marriage name is essential for the attainment of male adulthood, which gives a man the right to participate in important lineage and community rituals. In Ha Tsuen the correct way to ask whether a man has full ritual rights in the lineage is to inquire, "Does X have a *tzu*?", not "Is X married?" Marriage names are not used as terms of address; they may, however, appear in lineage genealogies and in formal documents.

By the time a man is married he will have acquired a public nickname (*wai hao*, literally an "outside name"). This is usually different from the family nickname he had in infancy or the "school name" given to him by a teacher.[8] Nicknames are widely used as terms of address and reference for males in the vil-

lage; in fact, a man's birth and marriage names may be largely unknown.

In a discussion of naming among the Ilongot, Renato Rosaldo emphasizes the process by which names come into being (1984:13). Rosaldo argues that names are negotiated, and that naming, like other aspects of Ilongot social life, is a matter of give and take, challenge and response (1984:22). Rosaldo's approach is particularly useful for understanding Chinese nicknaming. *Ming* (birth names) are formally bestowed by one's seniors, one chooses the *tzu* (marriage name) and, as we will see, the *hao* (courtesy name) oneself. Nicknames (*wai hao*), however, are negotiated; both the namer and the named play the game. By setting up this dichotomy between nicknames and other given names, I do not mean to suggest that these two categories have no common features nor that *ming*, marriage names, and courtesy names are simply the consequence of a set of rigidly applied rules and structures. It is clear, however, that nicknames fit into the transactional world of local politics, friendship, and informal groups more comfortably than do formal names.

In Chinese society, one can gain a reputation for cleverness by giving nicknames that are particularly apt or make witty literary allusions. Chinese nicknames are highly personalized and often refer to idiosyncratic characteristics. They may also be derogatory or critical, whereas one's formal names would never be intentionally unflattering (especially for a man). Nicknames may refer to a physical quality (for example, "Fatty") or a personal quality ("Stares at the Sky" for someone who is a snob). Nicknames may also protect ("Little Slave Girl") or they may equalize, at least temporarily, unequal relationships. The richest and most powerful man in one New Territories village was nicknamed "Little Dog." In one respect this was a useful nickname for an extremely wealthy man whose political career depended on being accepted by everyone in the community. Rather than rejecting his derogatory nickname he embraced it.

In Ha Tsuen when a man reaches middle age or when he starts a business career, he usually takes a *hao*—"style" or "courtesy" name. A man chooses this name himself. Sung notes that such names are "usually dissyllabic or polysyllabic, and [are] selected by oneself bas[ed] upon whatever one would like to be" (1981:86). Some people have more than one courtesy name. The *hao* is a public name par excellence. Such names, Eberhard points out, are often used on occasions when a man wants "to make his personal identity clear without revealing his personal name (*ming*)" (1970:219). In the past, and to some extent today,[9] the *ming* was considered to be too intimate, too personal to be used outside a circle of close friends and kin (Eberhard 1970:218). "The Chinese I know hide their names," writes Maxine Hong Kingston in *Woman Warrior;* "sojourners take new names when their lives change and guard their real names with silence" (1977:6).

Sung notes that *hao* names are no longer popular in present-day Taiwan except among high government officials (1981:86). However, in Hong Kong *hao* are still widely used; they are commonly found, for example, on business cards, and of course many painters or writers sign their work with a *hao*.

In one sense courtesy names are different from birth and marriage names. One achieves a courtesy name. They are a mark of social and economic status, and a poor man who gives himself such a name may be accused of putting on airs. Any man may take a *hao* but if he is not a "man of substance," the *hao* is likely to remain unknown and unused. With poor men or politically insignificant men these names, if they have them at all, may appear only in genealogies or on tombstones.

Some Ha Tsuen men have posthumous names (*shih-hao*) that they take themselves or have conferred upon them by others. Among the imperial elite posthumous names or titles were given to honor special deeds. In the village, however, taking or giving a *shih-hao* is left to individual taste. The practice has declined in recent years.

The preceding discussion suggests that names mark stages in a man's social life. The possession of a birth name, school name, nickname, marriage name, courtesy name, and posthumous name attest to the fact that a man has passed through the major stages of social adulthood. By the time a man reaches middle age he has considerable control over his names and naming. He names others (his children or grandchildren, for example) and he chooses his own marriage, courtesy, and posthumous names. He also has some control over the use of these names. This is especially true of a successful businessman or politician whose business associates may only know his courtesy name, his drinking friends one of his nicknames, his lineage-mates his birth name, and so on. The use of names is situational and involves some calculation both on the part of the named and those with whom he interacts.

Beidelman, in an article on naming among the Kaguru of Tanzania, emphasizes the point that the choice of name reflects the relation between the speaker and the person to whom he speaks (1974:282; see also Willis 1982). The choice of one name or another, or the use of a kin term rather than a personal name, is a tactical decision. In Ha Tsuen the use of nicknames, pet names, birth names, courtesy names is, like the use of kin terms, highly contextual. Intimates may address each other by a nickname when they are among friends but not when strangers are present, family nicknames may be used in the household but not outside of it, birth names and surnames with titles may be used in formal introductions but not in other settings. A man might be addressed by a kin term or a nickname depending on the speaker's goals. One can give respect by using a courtesy name or claim intimacy by using a nickname. In a single lineage village like Ha Tsuen, where all males are agnatic kinsmen, the strategic use of kin terms and personal names provides a fascinating glimpse into social relationships.

Surprisingly, however, this flexibility does not continue into old age. When a man reaches elderhood at age 61, his ability to control his names diminishes just as his control over his family and corporate resources weakens. In Ha Tsuen and in China generally men often hand over headship of the family when they become elders. The village code of respect requires that male elders be addressed by a kin term (for example, in Cantonese *ah baak*, FeB, or a combination of the given name and kin term, for example, *ah Tso baak*). Only an exceptional man, a scholar or wealthy businessman, will continue to be called by one of his personal names after his 60th birthday. For example, no villager would dare refer to or address the 93-year-old patriarch of the wealthiest family in Ha Tsuen as *ah baak*. In general, however, with advancing age the playful aspects of names and naming are taken away as is a man's power to transact his name. In old age a man has little control over what he is called, and in this respect his situation is similar to that of a married woman. As with wives, old men have left (or are leaving) the world of public and financial affairs to become immersed in the world of family and kinship where they are defined not by a set of distinctive names but by their relationship to others.

"NO NAME" WOMEN

At one month a Ha Tsuen girl is given a name (*ming*); when she marries this name ceases to be used. Marriage is a critical rite of passage for both men and women, but the effect of this rite on the two sexes is very different. Just as a man's distinctiveness and public role are enhanced by his marriage and his acquisition of a marriage name, the marriage rites relegate the woman to the inner world of household, neighborhood, and family. On the one hand, the marriage rites seek to enhance the young bride's fertility, but on the other hand, and in a more negative vein, they also dramatize the bride's separation from her previous life and emphasize the prohibitions and restrictions that now confine her. When the young bride crosses her husband's threshold, what distinctiveness she had as a girl is thrust aside. It is at this point that she loses her name and becomes the "inner person" (*nei jen*), a term Chinese husbands use to refer to their wives.

While the groom is receiving his marriage name on the first day of marriage rites, his

bride is being given an intensive course in kinship terminology by the elderly women of Ha Tsuen. Marriage ritual provides a number of occasions for the formal, ritualized exchange of kin terms (for a description of marriage rites in Ha Tsuen see R. Watson 1981). These exchanges, which always feature the bride, instruct the new wife and daughter-in-law in the vast array of kin terms she must use for her husband's relatives. The prevalence of virilocal/patrilocal residence means that the groom remains among the kin with whom he has always lived. It is the bride who must grasp a whole new set of kin terms and learn to attach these terms to what must seem a bewildering array of people. Two women resident in the groom's village (called in Cantonese *choi gaa*, "bride callers") act as the bride's guides and supporters during the three days of marriage rites, and it is their responsibility to instruct the bride in the kin terminology she will need in order to survive in her new environment.

These ritualized exchanges of kin terms do more, however, than serve as a pedagogic exercise; they also locate and anchor the bride in a new relational system. As the groom acquires his new marriage name—a name, it should be noted, that denotes both group or category membership *and* individual distinctiveness—the bride enters a world in which she exists only in relation to others. She is no longer "grounded" by her own special name (*ming*), however prosaic that name might have been; after marriage she exists only as someone's eBW or yBW or as Sing's mother, and so on. Eventually even these terms will be used with decreasing frequency; as she approaches old age, she will be addressed simply as "old woman" (*ah po*) by all but her close kin.

When I first moved into Ha Tsuen, I quickly learned the names of the male residents (mostly nicknames). But for the women I, like other villagers, relied on kin terms or category terms. Significantly, the rules that govern the use of these terms are not dependent on the age of the women themselves, but rather are a function of the lineage generation of their husbands. Women married to men of an ascending generation to the speaker (or the speaker's husband) may be addressed as *ah suk po* (a local expression meaning FyBW) or by the more formal *ah sam* (also meaning FyBW). For women married to men of one's own generation (male ego) the terms *ah sou* (eBW) or, if one wanted to give added respect, *ah sam* (FyBW) may be used.

A woman may also be referred to by the nickname of her husband plus "leung" (for example, ah Keung leung), or by a teknonym. For their part married women ordinarily use kin terms for their husbands' agnates and for other women in the village. I was told that a woman must use kin terms for men older in age or generation than her husband. Between husband and wife teknonyms are often used so that the father of Tim-sing might address his wife as *ah Sing nai* (*ah* is a prefix denoting familiarity, *Sing* is part of the son's *ming*, *nai* is "mother" or, literally, "milk"). In addressing their husbands, women might use nicknames; my neighbor always called her husband "Little Servant."[10]

Although there is some flexibility in deciding what to call a woman, the reference and address terms used for women in Ha Tsuen are very rigid compared to those employed for men. Furthermore, among women there is no possibility of self-naming. Men name themselves, women are named by others. Similarly, Ha Tsuen women are more restricted than their husbands in the tactical use they can make of names and kin terms. Whereas a man may refer to or address his neighbor by his nickname ("Fatty"), his *ming* (*ah Tim*), or by a kin term, decorum dictates that his wife use either a kin term appropriate to her husband's generation or one appropriate to her children. In Cantonese society, and presumably in China generally, adults often address and refer to each other by a version of the kin term their children would use for that person. I suspect, but at this point cannot document, that women are far more likely to do this than are men.

While it is true that a man has little choice in the reference or address terms he uses for women, he does have considerable freedom in distinguishing among his male acquaintances, friends, and kin. Women, as outlined above, have a restricted repertoire for both sexes. In this sense adult women may be said to carry a particularly heavy burden for guarding the kinship and sexual order. No adult woman is free to act alone or to be treated as if she were independent. The terms by which she is addressed and the terms she uses to address others serve as constant reminders of the hierarchical relations of gender, age, and generation.

As men grow older, as they become students, marry, start careers, take jobs, and eventually prepare for ancestorhood, their new names anchor them to new roles and privileges. These names are not, however, only role markers or classifiers. Ideally, they assign people to categories and at the same time declare their uniqueness. The pattern of naming in Chinese society presents an ever changing image of men. Viewed from this perspective Chinese males are always growing, becoming, accumulating new responsibilities and new rights.

Peasant women, on the other hand, experience few publicly validated life changes, and those that they do undergo link them ever more securely to stereotyped roles. Women's naming leaves little room for individuation or self-expression. Unlike males, whose changes are marked by both ascribed (for example, elderhood) *and* achieved criteria (such as student, scholar, businessman, writer, politician), a woman's changes (from unmarried virgin to married woman, from nonmother to mother, from reproducer to nonreproducer) are not related to achievement outside the home. Instead of acquiring a new name at marriage or the birth of a first child, women's changes are marked by kin terminology or category shifts. At marriage the bride loses her *ming* and becomes known by a series of kin terms. At the birth of a child she may add a teknonym ("Sing's mother"), and as she approaches and enters old age more and more people will address her simply as "old woman" (*ah po*).

The most dramatic changes that women make are the shift from named to unnamed at marriage and the gradual shift from kin term to category term as their children mature and marry.[11] It would appear that as a woman's reproductive capacity declines, she becomes less grounded in the relational system. She becomes, quite simply, an "old woman" much like any other old woman. Of course, family members continue to use kin terms for these elderly women, especially in reference and address, but gradually their anonymity increases. Unlike men, women do not become elders. There is no ceremony marking their entry into respected old age. They move from reproductively active mother to sexually inactive grandmother with no fanfare and with little public recognition of their changed status.

Even in death a woman has no personal name. On the red flag that leads the spirit of the deceased from the village to the grave is written the woman's father's surname (for example, *Lin shih*, translated "Family of Lin"); no personal name is added. For men, the deceased's surname plus his courtesy and/or posthumous name is written on the soul flag. Neither do women's personal names appear on the tombstone where, here again, only the surname of the woman's father is given ("Family of Lin"). In Ha Tsuen women do not have separate ancestral tablets; if they are commemorated at all, they appear as minor appendages on their husbands' tablets. And, once more, they are listed only under the surnames of their fathers. In subsequent generations whatever individuating characteristics a woman might have had are lost—not even a name survives as testimony of her existence as a person.

CONCLUSIONS

If one were to categorize Ha Tsuen villagers on a social continuum according to the number and quality of their names, married peasant women would stand at the extreme negative pole.[12] To my knowledge they share this dubious distinction with no other group. In the past even male slaves (*hsi min*) and household servants had nicknames (see J. Watson 1976:365). They may not have had *ming* or surnames as such but they did possess names

that distinguished them from others. It is important to note that it is not only the possession of multiple names that matters but also the fact that, at one end of the continuum, people have no control over their own names while, at the other end, they name themselves and others.

At marriage women find themselves enmeshed in the world of family and kinship. It is a world, as noted in the introduction, that they belong to but do not control. In Ha Tsuen brides arrive as outsiders but quickly, one might even say brutally, they become firmly entrenched in their new environment. Village women can only be identified within the constellation of male names or within the limits of kinship terminology. Unlike their husbands and brothers, women—having no public identity outside the relational system—are defined by and through others.

In Ha Tsuen women are excluded from participation in most of the formal aspects of lineage or community life and they are not involved in decision making outside the home. Ha Tsuen women do not inherit productive resources; they are also restricted in the uses to which they can put their dowries (R. Watson 1984). Furthermore, women in Ha Tsuen cannot become household heads and, even today, they do not vote in local elections. They do not worship in ancestral halls nor do they join the cult of lineage ancestors after death. Although individual peasant women may attain considerable power within their households, they are said to have gained this power by manipulation and stealth. Women by definition cannot hold positions of authority.

In a discussion of male and female naming among the Omaha Sioux, Robert Barnes writes: "The names of Omaha males provide men with distinctive individuality, while also linking each unmistakably to a recognized collectivity. The possibility of acquiring multiple names in adulthood enhances individual prominence for men" (1982:220). Barnes goes on to say that women's names "barely rescue them from a general anonymity, neither conferring uniqueness nor indicating group membership" (1982:22). As among the Sioux, personal naming among Chinese men is a sign of both individual distinctiveness and group membership, while naming practices among village women simply confirm their marginality.

In Ha Tsuen the practice of personal naming reflects and facilitates the passage from one social level to another. Names establish people in social groups and give them certain rights within those groups. With each additional name, a man acquires new attributes. Maybury-Lewis has argued that among many Central Brazilian societies names give humans their "social persona and link [them] to other people" (1984:5; see also Bamberger 1974). Names, Maybury-Lewis writes, "transform individuals into persons" (1984:7). Naming may not be as central to Chinese social organization and ideology as it is among the societies of Central Brazil, yet there is no doubt that, for Chinese men, names have a transformative power that binds them as individuals to society.

In Ha Tsuen the ultimate goal of all males is to produce an heir, to have a grandson at one's funeral, to leave property that guarantees the performance of one's ancestral rites. The possession of many names testifies to the fact that a man has completed the cycle of life. Full personhood is not acquired at birth, at marriage, or even at the death of one's father. It is a process that continues throughout life and is punctuated by the taking and bestowing of names. One might argue that it is a process that extends even beyond death as the named ancestor interacts with the living. If, as Grace Harris suggests, personhood involves a process of social growth "in the course of which changes [are] wrought by ceremony and ritual" (1978:49), then Chinese women never approximate the full cycle of development that their menfolk experience.[13] In stark contrast to men, women become less distinct as they age. The changes they undergo remain largely unrecognized and unnoticed.

In Chinese society, as in other societies, there is a tension between the notion of the unique individual (the individual as value) and the notion of the person tied to society.[14] In some sense the great philosophical systems of Taoism and Confucianism represent these two poles. Among men, naming involves a dual process through which they achieve personhood by being bound to society, while at the same time they acquire an enhanced sense of individuality and distinctiveness. The peasant women described in this paper seem to have been largely excluded from the individuating, individualizing world of personal naming. The situation with regard to personhood is, however, another matter. It would be wrong to say that peasant wives are nonpersons; rather, they are not persons in the same sense or to the same degree as are husbands and sons. Viewed from the perspective of names, peasant women are neither fully individuated nor "personed." In life as in death they remain suspended between the anonymous world of anybodies and the more sharply defined world of somebodies.

NOTES

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Cantonese terms are in Yale romanization and Mandarin terms follow the Wade-Giles system.

This paper is dedicated to the memory of my friend and fellow anthropologist Judith Strauch (1942–85).

1. There are bound to be regional, temporal, urban-rural, and class differences in Chinese naming practices. A general discussion of Chinese naming awaits further research.
2. In Taiwan the *ming* is the legal name (it appears in the official household register) and is sometimes called the *cheng ming* (correct name) (Sung 1981:70). In Hong Kong this name may or may not be the name used on legal documents.
3. I am grateful to Professor Jack Dull for pointing out to me the significance and frequency of the personal name Nai among Chinese women.
4. In a similar vein a fifth or sixth child might be named "To End" or "To Finish." One can find such names in the Hong Kong and Taipei telephone directories (see also Sung 1981:81).
5. In China there are no given names like John that are shared by millions of people; on this point see Sung 1981:85.
6. In a discussion of the cosmic relationship between mother and child Marjorie Topley writes of her Cantonese informants:

   The constitutional imbalance of a child with a queer fate may also involve other parties. First, the child may be polarized in the same direction as someone with whom it has a continuous relationship. Then both parties may suffer from continual illness. This may be corrected by adding an element to the child's name so it is compatible with that of the other party [1974:240].
7. This is changing now that girls go to school and their births are registered.
8. In the past when village boys started school at age five or six (girls did not attend school until the 1960s), the schoolmaster gave each student a school or "study name" (*hsueh-ming*). School names are no longer very important in the New Territories.
9. In the past officials' *ming* could not be used except by intimates (see Eberhard 1970 and Sung 1981).
10. After having gained some insight into the micropolitics of my neighbor's household, the name seemed well chosen.
11. Once a son marries reproduction becomes a matter for the younger generation, and in Ha Tsuen it was considered shameful for the mother of a married son to become pregnant.
12. It should be noted here that men do not constitute a uniform category in this regard. Highly literate men make up one extreme but

many poorly educated or uneducated men fall somewhere between the two extremes. Like the names of their sisters, their names may be inelegant and rarely seen in written form, but unlike adult women, they do retain their names after marriage.
13. On this point see also LaFontaine 1985:131.
14. For discussions of the concept of the individual as value and the self in Chinese society see for example de Bary 1970; Shiga 1978:122; and more recently Elvin 1985; Munro 1985 (especially essays by Hansen, Yu, Munro, and de Bary).

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Menstruation and the Power of Yurok Women

Thomas Buckley

In 1976 Lowell Bean and Thomas Blackburn encouraged the ongoing renewal of anthropological interest in native California through publication of a collection of relatively recent theoretical essays. In their introduction to the volume the editors stress the possibilities inherent in the truly vast accumulation of data on aboriginal Californian peoples to be found in the descriptive ethnographies of earlier investigators, and especially in the "undigested" original field notes of these ethnographers. Bean and Blackburn (1976:5–10) emphasize the necessity for approaching such materials from new theoretical perspectives so as to realize their potentials. Several recent papers on Californian cultures stress such possibilities as well, suggesting that the real value in exploring these cultures lies in opportunities for developing hypotheses of significance to general theory regarding hunter-gatherers far beyond the confines of native California. Data on the area are increasingly recognized as being uniquely fruitful in just this regard (e.g., Gould 1975; Blackburn 1976).

That significant new work on native California continues to appear belies the Kroeberian notion that the ethnographic records of California's aboriginal peoples have been completed as far as possible and, moreover, that they have been exhausted analytically. Clearly more skeptical scholars have been mistaken in the conservatism of their questioning "whether late-coming ethnologists, working with . . . apparently imperfect old data and such new data as can be elicited from younger informants . . . can actually develop a viable new analytic system . . . at this late date" (Elsasser 1976:96). Specifically, I question the dim view taken in some quarters of the value of contemporary Indian consultants' testimony regarding their traditional cultures. Surviving Californian cultures have proved unexpectedly resilient. It is indeed, as Bean and Blackburn (1976:8–9) point out, the possibility of doing sound new

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fieldwork in native California that in part accounts for the extreme usefulness today of older unpublished field materials.

Following these anthropologists, I suggest that contemporary research in and analyses of California cultures may best be undertaken in a threefold manner. New fieldwork among knowledgeable consultants should be seen in relation to earlier accounts, especially those available in various archives. Each sheds light on the other. Contemporary testimony often reveals the importance of data that were neglected in published work, and these earlier data may provide unplumbed information that could be highly useful in interpreting the nature of both cultural change and persistence in a given surviving culture. A theoretical component is needed, however, to take full advantage of the existence of these two strata of field materials, and this third component must overcome the limitations in vision implicit in prior neglect of significant portions of the earlier data. Particularly in the Californian case, such limitations seem to indicate a certain blindness to broadly suggestive, complex orders of systematic organization, variation, and interrelation in native cultures, and it is with these that I am most concerned here.

"MOONTIME"

The Yurok Indians today live largely within or near their aboriginal homelands in coastal and riverine northwestern California, close by the Klamath River and the present California-Oregon border. Their culture, though greatly changed since the time of first massive contact with European-Americans during the gold rush, retains a certain, albeit transformed, uniqueness.

One evening in 1978 I went with an Indian friend to his house to eat. He would be doing the cooking, he explained on the way, because his Yurok wife was "on her moontime" (menstruating)[1] and they were keeping the old ways as best they could. This meant that his wife went into seclusion for ten days during and after her flow, cooking and eating her own food by herself.

According to traditional "Indian law" (here, rules for conduct), a menstruating woman is highly polluting and will contaminate the family house and food supply if she comes into contact with either. Thus in the old days, a special shelter for menstrual seclusion was built near the main house, and special food for a family's menstruating women was separately collected, stored, and prepared for consumption in this shelter. In my friend's modern house a back room had been set aside for his wife's monthly use. Separate food storage as well as cooking and eating utensils were furnished in the kitchen.

I hadn't expected to find the old, seemingly anachronistic menstrual practices being approximated in this environment. Aside from the exclusion of women from ceremonial activities during their menses, and the fact that some men refrain from deer hunting while their wives and daughters are menstruating, I had not found adherence to the old menstrual rules to be widespread among contemporary Yurok—certainly not to the extent that they were being followed in this house. Even here, however, these rules were not kept to the letter. The young woman appeared when we arrived and joined the conversation, explaining to me that she often got restless in her back room and so wandered around the house talking with her husband when he was home, although they neither ate nor slept together during her "moontime." She then went on to talk about what she was doing and why and how she felt about it.

She said that she had been instructed in the menstrual laws by her maternal aunts and grandmother, who in their times were well-known, conservative Yurok women. Her understanding of menstruation came largely from these sources. She began her account of this understanding by telling me that as a foster child in non-Indian homes she had been taught that menstruation is "bad and shameful" and that through it "women are being punished." On her return to Yurok society, however, "my aunts and my grandmother taught me different."[2] The difference was that these women stressed the positive aspects of menstruation and of Yurok menstrual rules. Briefly, here is what the young woman said.

A menstruating woman should isolate herself because this is the time when she is at the height of her powers. Thus the time should not be wasted in mundane tasks and social distractions, nor should one's concentration be broken by concerns with the opposite sex. Rather, all of one's energies should be applied in concentrated meditation "to find out the purpose of your life," and toward the "accumulation" of spiritual energy. The menstrual shelter, or room, is "like the men's sweathouse," a place where you "go into yourself and make yourself stronger." As in traditional male sweathouse practice, or "training" (*hohkep-*), there are physical as well as mental aspects of "accumulation." The blood that flows serves to "purify" the woman, preparing her for spiritual accomplishment. Again, a woman must use a scratching implement, instead of scratching absentmindedly with her fingers, as an aid in focusing her full attention on her body by making even the most natural and spontaneous of actions fully conscious and intentional: "You should feel all of your body exactly as it is, and pay attention."

The woman continued: There is, in the mountains above the old Yurok village of Meri·p, a "sacred moontime pond" where in the old days menstruating women went to bathe and to perform rituals that brought spiritual benefits. Practitioners brought special firewood back from this place for use in the menstrual shelter. Many girls performed these rites only at the time of their first menstruation, but aristocratic women went to the pond every month until menopause. Through such practice women came to "see that the earth has her own moontime," a recognition that made one both "stronger" and "proud" of one's menstrual cycle.

Finally, the young woman said that in old-time village life all of a household's fertile women who were not pregnant menstruated at the same time, a time dictated by the moon; that these women practiced the bathing rituals together at this time; and that men associated with the household used this time to "train hard" in the household's sweathouse. If a woman got out of synchronization with the moon and with the other women of the household, she could "get back in by sitting in the moonlight and talking to the moon, asking it to balance [her]."

THE CLASSIC APPROACH

My immediate reaction to all of this was somewhat as follows. The woman and her husband, who were both deeply involved in the contemporary renascence of Indian culture and identity and were committed to living in an "Indian way," as they understood it, had revived aspects of traditional menstrual practice as a means of expressing their commitment to "Indianness." Because the old Yurok menstrual rules had reflected the male-dominant gender asymmetry that ordered the underlying symbolic code—an asymmetry specifically challenged by modern notions of women's rights—these old rules had been rationalized and reinterpreted. Through this process they had come to be newly understood from a perspective that allowed resolution of conflicting desires for both a strong link to the Indian past and for political modernity.

I reacted this way because having studied the received ethnographies of traditional Yurok and neighboring cultures carefully, I found the young woman's testimony incredible. According to a composite picture drawn from published data bearing on the topic of menstruation in Yurok, Karok, Hupa, and Tolowa ethnographies, menstruation and everything associated with it was simply negative—in Yurok, *kimoleni* (dirty, polluting). Menstrual blood itself was thought by Yurok to be a dire poison, and menstruating women were believed to contaminate whatever they came into contact with—houses, food, hunting gear, weapons, canoes, water, trails, and, above all, the men's wealth objects central to these acquisitive societies and emblematic of

spiritual ascendancy (Bushnell and Bushnell 1977). Menstruating women, beyond contaminating concrete objects, were perhaps most dangerous through their negative effect on men's psychic or spiritual life. These women spoiled men's "luck" (*heyomoks-*)—their ability to exercise power in, among other things, the accumulation of wealth. A menstruating woman who seduced an unwary man was therefore cišah ([worse than] a dog), the lowest form of mammalian life. Strong antipathy between menstruous women and the world of spirits seems suggested by the use of menstruating virgins to drive off the spirits (*wo·gey*) that attempted to steal the "souls" (*hewec-*) of infants.

Thus menstruating women were isolated in special shelters, ate carefully segregated foods, and used scratching bones, being so highly charged with negative energy that they could not touch even themselves for fear of poisoning. In Yurok society, far from being permitted to travel into the very "pure" (*mɹw.ɬks.ɹy.ɬh*) mountains to bathe, these women bathed daily and seemingly compulsively in the Klamath River, waters already thought to be polluted by corpses, dogs, aborted fetuses, and menstrual blood—"things" (*so·k*). Finally, regarding discrepancies between the modern Yurok woman's testimony on the positive nature of menstruation and the received ethnographies, the latter nowhere explicitly suggest that either the moon or synchrony was a consideration in aboriginal menstrual practices.[3]

Reports of entirely negative coding of menstruation itself (as distinct from female puberty) are, of course, staples of the ethnographic accounts of a great many cultures, to the extent that they seem collectively to suggest an ethnological truism: Menstruation is, for a great many peoples, virtually the definitive form of pollution. Currently this apparent truism is being widely used as the basis for a strong element in more general, politically motivated critiques of male-dominant gender asymmetry in certain cultures (e.g., Delaney, Lupton, and Toth 1976). Supported by further neglected Yurok data to which I now turn, however, I suggest that we be circumspect in evaluating received ethnographies, realizing the double male biases that are implicit in a great many of them (i.e., in the descriptions of male anthropologists based on the testimony of primarily male consultants). Moreover I suggest that we be open to far more complex kinds of symbolic, or conceptual, structuring than are accommodated in what may be simplistic and overly universalistic views of menstruation qua pollution. We should bear in mind the ambivalent nature of pollution itself in many cultural systems, where, far from being a *simply* negative concept, pollution is understood to comprise an ambiguous manifestation of a neutral (hence potentially positive) energy (Douglas 1966; compare Bean 1977). Finally, we should continue to consider seriously Edwin Ardener's (1972:1–3) proposition that the world of women in culture is not characteristically defined by the same "neat, bounded categories given by the male informant" (King 1983:109).

KROEBER'S FIELD NOTES

A few weeks after the conversation sketched earlier I went to Berkeley, where I spent several days going through the A. L. Kroeber Papers, now in the Manuscript Division of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (call number 71/83c). I was particularly interested in Kroeber's Yurok field notes (cartons 6 and 7). I discovered, in the course of my readings, a set of notes and textual transcriptions detailing interviews with a Yurok woman at the village of Wecpus in 1902 (carton 7). Kroeber never utilized either the texts or most of the descriptions collected from this woman, identified only as "Weitchpec Susie," in his various publications (but see Kroeber 1925:45).

These notes and transcriptions concern menstruation and childbirth and, along with some expository comments by Susie on these topics, include a long formula used by women in ritual bathing during menstruation, a myth relating the origins of both menstruation and these rituals, and other esoterica—fragments of prayers and myths concerning various as-

pects of childbirth. To my surprise, these materials to an extent confirmed the traditional authenticity of the young woman's modern understanding of menstruation as a powerful, positive phenomenon with esoteric significance. Additionally, Kroeber's notes provide a good deal of fresh insight into the structure of menstrual symbolism when viewed from a feminine perspective.

According to the myth recited in English by Susie, menstruation originated in a capricious joke, initiated by Coyote (*segep*).[4] Coyote said, "I think be best way if woman have flowers. When she have flowers she will see blood." The hero Pulekukʷerek aided and abetted Coyote, cutting his ankle and putting the blood on a girl's thigh. Coyote said, "You got flowers now." Girl: "No!" Coyote: "Yes, I see blood on your legs." Coyote and Pulekukʷerek then instituted both the girls' puberty ritual and the regimen to be followed during subsequent menses. The duration of monthly continence and ritual observance (ten days), proper costume (a bark skirt, grass arm and leg bands), specially treated foods of a limited kind (acorns gathered and stored for the purpose, similarly secured dried fish, no red meats or fresh fish), isolation in a special shelter, a program of bathing and of firewood gathering, and use of the long prayer to bring wealth are all specified (notes for 8 June 1902, pp. 1–8).

After Coyote has outlined the basic menstrual procedures he falters, not knowing how to continue. A spirit-woman speaks to him from the sky:

> Need not be afraid of that [menstruation]. We [spirits] are around here in sky, all we women thus, flowers, and we never afraid on it, because we have medicine for it. Now you look way over other side (upriver). Now I always wash way over there myself. . . . Now you can look, look at that lake right in the middle of the sky, you can see how many trails come on that lake. . . . Those trails are dentalia's trails some of them, some woodpecker head's, some white deerskin's, everything, that's where I always wash myself, because that money that's his water, his lake. Now you can look where I stand. You can see blood all around where I stand now, because I'm that way now. I'm flowers. I can go out on that lake, and wash, and they'll make me good luck just the same. . . . You tell that girl to do that. . . . Whenever goes to wash in water anyplace, tell her just that way. . . . Tell her I wash in sky, using that water. So he'll be good luck; if talk that way, will be just same as if wash that lake on sky. (Notes 8 June 1902, pp. 4–5)

The menstrual formula (described later) comprises these instructions given by the menstruating spirit woman to Coyote and Pulekukʷerek.[5]

Pulekukʷerek, it should be noted, was the most ascetic and spiritual of the "Beforetime People." His total abstinence from sexual intercourse suggests asexuality, rather than the pronounced maleness of the two Yurok tricksters Coyote and Wohpekumew (a trickster-hero). It was Pulekukʷerek, however, who epitomized human virtues for Yurok men, for it was he who, along with being a formidable warrior, instituted the men's sweathouse and the wealth quest austerities to be followed by men. A comparison between his and Coyote's instructions for menstruating women and Pulekukʷerek's for male wealth questing is illuminating.

Ten days was the standard period for men's "training" related to all important undertakings—most significantly, here, to wealth questing and to "luck" seeking in alpine lakes. During this period men secluded themselves in the sweathouse, maintained strict continence, avoided all contacts with fecund women, and ate only specially gathered, stored, and prepared foods (the same staples as utilized in menstrual provender). These men bathed twice daily. A primary feature of such sweathouse training was the gathering of firewood for use in the sweathouse. Grass anklets were worn by these men for protection against snakebite and as an esoteric aid in traveling into the mountains to gather wood and to practice various rituals. Men in training for wealth acquisition gashed their legs with flakes of white quartz, the flowing blood being thought to carry off psychic impurity, preparing one for spiritual attainment: The common ten-day men's training periods alternated with periods of greater relaxation

and less austerity, in which the "balance" of a "complete" life was restored—the aim of well-trained Yurok men being to keep "in the middle" (*wogi*). (It is relevant to note that in the sweathouse-focal training of both male and female "doctors" [*kegey*]—held to bring wealth as well as curing powers—a skirt of shredded maple bark was worn.)

The recitation of formulas was a central feature of all Yurok training, and such recitations, correctly executed, were believed to bring wealth. It has long been thought that the wealth quest and hence use of such formulas were, with the exception of female *kegey*, strictly male prerogatives. However, the menstrual formula collected from Susie not only substantiates the comparisons between male and female training suggested by the Coyote myth but calls this ethnographic assumption into question.

The formula speaks of a small lake, "up in the middle of the sky" (*wonoyeʔik*), where menstruating women may see a great many *Dentalia Indianorum* (dentalium shells were prized Yurok wealth objects). Women are instructed in the formula to dive to the lake's bottom to pick up a small stone and then to return with it to their homes. As a result of these actions (and of properly reciting the formula itself), women may expect to grow wealthy in later life, their menstrual practices attracting dentalium to their houses. Translating from the Yurok text recited for Kroeber by Susie:

> You will be rich if you wash. You go in, you will be rich. Human being, money will come into your house. You go in—you'll be rich. You better go. Go up in the sky. Look! Look! Wash in the lake—just once. Sink down completely. Don't submerge yourself twice. A pile of dentalium is here.
>
> You will go in, go in the water. Only one time. You will lie with your head downstream. Take a stone. You will take it into your house so you will be rich. (Notes 8 June 1902, items 4065–4066; my translation)

The middle of the sky in Yurok cosmography is the most pure, least polluted place in the universe, the source of the most valuable and powerful of things, including many wealth objects. It may be reached, in trance, only by those who are themselves completely pure. It seems to have been a consciously metaphorical location for, as trained people well knew, they physically ascended only into the hills and mountains rising above the coastal and riverine villages.[6] In the most powerful kinds of training, the terrain of the Blue Creek drainage, above Meri·p, was utilized. Such ascents were, however, closely restricted to those who, through ritual austerities, were free of polluting influence.

Men making such ascents while seeking the power of wealth acquisition visualized dentalia and the trails of slime left by them, reciting formulas to attract the shells into their later possession. Diving in alpine lakes is a recurrent motif in accounts of male esoteric practice, as is the retrieval of wealth-attracting stone talismans from various watery places.

There are, then, direct parallels in conception, ritualization, and goal orientation between male training and female menstrual practice. However, and most important, whereas Yurok men feared menstrual pollution as, above all, driving away wealth (that is, spiritual attainment), Yurok women who used the formula understood that it was precisely during their menses that they could most easily attract wealth (i.e., attain spiritual ascendancy).

Finally, we find that whereas men considered menstruating women who seduced men to be *cišah* ([worse than] dogs), the same term was applied by women to men who forced their attentions on them during their own ten-day menstrual training periods (according to the Kroeber papers). Clearly, then, there are two gender-specific views, of which only one—that of the male—has become known through published ethnographies.[7]

The contemporary Yurok woman's notion of "accumulation" now rings true in retrospect. The primary activity of men engaged in wealth questing (that is, in a quest for spiritual advancement), while they were actually in and around the sweathouse, was "meditating" (*kocpoks*) directed toward personal centering

and empowerment. It was in such meditation, according to the most knowledgeable of elderly male consultants, that one actually "made medicine" and grew "stronger," rather than in the rituals for which such "thinking" prepared one and which accompanied the meditative "accumulation" of identity, insight, and control. Wealth was believed to accrue only to those who had "done their thinking" precisely and openly (see Buckley 1979).

We find further inferential support of the traditional nature of the young woman's positive view of the power of menstruation in "Weitchpec Susie's" 1902 accounts of childbirth. Susie's English gloss of the Yurok formula for easing labor contains the passage, "*wesʔonah* . . . said, 'You call my name whenever hard to come baby, then you call me to help you,' he said to Indians. 'Is my *ʔeʔgurʔ* [medicine basket].' Whenever you call that to open you will hear baby crying coming." Kroeber notes that "the woman's vagina is Sky's [*wesʔonah's*] *ʔeʔgur*" (notes for 8 June 1902, p. 16). Two pieces of information are necessary to put the childbirth formula into perspective. First, the Yurok (ʔ)*wesʔonah* is polysemous, meaning "sky"; "that which exists" (the phenomenal world); and "cosmos," the universe as noumenon, a metaphysical first principle—today, in English, "creation" and/or "the Creator." Second, both traditional elkhorn dentalium purses and the medicine baskets (*ʔeʔgurʔ*) used by men in the Jump Dance, which contain various power tokens, have labialike openings.

We may interpret this material in light of both the menstrual myth and formula and general tendencies in the Yurok worldview. The medicines of (ʔ)*wesʔonah*, from the "feminine" perspective, are babies, the by-products of birth, and menstrual blood—all of which are highly polluting from the "masculine" perspective. From an (aristocratic "feminine" point of view, however, these things, while polluting in certain contexts, are *also* pure: pure enough, that is, to be to the "cosmos" what wealth and other tokens of spiritual ascendancy are to human beings. Like wealth objects, from this perspective they are themselves *m.ruuhksəy.h* (pure).[8] Such multiple coding is common in Yurok philosophy, which repeatedly stresses complementary perspectives in which things held to be *kimoleni* (dirty) from one perspective are revealed to be *m.ruuhksəy.h* from another (Buckley 1980). We find, then, that the young contemporary woman's account is quite reliable as an expression of a far older traditional Yurok women's perspective. Its reliability is founded, no doubt, in her memory of the instruction she received through her female relatives, who, it would seem, emphasized what I have characterized as an aristocratic feminine perspective over the more negative male one recorded in received ethnographies. This being so in the general case, we are obliged to pay close attention to her testimony regarding synchrony and lunar influence. Although to this point investigation has rested on solid data and clearly relevant comparison, here we can only speculate, for there are few earlier ethnographic data on these topics. There are, however, recent biological research results that appear to be pertinent.

The work of Martha McClintock (1971, 1981) has established the phenomena of human intragroup menstrual synchrony and suppression. The menstrual cycles of frequently interacting women—in college dormitories, for instance—tend to become synchronized over time, the greatest increase in synchrony among individuals occurring within four months. Such synchronization of groups within all-female populations is related to the extent and frequency of contacts between individual women, groups of close friends comprising the most evident synchronous groups (McClintock 1971). In more recent experiments (Quadagno, Shubeita, Deck, and Francouer 1979; Graham and McGrew 1980), McClintock's results have been replicated and extended to populations including both males and females.

The aboriginal Yurok residential group was an extremely flexible unit. An ideal type may be suggested through the term "household." I use this term to refer to the narrowly extended unit of population defined through consanguinity, affinity, adoption, and—above all—common residence. Such a house-

hold comprised three or four generations of patrilineally related males and their wives and unmarried daughters, those married daughters with in-marrying husbands and their children, and, in many cases, adoptive kin, both male and female. This unit was centered at a named, patrilineally inherited "family house" (*ʔoʔlel*). The family house was usually the property of the senior male but was strictly the domain of the women who lived and slept there with the children. The lives of most males after puberty were centered in the household's sweathouse (*ʔɪʔgɪc*), where the men spent much of their time, both waking and sleeping.

When a descent group outgrew its family house, a second one was built close by, sharing the name of the first, and its men used the sweathouse belonging to the owner of the original family house. There was approximately one sweathouse for every two family houses in a Yurok village. The people closely associated with these three structures, then, constituted the household. The normative village comprised approximately three such households, the members of each being (putatively) related to those of the others (hence exogamy was generally practiced, intravillage marriage usually being considered incestuous). By my estimate, based on 1852 census figures, each family house sheltered an average of five women and children, of whom, we may hypothesize, at least two were fertile women. Thus a *household's* potentially menstruating women would have numbered four or more (see Kroeber 1925:16–17).

We can only presume that, aboriginally, the related women of Yurok households interacted both frequently and regularly. The findings of McClintock and others are pertinent here, and a myth from the neighboring Karok encourages such comparison. The myth, relating the origins of the Pleiades, tells of several sisters who shared a house and who menstruated at the same time. The *idea* of household menstrual synchrony was indeed present in the area (Harrington 1931:142–145). Indeed, we have a historical account of women menstruating simultaneously at the coastal Yurok village of *ʔespew* in the later nineteenth century. According to Robert Spott, when his "aunt," the doctor Fanny Flounder, was dancing for her power in that village's sweathouse, she was secretly cursed by a menstruating woman. Trying to discover the culprit, "they summoned the menstruating women . . . only one of them would not come" (Spott and Kroeber 1942:62). At the approximate time, there were four family houses at *ʔespew* (Waterman 1920:261).

What of the claim that synchronously menstruating women practiced the requisite rituals together? If this was indeed the case, why, we must ask, were small, individual menstrual shelters built? Why not communal shelters, like the men's sweathouses that the menstrual shelters seem functionally to parallel? It is possible that communal shelters were used. There is very little information on the subject in either ethnographic descriptions or in native texts and none on the actual size of the shelters. Although several early ethnographers mention menstrual "huts" in northwestern California, none of them ever actually saw one, for these shelters had fallen from use before the earliest trained observers arrived. Goddard (1903:17–18), working among the Hupa in 1900, noted that not even traces of the Hupa "huts" remained at the time of his fieldwork. The detailed Yurok village maps drawn by Waterman (1920) in the early part of this century, which show all structures and structural remains in each village, show neither these "menstrual huts" (*mekʷʔr*) nor their remains. All accounts of these shelters found in ethnographic notes and publications are thus both vague and incomplete, as the minimal accounts themselves suggest.

Kroeber (1925:80), for example, tells us only that "a hut was used by Yurok women in their periodic illnesses. This was a small and rude lean-to of a few planks, near the house or against its side." Yet in northwestern California surely such flimsy shelter for valuable, necessary, and beloved women (Gould 1966; Spott and Kroeber 1942) would have been perceptibly maladaptive, even among the apparently male-dominant Yurok and especially so during the months between October and May when a great deal of cold rain

customarily falls. I suggest the the paucity of ethnographic detail regarding menstrual shelters and much else reflects an understandable and pervasive bias (note Kroeber's use of the word "illnesses") and reticence in delving into and publishing material on the entire topic of menstruation, as further suggested by Kroeber's neglect of most of the Susie material in his published work.

In fact, it is quite possible that the aboriginal Yurok used large, dome-shaped communal brush menstrual shelters. Brush menstrual shelters have been reported for the Hupa of 1890 (A. R. Pilling, personal communication, 1981). In 1984 an elderly Yurok woman reported that she knew, at second hand, of three Yurok women who had undergone their first menstrual seclusion simultaneously in a single brush shelter (see later discussion). Finally, an 1850 sketch of the Yurok village of Curey by J. Goldsborough Bruff shows at least one, and possibly two, dome-shaped structures in association with plank houses (Kroeber, Elsasser, and Heizer 1977:257). If the Bruff drawing does depict one or more menstrual shelters, it indeed supports the synchrony hypothesis, for the structures shown are large ones—the clearer of the two being approximately the size of the sweathouse by which it stands. Comparative material from the Northwest Coast and the Plateau supports both the elderly woman's testimony and the drawing as evidence.

The Yurok have long been recognized as being importantly influenced by more "climactic" Northwest Coast cultures (e.g., Drucker 1963[1955]). We may legitimately turn to the farther Northwest Coast seeking comparative suggestions. We find among the Tlingit, for example, substantial brush and plank "birth houses," used for monthly menstrual seclusion as well as for labor and childbirth. These houses were heated by fires, used for sweating, and were large enough to hold four adult women (de Laguna 1972:501–502, 519, 527). The influence of Plateau cultures on those of northwestern California, though not yet systematically established, seems probable. It is of interest, then, that communal birth and menstrual seclusion houses were once common among the Chilcotin, Okanogen, Tenino, and others in the Plateau culture area (Ray 1939).

Regarding the posited use of the moon in restoring menstrual synchrony on the occasions when it had been disrupted, we note recent biological research and findings. The timing of ovulation in certain nonhuman mammalian females and in female humans can be manipulated by exposure to light relatively stronger than that to which subjects are accustomed at a given time of day or night (Hoffman, Hester, and Towns 1965; Reinberg, Halberg, Ghata, and Siffre 1966; Matsumoto, Igarashi, and Nagaoka 1968; Dewan 1967, 1969; Presser 1974). There is evidence that light of the intensity of the full moon can affect the timing of ovulation and hence of menstruation in human females (Menaker and Menaker 1959; Hauenschild 1960; Cloudsley 1961:85–93).

More recently Dewan, Menkin, and Rock (1978) have demonstrated that the onset of menstruation itself may be directly affected by the exposure of ovulating women to light during sleep. The menstruation of ovulating women exposed to the light of a 100-watt bulb during the fourteenth through sixteenth or seventeenth nights of their cycles (counting the onset of menstruation as day 1) became regularized, with a significant number of the forty-one experimental subjects' cycles being regularized at twenty-nine days, the normative menstrual cycle (Dewan et al. 1978:582–583). The three to four nights of exposure was predicated on the natural duration of full moonlight during the lunar month (the mean synodic lunar month is 29.53 days). However, the researchers held it "probable" that one night's exposure would suffice to regularize the onset of menstruation (1978:582).

Light thus affects the onset of menstruation directly and, through affecting the onset of ovulation, indirectly as well. My young Yurok consultant did not specify in what phase of the moon women "talked" to it, "asking it to balance them." It is probable, however, that only the full moon provides enough photic stimulation (probably to the pineal

gland) to affect either ovulation or, directly, the onset of menstruation twelve to fourteen days later. Such onset is at the time of the new moon, which, according to the biological model (Cloudsley 1961:85–93; Dewan et al. 1978:581), comprises the naturally occurring lunar phase for the onset of menstruation. Elderly Yurok men have told me that intensive male training was always undertaken "during the dark of the moon." It seems probable, then, that women indeed "talked" to the full moon and that both synchronized menstruation and male training occurred during the period bracketed by the new moon. Yurok men's training for positive medicines ("luck") emphasizes light in its symbolism. Thus the intensification of training, much of it undertaken at night, during the new moon seems inconsistent—but, indeed, it makes good sense in the full biological context of village life.[9]

The Yurok word for "moon" is *wonesleg*, from *wonews* (overhead) and *leg(ay-)* (to pass regularly). There is evidence for precontact use of sweathouses as calendrical observatories in northwestern California (Goldschmidt 1940). In 1907 Kroeber gathered data on the construction and use of Yurok sweathouses for observation of both solar and lunar yearly cycles (in Elmendorf 1960:26). Such material evidence substantiates contemporary Yurok testimony on the accuracy of traditional timekeeping and the closeness of lunar prediction, and adds support to the young woman's assertion that Yurok women once utilized the moon's light in temporal regulation of biological cycles. I am suggesting, that is, a parallelism between male (sweathouse) and female uses of the moon consistent with cross-gender conceptual and ritual parallelisms discussed earlier.[10]

One important object of male lunar observation was that of correctly scheduling the great interareal ritual and ceremonial events that were once held in accordance with one-, two-, and three-year cycles in more than a dozen northwestern Californian centers. These events, customarily—if erroneously—lumped together as "world renewal dances," included esoteric components enacted by priests and their helpers, as well as public dances attended by very large audiences (Kroeber and Gifford 1949). Each had to be completed, in all aspects, within a single lunation and it had to end in the dark of the moon (p. 130; Kroeber, in Elmendorf 1960:28). The public dances themselves usually lasted approximately ten days, following the esoteric preparations. Menstruating women were prohibited from attending these dances. Whatever other symbolism was involved, the timing of these events makes particular sense in light of the biological model for menstruation at the new moon. According to this model, the two weeks before the new moon would have been the optimum time for the public dances: the time when the most women were free of menstrual restrictions and could attend.

The possible significance of menstrual synchrony in precontact Yurok culture, however, is far broader than this emphasis on ceremonialism suggests. *If* Yurok women once shared menstrual periods in synchrony and were able to control this synchrony to some degree, it would have meant that for ten days out of every twenty-nine all of the fertile women who were not pregnant were removed, as a group, from their households' mundane activities and plunged into collective contemplative and ritual exercises aimed at the acquisition of wealth objects and other spiritual boons. Logically, this would have been the ideal time for all of the younger men in the sweathouse to undertake their own ten-day periods of intense training, which, as did women's menstrual practices, emphasized continence and avoidance of contact with fecund members of the opposite sex.

Because they would have contaminated any food that they touched during their menses, all fecund women were removed from the subsistence quest for ten days out of every twenty-nine (pregnant women followed their own extended restrictions). Because the subsistence quest was *dominated* by women, who either provided foods themselves (e.g., acorns, shellfish) or were required actresses in male-focal subsistence activities—necessary for cleaning, butchering, and drying the fish and game that men caught—it is clear that during the ten-day menstrual period a woman's household's subsistence quest would have been somewhat hampered. This is even more clear in light of the fact that men could not hunt (or fight) while their wives were menstruating. If all of the women of a household menstruated in synchrony, these activities would have been very severely curtailed. If this was the case, it would be logical to think that the household's subsistence quest (and feuding) would have been brought virtually to a halt, men as well as women refraining from all but the most casual collecting of food. (Note that demand for fresh fish and game was reduced through the food avoidance rules for both menstruating women and men in training.) Such interruptions would not necessarily have been risky in northwestern California, where food supplies were abundant and dependable (cyclic occurrence of staple fish and acorns being of long duration) and where food (especially acorns and smoked-dried fish) was successfully stored in large quantities (Gould 1966, 1975).

A possibility, then, is that the monthly round transformed the Yurok household, for one-third of every month, into an esoteric training camp in which most (aristocratic) men and women between puberty and middle age devoted themselves to their respective practices aimed at the acquisition of wealth and self-knowledge, supported by both younger and older males and females (with the exception of pregnant women and new mothers, who followed their own equally restrictive regimes for the entire gestation period and for ninety days after giving birth).

This speculation accords well with both the oft-noted spirituality and asceticism of aboriginal Yurok culture and the expression of these tendencies in Yurok social organization. Male Yurok began to undertake wealth-bringing austerities at puberty, as did the women; and like the women, they had largely ceased such activities by late middle age, when, in the native theory, they began to enjoy the fruits of their labors. There was, then, a well-defined group in every household capable of managing ongoing affairs

and supporting the monthly practices of the men and women between puberty and middle age. For example, the special foods of men in training were prepared by postmenopausal women and prepubescent girls, who also attended women secluded during their menses.

If we are anywhere near the mark in these speculations, it is clear that the menstrual power of Yurok women did not manifest itself only on a gender-specific, esoteric level of knowledge and practice—one that paralleled identical features of opposite-gender life—but that it had profound, pragmatic implications as well in dictating the temporal structuring of activities for entire households on a monthly basis.

CONCLUSION

I have shown that for some precontact Yurok women at least, menstruation was not viewed solely as a virulent form of contamination but was understood as spiritual potency potentially, if ambiguously, providing a route to knowledge and wealth. It is quite likely that in agreement with many contemporary native northwestern Californians other than my principal informant, and with a traditional male-dominated understanding, some aboriginal Yurok women did view their periods as times, simply, of negative pollution. It is also likely that still others were deeply ambivalent. However, some—most likely aristocratic—women held a seemingly gender-specific, at least partially positive view of menstruation, encoding it within a gender-specific mythic and ritual context.

I suggest, moreover, that the women of aboriginal Yurok households menstruated in synchrony, utilizing the light of the moon to regularize their menstrual cycles, and that the menstruating women of (aristocratic) households used their shared periods of menstrual seclusion for the practice of spiritual disciplines. Moreover I propose that both the subsistence quests and fighting patterns of all of the active men of these households, as well as their own programs of esoteric training, were keyed to the synchronous menstrual cycles of

the household's women. To an extent these propositions have been justified by recent Yurok testimony, unavailable to me when I first published on these topics (Buckley 1982).

During 1984 Arnold R. Pilling, my senior colleague in Yurok studies, spent part of the summer working with the late Lowana Brantner, a Yurok woman of Meta, then in her mid-seventies. Pilling recorded on tape over twenty-two hours of data concerning Mrs. Brantner's life and Yurok traditional patterns. In the process of that interviewing he collected such data as Mrs. Brantner knew of other females' first menstruation rites and many comments on her own lengthy first menstrual seclusion. In regard to the latter, Mrs. Brantner reported that among the women who came to supervise and instruct her during this period was the renowned *kegey* Fanny Flounder (e.g., Spott and Kroeber 1942:158–164).

Mrs. Brantner also noted that she was the only girl from Meta undergoing menstrual seclusion during the year of her training and, in fact, for over a generation before, while Fanny had been the only female of her village secluded the year that Fanny had been trained at the undercut of a waterfall in a canyon along Gold Bluffs. Mrs. Brantner noted, however, that in the case of one woman with whom she had discussed first menstrual seclusion there had been three girls from a single village being secluded in one brush shelter at once. When Pilling expressed surprise that three girls from one village would have their first menstruation at the same time, Mrs. Brantner said that they *should:* since the whole village had their "mating season" at the same time (i.e., late summer–early fall), the "birthing season" fell at the same time for all as well (in May–June [compare Erikson 1943]). Therefore all the girls of a village had their first menstruation at once, according to Mrs. Brantner (Arnold R. Pilling, personal communications 1985, 1986).

Lowana Brantner's recollections add considerable weight to my own consultant's assertions regarding Yurok menstrual synchrony and menstrual practice as a context for spiritual training, which initiated the present inquiry. Still, empirical proof of the hypotheses that have grown out of that original testimony remains lacking. Unfortunately it is too late to test these hypotheses in the Yurok case. Yet as I have suggested, there are certain possibilities that can and should be explored in contemporary face-to-face societies in which strong menstrual restrictions and gender-specific knowledge and practices still exist.

Such research can be combined with a close examination of early information concerning cultures that are today much changed from their aboriginal precursors. Contemporary native testimony and far earlier ethnographic materials may stand in an intricate relationship. By exploring this relationship we may, in some cases, clarify both our received understandings of the past and our (possibly mistaken) interpretations of the present. In such analyses, particularly but not exclusively in the cases of native Californian cultures, it is especially important that we attend to the often entirely neglected raw field data of earlier investigators.

NOTES

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An earlier version of this chapter appeared in *American Ethnologist*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1982):47–60. The present version, in which I have corrected certain errors and have made several additions, should be regarded as the more definitive of the two.

1. The English language euphemism "moontime," used by some Yurok today in reference to menstrual periods, reflects a central symbolic relationship between the moon and menses in contemporary Yurok culture. It is not clear, however, just when "moontime" came into use among English-speaking Yurok, nor are there sufficient data to establish a likely time. In 1902 one of Kroeber's consultants used the English "flowers" in reference to menstruation, and "moontime" does not appear in any of the other early published or archival material on the Yurok. We cannot, then, use the term "moontime" as evidence of a moon/menses relationship in aboriginal Yurok culture. (Both flowers and moon-related menstrual imagery are very widespread, far beyond the confines of both native California and the modern era [Delaney, Lupton, ant Toth 1976; Gottlieb, this volume].)

   The explicit Yurok verb meaning "to menstruate" is *kukucp-*, the prefix *kuku-* indicating both cyclic and erratic oscillation. This verb is not used, however, in any of the Yurok texts collected by Kroeber. Here the common Yurok term for a menstruating woman, *wespurawok*, is euphemistic, alluding to a woman who bathes in the (Klamath) river. Such euphemisms are frequently used in Yurok in avoidance of more explicit terms, use of which under many circumstances is considered to be offensive and even polluting.
2. The woman was perhaps dramatizing her relationship to her far older female relatives. It is quite possible that she did not herself receive the information from them but at second hand, from her mother, for the youngest of the women of whom she spoke died while she herself was a young girl in a foster home. (Such dramatization is frequently encountered among Yurok today, many of whom stress their links with the past by telescoping time and people in accounts of their own nurture.)

   Later I argue that the value of the young woman's testimony is established by its resonance with a far older account, that given in 1902 by Weitchpec Susie, and with the contemporary testimony of another, elderly Yurok woman. Again, the evaluation of contemporary testimony in dialectic with other evidence is a central methodological concern in the present chapter.
3. The classic ethnographic accounts in which the earliest published data on menstrual practices in northwestern California are to be found are S. Powers ([1877] 1976); Goddard (1903); Kroeber (1925); Harrington (1932); and Drucker (1937). Information on male training for wealth acquisition among these peoples, referred to later, is found in the same sources. Additional material on Yurok training appears in Spott and Kroeber (1942); Elmendorf (1960); Kroeber (1976); and Pilling (1978).
4. No reason is given in the Kroeber notes for Coyote's action. A parallel Chilula Indian account, however, states that a girl had rejected the trickster's sexual advances and that he acted out of spite. The Chilula once neighbored the Yurok.
5. Note that in this text the perpetual purity of the spirits—the *wo·gey*—is cast in quite a different light than in the received ethnography (e.g., Erikson 1943): the female *wo·gey* themselves menstruate. even in the "spirit world." The fact is but one of many that needs attention in a careful reconsideration of traditional Yurok world view, male and female.
6. A Yurok woman fully trained as a *kegey* (doctor) told Kroeber about using the angelica roots she gathered in the mountains. The full account was recorded in English in 1907 and is among the Kroeber Papers, carton 7. I include a partial version here.

   > I . . . always throw *woʔlp'eʔy* [angelica] in the fire. I talk this way:
   >
   > "Now this *woʔlp'eʔy*, I got it *wesʔonah hiwoʔnik*, right up in the middle of the sky. . . . "
   >
   > It didn't come from there in fact, but one just talked that way and threw it in the fire, so that all kinds of money would just come right to this house.

   Clearly the "lake in the middle of the sky" comprises such metaphorical usage, this lake being symbolized by any water used to bathe in during menstruation, most commonly the Klamath River and, far less certainly, the "moontime pond' above Meri·p.
7. In all likelihood the actual situation was far more complex. Some women undoubtedly shared what I have characterized here as a

"male" perspective, viewing menstruation as a dire pollutant. Again, one old Yurok-trained "aristocratic" male voiced the kind of perspective I here characterize as female in conversations with me in 1970, long before I had begun the present inquiry. Finally, it is probable that some—perhaps many—women were highly ambivalent and shared *both* "male" and "female" perspectives on menstruation. Susie herself, for instance, told Kroeber that menstruous women polluted trails.

Such diversity was probably resolved to an extent by Yurok quasi-class structure. Esoteric knowledge among Yurok tended to be concentrated in the upper echelons of aboriginal society among what, for lack of a better term, may be called "aristocratic" descent groups (see Buckley 1980). Weitchpec Susie was a member of such a group, as was the old man mentioned earlier, and as is—although less significantly today—the young woman whose testimony initiated the present study.

It is likely, and in keeping with what may be known of the sociology of aboriginal Yurok knowledge, that the positive view of menstruation developed here was class- as well as gender-specific, but also that its occurrence to some extent crossed both class and gender lines. In any case the present analysis must be viewed as pertaining particularly to aboriginal Yurok women of aristocratic descent groups. As Pilling (1978) points out, these groups overwhelmingly have provided ethnographers, informants, and we know far more about them than about the lower strata of traditional Yurok society.

8. Erikson (1943:295) writes that the Yurok "believe [that] babies come from the sky." The Kroeber notes discussed here, however, suggest that the meaning of this "belief" was far more complex, at least for "educated" (*teno·wok*) aristocratic women. Babies come from (ʔ)*wesʔonah* (the cosmos) by way of its "medicine basket" (the uterus).
9. Menstruation at the new moon is in accord both with Cloudsley's and Dewan's biological model and with the folk-physiological models of many nonindustrial peoples. However, these models contrast with Cutler's (1980) findings that statistically correlate menstruation among a sample of contemporary women in Philadelphia and the "light" lunar period (between the first and third lunar quarters). If Cutler's findings are significant (and the variables here are extraordinarily complex), more comprehensive cross-cultural models should perhaps be pursued. Lamp's hypothesis (this volume) that menstruation occurs among Temne women in two groups—a "light" lunar phase group and a "dark" one, in Cutler's terms—may be relevant to this still unresolved matter.
10. Harry K. Roberts, who spent much of his youth in the Spott household at Requa, told me that "old-time" women kept careful track of their monthly cycles using stick calendars in order to plan for travel and ritual. Pregnancy, according to Roberts, was also carefully charted, a stick being set aside each month rather than each day (as is the case with menstrual stick calendars).

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V. Culture and Sexuality

The study of sexuality in anthropology is a relatively recent research emphasis. Classic anthropological monographs have reported exotic sexual practices in the course of ethnographic description (for example, we learn in Malinowski's *The Sexual Life of Savages* [1929] that the Trobriand islanders may bite each others' eyelashes in the heat of passion), but other than occasional esoterica, a naturalistic, biological bias has dominated the study of sexuality. However, as Vance observes (1984:8), "although sexuality, like all human cultural activity, is grounded in the body, the body's structure, physiology, and functioning do not directly or simply determine the configuration or meaning of sexuality." Rather, sexuality is in large part culturally constructed. Just as we may inquire into the culturally variable meanings of male and female and masculinity and femininity, we may examine the ways in which sexuality is invested with meaning in particular societies (Ortner and Whitehead 1981:2).

Sexuality, as a topic of analysis, links the personal and the social, the individual and society. To Americans sex may imply medical facts, Freud, and erotic techniques, but all of these aspects of sexuality are socially shaped and inevitably curbed. Within every culture there are measures for the management of sexuality and gender expression (Ortner and Whitehead 1981:24–25) and sanctions for those who break the rules.

These sanctions may be imposed at the level of the family, the lineage, the community, or the state. Indeed, Foucault (1981) has suggested that a feature of the recent past is the increasing intervention of the state in the domain of sexuality. In this regard Ross and Rapp (1981:71) conclude that it is not accidental that contemporary western culture conceptualizes sex as a thing in itself, isolated from social, political, and economic context: "The separation with industrial capitalism of family life from work, of consumption from production, of leisure from labour, of personal life from political life, has completely reorganized the context in which we experience sexuality. . . . Modern consciousness permits, as earlier systems of thought did not, the positing of 'sex' for perhaps the first time as having an 'independent' existence." However, Caplan (1987:24) warns that while western culture may have a concept of sexuality divorced from repro-