

Washo Peyote Songs

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I

The Washo

THE Washo people of Nevada and California have been described linguistically as a small Hokan-speaking group among the Shoshonean-speaking peoples of the Great Basin (Kroeber 1907; Lowie 1939). They formerly inhabited a relatively abundant territory extending from Honey Lake in the north to Antelope Valley and Sonora Pass in the south, and from the Pinenut Range east of Carson Valley in Nevada to Lake Tahoe and the summit of the Sierra-Nevada Mountains of California in the west. Present population is variously reported at between 400 and 1000 individuals; the figures on file at the Nevada Indian Agency in Stewart, Nevada, support the larger estimates.

The Washo were formerly distributed in small, band-like communities composed of semi-exogamous extended families which made use of the full range of their diversified setting in hunting and gathering, and were thus a highly mobile population. In recent times, however, there has been an increasing tendency to cluster in small colonies in or near the older white settlements of Nevada and California, and on the few remaining allotment acres provided by the government many years ago. The major source of money-income for families is provided by those members who are employed as laborers on road-construction gangs, ranches, and farms. A few women work as servants in the towns and resorts. There is little use of the land for agricultural purposes, while hunting, fishing, and gathering still provide an important part of subsistence. Despite the often drastic conditions of acculturation during the past one hundred years, the Washo have maintained considerable homogeneity as an ethnic and cultural minority.

The Peyotists

Peyotism among the Washo is scarcely more than twenty years old, having been introduced by one Ben Lancaster, a member of the tribe who had learned the ritual and ideology during a long sojourn among eastern and southern tribes. In 1936 he started the proselyting which resulted in the creation of an enthusiastic group of Washo and Paiute adherents during the period 1936-39. By 1940, however, the movement had already become defunct, and meetings were no longer held in Washo territory. Ben Lancaster continued to preside over the embittered and secretive remnants of the cult, which consisted of a handful of loyal Paiute and a very few Washo members. He also erected an

octagonal "church" near Coleville, California, and was known as "the Peyote preacher."

The decline of the movement may be attributed to at least three factors: the aggressiveness and opportunism of Ben Lancaster's leadership, which eventually antagonized the majority of non-Peyotist Washo and encouraged the formation of dissident sects among the Peyotists themselves; the direct threat posed by the new religion to the already weakened influence of the shamans, which united them in concerted and violent attack against it; and the deep schisms effected by the movement in regard to traditional tribal loyalties and family ties, which turned the initial curiosity of the Washo majority to active hostility and rejection. The period of introduction, growth, and decline of the religion from 1936 to 1939 has been studied intensively by two earlier investigators (Stewart 1944; Siskin 1941).

Recent field work indicates a revival of the Peyotist movement among the Washo shortly after 1939. Initiated by a relatively obscure Washo member of the cult, who claimed to have learned a "new way" during a visit to Peyotists in Idaho, the sect was labelled "The Tipi Way." It was set in open opposition to Ben Lancaster's domination and succeeded in attracting a number of former adherents from among the Washo who had become inactive after the 1939 debacle. This sect has undergone many changes of leadership since its inception in 1941-42, but it has persisted with remarkable cohesion to the present time. Relations with other members of the tribe have improved to the extent that the Peyotists are now a tolerated and often respected minority, and carry on their activities openly.

When the original proselyter, Ben Lancaster, died in 1955, there were three distinct sects competing for dominance in the area. One of these was the moribund group referred to as "Lancaster's Way," made up of Washo and Paiute followers who had remained loyal to him. Lancaster's wife and an old Paiute adherent lead the handful of members, and it is known by the latter's name—"J—S—'s Way." A second group is led by a mixed Washo-Paiute individual, and the participants are drawn from his immediate family; it is also referred to as his "Way." However, the largest and most vigorous sect, is "The Tipi Way," which has its center of operations at Woodfords, California, with a substantially Washo membership.

A comparison of the recent total membership of these sects with the participation data presented by Stewart (1944) reveals that there has been a drop from 111 active Peyotists in 1938 to about 78 in 1955. In 1938 there were 37 Washo and 55 Paiute members, while in 1955 fewer than 15 of the active Peyotists are Paiute or of mixed tribal origin. Of the present total membership more than seventy percent attends the meetings of "The Tipi Way" sect.

The members of this dominant sect have initiated and maintained more contact with the Native American Church than have either of the others. Its members make frequent visits to meetings in Idaho and Utah, and informal delegations make pilgrimages to Peyotist centers in Oklahoma, which they consider to be the homeland of the movement. Every few months "runs" are

made by automobile to Texas and New Mexico in order to replenish dwindling supplies of "the herb" from the "Peyote gardens."

Ritual procedure and ideology has undergone some noteworthy changes since it was first observed by Stewart in 1938. Most of these indicate an alignment with the practices of the Peyotists of eastern tribes as standardized by the Native American Church. Women no longer preside nor do they sing at meetings, as they were encouraged to do during Ben Lancaster's early dominance. It is now considered preferable to hold meetings in a canvas tipi rather than in a member's cabin or temporary windbreak. There is insistence upon members learning "real Peyote songs" rather than bringing "any old song" to meetings as was once allowed. The performance of leaders in conducting meetings and in their personal lives is critically evaluated by the membership in terms of an ideal which is frequently expressed as "the way those old-time Peyote Indians back east do it."

Some changes are especially significant in that they appear to be unique and to suggest Washo cultural influence. Eagle feathers were formerly used by the shaman and were considered too powerful for ordinary people to handle. While used in Peyote today, informants admit that the Washo are not as free with these feathers as are Peyotists in other tribes; the use of eagle feather "fans" is carefully restricted to the "strongest" roadchiefs and old members. Other members make fans from the feathers of various birds, each with its special qualities and degree of "power."

The traditional Washo concept of spirit guidance or power is strenuously opposed by Peyotist ideology. All "power" is in Peyote, and the devout are merely its instruments. Peyote is "good" but the medicines of the old shamans were "bad" because they were the gift from evil forces for the personal gain of the shaman. This has been one of the primary arguments of the local Peyotists in their struggle to defend and improve their status among the more conservative members of the tribe. Many Peyotists take the position that the idea of "power" itself is alien to the true spirit of Peyote, although the same persons may attribute the eclipse of shamanism over the past twenty years to the superior "power" of Peyote. More sophisticated versions of this same view hold that God gave Peyote to man as a weapon to fight evil, and that shamanism was one of the evils. Individual Peyotists accuse one another of causing sickness or death under guidance of malicious spirits, or of secretly making use of Peyotist ritual, song, and medicine as a screen for acquiring personal advantage in "the old way." Coyote, loon, eagle, and snake are seen at meetings and are a sign that some member is clandestinely associated with them.

The rivalry among leading Peyotists for success in curing and ritual proficiency is no less intense than that once exhibited by the shamans in public competitions. Deaths of members or too-frequent failure to cure result in suspicion and the eventual rejection of a leader. Eating of Peyote in large quantities may be admired as a proof of devotion, but it is more likely to be considered as a slightly unethical swaggering too reminiscent of a trick of the old shamans who ate the poisonous wild parsnip to show their "power."

Though some say that this reveals disrespect for "the medicine," rival Peyotists do boast of their prowess by comparing the number of "buttons" they were able to eat during a single night.

The concept of disease also appears to stem from traditional beliefs. Thus it is said that the roadchief, like the earlier shamans, can "look into a person and see what is wrong with him—just like X-ray" (see also Siskin 1941:105). With the aid of Peyote he can track down the disease and remove it with prayers. Disease-objects are often vomited out during meetings and are described as having the form of snakes, insects, stones, etc. The roadchief treats the afflicted part of a sick member by fanning it with smoke or by "switching" it with eagle feathers. Leaders conduct small curing sessions for individual Peyotists and non-Peyotists for a subtly defined fee. There is a tendency to "try" various leading Peyotists during a serious illness, calling on them in rotation to conduct meetings "until the right song or prayer makes a connection."

Other changes also suggest the increased integration of the sect into its Washo setting. English is no longer used in prayers or for the conduct of ritual. If a non-Washo is present, important sections of the proceedings are translated for him by one of the roadchief's assistants. Christian elements have diminished considerably; the Bible is no longer a part of the leader's paraphernalia, and biblical references in prayer or conversation are rare.

II

The ethnological data and tape recordings upon which this paper is based were collected by Warren d'Azevedo over a period of nine months among the Washo Peyotists in 1954 and 1955. Alan P. Merriam made the musical analysis and is responsible for the major portion of the final organization and writing of the paper. Recordings were made in the summer of 1954 on a portable Magnecorder loaned by Radio Station KPFA of Berkeley, California.

The musical sample consists of five song cycles sung by three Washo members of "The Tipi Way" sect described above. One of the singers was the founder and original roadchief of the sect, and all three have been active participants in the religion since the early years of its introduction by Ben Lancaster. Their songs are therefore fully representative of the type and style current among Washo Peyotists. All five cycles were recorded at a single session in the cabin of a leading sect member in Woodfords, California. The occasion was an "open prayer meeting"—one of the informal social gatherings of Peyotists and their non-Peyotist friends for the purpose of singing practice and religious discussion.

To "The Tipi Way" Peyotists, singing is a measure of prestige and spiritual eminence. The most admired singers are the most influential Peyotists, and the degree to which a Peyotist has found "the Way" through the "medicine" is demonstrated by his competence with song, drum, and rattle. It is of equal importance to knowledge of the intricate ritual procedure of meetings, and excellence at both are requirements of leadership. A large repertoire of songs is

also a measure of the man. One who has been able to "catch" many songs is no doubt "living a good life, and the medicine is backing him."

Instruments and criteria of performance

Musical instruments of the Washo Peyote singers include rattle and drum; the construction and materials used are as important to the musician as the special skills exerted in playing. The most adroit drummer or rattler feels he has done poorly if he is not satisfied with the qualities of his instrument; he is usually most confident if he has made the drum and rattle himself or if they have been made by a Peyotist he admires. Some of the most highly prized rattles are relatively old and have been passed from owner to owner, each of whom knows the history of its ownership.

The four important elements of the rattle are the gourd, stones, tuft, and handle. The gourd should be perfectly pear-shaped and not too large; the older and more used it is, the better, for this toughens and thins the shell which in turn improves the sound. New gourds are often boiled in oil and lined with pine pitch in an effort to speed this desired effect.

Considerable care and ingenuity is exercised in finding materials which will produce the proper sound inside the gourd; the number of "stones" should always be seven. White flint, which is found in the area and which does not break or wear in the gourd, is used by some singers; it is said to give a high-pitched soft rattle. Other musicians use bits of granite, quartz crystal, hollow brass balls from key chains, or small brass nuts (hardware).

The tuft is the "crown" of the rattle and must give a special and pleasing effect while the rattle is being shaken. It is symbolic of the tuft of the Peyote button, and also of sunburst or sunrise, associations which are very important in the appreciation of the general effect of any rattle. Material used is most often hair from a horse tail, but it may also be feathers—the comb of a cock pheasant, or hummingbird wing feathers.

The handle of the rattle is usually intricately carved or beaded, and a fine handle unscrews into two parts so that the rattle can be folded and packed into a small paraphernalia kit. The beadwork or carving symbolizes various aspects of Peyote ideology; for example, bands of color from bottom to top indicate evening, midnight, daybreak, and sunlight, thus concurring with the steps in Peyote ritual. The mounting of the gourd on the handle is considered extremely important; it must be mounted in such a way that the gourd touches the handle only where the pointed end of the latter fits tightly through the tufted top of the gourd. To achieve this ideal, a shell or silver fitting is placed at the bottom of the gourd; this retains the stones but at the same time allows a free space between fitting and gourd. If touching does occur, the rattle "sounds flat."

In performance it is the singer who holds the rattle, and each has some special rhythmic devices of his own which partly identify his playing. Methods of performance, or criteria as to the importance of rattling, are not highly verbalized among the Washo; responses range from, "the rattle is used to keep

time with; that's all," to "it is just as important as the drum and the singing. Yes it means something; everything we use has a meaning. Right now I don't know the meaning, but it is a symbol."

The drum used by the Washo in Peyote ritual is usually made from a three-legged iron pot of a type formerly used by miners; these pots are approximately eight to ten inches in diameter and about six inches in depth, including legs an inch and a half long. The drum is considered a sacred object of great importance to song; thus the ritual of tying the instrument before a meeting or singing practice is carefully observed. The kettle must have been tested for timbre before it is chosen for use; the deerhide must be "Indian cured and tanned," and it is preferable that it not come from a deer which has been shot. At the beginning of the evening, the kettle is filled one half to three quarters full of water; seven pieces of glowing charcoal are added and the hide is then wetted in the water and stretched over the top of the pot. At this point it is the special task of the drumchief to fasten the drumhead by an intricate "star" design of thong or rope fastened from each of the seven pebbles (which should be naturally polished and not "made by machines") placed under the edges of the hide. The tie is referred to as the "star" because its completed design resembles a star shape viewed from the bottom of the pot. The hide is stretched taut in this way and seldom has to be retightened during the evening; it is kept wet by occasional shaking.

The drumstick is usually a carved, highly polished piece of hardwood, and individual Peyotists like to make and keep their own drumsticks which become potent with the power of drumming and singing after long use. During a meeting, drumsticks sometimes get out of hand and cannot be controlled; drummers say that the stick "drummed by itself," and that they no longer had a sense of holding it.

In performance the drum is ordinarily held between the knees and tipped slightly away from the player; the drumstick is held lightly between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, and the wrist is kept flexible. On occasion, arm and wrist are made rigid so that the drum can be struck with full force; this seems to be reserved for high points in the song when special emphasis is required. The drum is held by the four fingers and "worked" with the thumb of the left hand. The thumb is used for stopping the drumhead; it is pressed firmly over the surface of the hide until just the right pitch and timbre are achieved. Every drummer, during each song and with every drum, has to experiment anew for the right "place." To achieve a particularly "tight" sounding tone, the drummer sometimes lifts the drum to his lips, drinks a bit of water from it, and then blows air through the hide until the pressure from within distends it; bloated drums give an especially hard and desirable sound. Two or more drums are never used at one time.

Questioning about the problem of "good" drumming brings forth a varied response; two typical answers are:

The drummer is supposed to follow, but he carries the singer. He has to tune the drum according to the singer's pitch. He might have to shake the drum now and then to

keep the skin wet; this changes the time of his beat. When you wet the skin from inside and blow air into the drum, it makes a fuller and deeper sound.

Good drumming is given as a gift. When the medicine gives you the gift to use the drum right, it goes through the body and then you can help. You can't learn in five years; you just keep trying until you learn and it comes to you. If you pray good, the Supreme Master may hear you and will help you to drum good.

The significance of drumming, however, can bring forth a more detailed answer. The following account is a lucid picture of the significance of drumming for a devout Peyotist:

The drum is the most important. The way the drummer handles himself can help or spoil the singing. The singer depends on the drum, it has to fit his way of singing. If the drummer is good-thinking, or knows his business, he can help the singer; he can make the song real good. The drum and the singing have to be like one sound—all together. A drummer can make the voice move along on waves, he can send the voice where he wants it to go—just like a telegraph—he can put it in that corner or that corner, or send it out a long distance away. A new (inexperienced) drummer drums “too open.” (Lets the drum vibrate out of control.) The drummer must keep his thumb down on just the right place to get a full, round sound out of the drum, a deep sound without too much vibration. If you leave it “too open” it gets a dull sound like hitting wood, or it goes wild and sounds tinny. The drummer has to catch the voice of each singer and tune the drum to it. The drummer has to carry the voice, lead it in the way it goes best, and pull the singer through. You have to always remember that the drum is full of electricity, that charcoal and water are inside there churning like a generator each time that stick hits the drum. It builds up big air pressure, and it connects with the air in your throat when you sing. The wrong kind of drumming can make you choke, can push the air back into the singer's lungs and stop his song. I have seen that happen and it has happened to me. Sometimes the wrong drummer will do that to you if he is not feeling right about you. One time one guy was drumming for me and it felt just like his thumb was on my throat trying to choke me. I saw that his thumb on the drum was just like it was choking the drum.

It is hard to say just what is the right way to drum. Everybody drums different. It depends on how the person thinks and feels, and how much experience he has had in the meetings. Drumming changes with every song, and it is never the same twice. It depends on the song and how the drummer and singer are feeling about each other or about themselves. But most of it depends on the drummer. He has to think of himself and the singer, too. He is the main one; he is the helper. That drum is the hardest thing. It takes the longest to know. I am a poor drummer even yet after all these years (about 30). Maybe when I am an old man I will know better. Some of those Indians say the drum is everything, that the drum is the way to the medicine. When you know that, you know The Way.

The problems of what good singing is, and what makes a good singer, are as indirectly considered by the Washo as are those of instrumental performance. Response is of the following nature:

It depends on how a man sings with the drumming, how he carries his tune even. He carries it up and holds his voice on the high notes. He has to go up all the way and then carry it down without breaking his time.

A person has to do his best. Sing the song just the way you heard it. It takes a long breath to sing good, to hold all those notes coming down and going up. Sometimes the medicine makes it sound better to you.

Song types

The major distinction drawn between Peyote song types is based upon an arbitrary designation of "main" songs as opposed to "unconnected" songs. The latter are those which may be sung at any time in any company and with any combination of other songs, while the former are sung under much greater restriction. The "main" songs are considered special; they may be reserved for the special opening, midnight, after-midnight, morning, or before-quitting times in an actual Peyote meeting but are always part of a special song cycle. Such songs should be sung in meetings or on an equally solemn occasion, and conversely, it is generally thought improper to sing them outside of meetings; in so doing, one runs the risk of "spoiling" them.

Both types of songs may be sung at specific times in Peyote ceremony. This relegation of songs to certain periods during the meetings seems to have nothing to do with either musical quality or type; rather, it is an arbitrary distinction made by each singer about the songs in his repertoire. It may be that the person who taught the singer the song told him that it was a morning or a before-midnight song, for example, or he may decide this for himself. On the other hand, he may also sing them at any time during the meetings. Various informants revealed different attitudes about this matter, and except for the individual distinction as to the category of songs by a few members, most members sing their songs at any time. The only songs which seem to be required at any particular time are those of the roadchief, who has his own special starting, midnight, and quitting songs.

Songs also are organized into sets or cycles. Such cycles are made up of four songs which are always sung in a particular order, and this gives them a unique quality to most Peyotists. "They are then a set of songs. If he starts one you can be sure the others will follow. They are connected. They are his songs." The songs may be learned at different times and in different places, and then put together in certain order by the singer, or a set may be made up of four versions or four repetitions of the same song; examples of each are included in the present study. A partial explanation for this difference in rendition seems to be indicated by historical evidence. It has been reported that fifteen years ago very few Washo sang at all, for most of the old songs were forgotten and no new ones had been learned. Ben Lancaster, the original proselytizer, had learned a few songs in Oklahoma and from the Gosiute, and these he taught to his members. At the same time he encouraged people to sing any songs they knew at the meetings—gospel songs, traditional Washo songs, popular American songs (cowboy, hillbilly), or songs of other tribes that they might have learned (Stewart 1944). Apparently because most individuals knew only a song or two at most, it became the custom to repeat the same song four times in the cycle rather than to sing four different songs.

Along with the schisms which have developed in the cult during the break-away from the Lancaster tradition during the past fifteen years, there is now an emphasis in the Tipi Way faction of the cult on knowing many songs and having different songs arranged into four-song cycles. The arrangement is usually an individual matter, and a person who has learned twelve to twenty-four songs and arranged three or six cycles is considered a very accomplished Peyotist.

However, among those who have remained in Lancaster's original group, the singing of one song through a cycle has become traditional; thus if a man knows ten songs he has material for ten cycles. Individuals in this group have learned as many new songs as have the Tipi Way people, but place a traditional ritualistic importance on singing a single song per cycle. "If you got a good song," they say, "it is your song and it is part of you. Maybe that song is the best one for you." On the other hand, Tipi Way people express the opinion that "it is boring to hear a man repeat the song so many times."

Sources of songs

There are apparently two major sources of Peyote songs for the Washo—other people, and on-the-spot inspiration; the former seems to be far the more frequent. Of eighteen songs in the present collection for which the origin is fairly well documented, seventeen were learned from other people. Of these, three were learned from Sound Chief records (1 Cheyenne and 2 Kiowa songs), and fourteen directly from other Peyotists in the period from 1939 to 1947. The listing shows 3 Bannock, 3 Shoshone, 2 Paiute and 1 Klamath ("they sound like any other Peyote song") songs, and five songs which were "learned in Idaho." The singers seem to be least sure of the songs learned by listening to records. Of the others, the individual learns the song from some leader, friend, or even from a stranger at certain meetings in which he has achieved the degree of involvement necessary to absorb the song "all at once," or "so that it just came into my head."

The songs made up by individuals seem also to involve dramatic learnings; the singers say that when one "catches a song" it is learned all at once in a moment of great emotional intensity. Of the single song created by a known individual, the composer commented that it was a song that "just came to me" at a Tipi Way meeting. "I never heard anyone else sing it. Maybe I might have heard it someplace a long time before that, and the meeting helped me to catch it—that happens sometimes. I always sing that song the same way; don't change it none."

Most songs seem to have been embellished, consciously or unconsciously altered over time, combined, improvised, forgotten and "caught" again in new form as one's own. The last are thought of as "new" or "my" songs, but the singer has no inclination to hide the fact that he was influenced by another song, and that "I just changed it a little." Nevertheless, it does become a "new" song.

The following illustrates one of the rare instances of known individual

creation, and also gives some indication of the process of variation:

When I was a child in Carson Valley I used to go out in the fields at night during a thunder storm to listen. Lightning and thunder had a special fascination for me, and I still dream about it. I remember how the sound of thunder seemed to strike against Job's Peak and then glance off and go rolling northward like the sounds which had followed and swallowed up "the old lady and the old man" (mythological creatures in the Washo creation tale). While the thunder was rolling away I could hear him singing a song; his voice was that sound thunder makes when it echoes among the mountains. I can remember that song, and I can sing it. I have sung it ever since I was a child. It is my song. The words went *li wa . . . li wa na*. That *li* sound was a kind of white man's language sound, kind of hard and rolling along . . . *li wan*.

Later, when the informant began to attend Peyote meetings, he started by singing this song, but in time he changed the "words" a bit to sound like *han a wan*. He did this to make it sound more like "Peyote song words." He was not sure that the original sounds were appropriate because they were filled with his earlier fears as well as his feeling that thunder and lightning were his "power." Peyote forces one to put these earlier powers aside and trust in Peyote. As time went on, he began to change the song slightly to include parts of other songs that struck him as similar to his. He heard one song from a member in Idaho which fitted into his own song. "But it is really my own song and pretty much the way I used to sing it when I was a kid; the way it moves and the words still remind me of the way thunder sounds when it echoes and bounces along the valley."

Variation, effect of recorder, and rivalry

It is difficult to ascertain many clear-cut patterns with respect to allowable variation in Washo Peyote songs. The range varies from a frank admission of improvisation during the course of the song, to saying about a "main" song that "It can't be changed in any way or it is wrong. You learn it that way and you keep it that way." It appears that, ideally at least, "main" songs are never changed; apparently other songs may be varied to the point of becoming "new." Under normal circumstances, the singer seems to try to keep the original version fairly well in mind—"I try to sing it the same way," or "If you can, you keep the song like you heard it"—but on the other hand, "I can't quite get it just the same," and "it is all right to change it some time." There is also a clear recognition of changing songs, expressed in such statements as:

I made lots of changes, but I don't know exactly what they are now. I put some of my own sounds in and changed the tune a little. You can do that if you feel like it.

I tried to keep the old words as much as possible, but I couldn't understand them anyway, so little by little I stuck in some sounds from my own language that seemed good.

At the same time, "it is important to keep the rhythm as much the same as you can; that's a special part of the song."

In the fifth cycle the singer sang five songs; when questioned he averred that "it doesn't make any difference outside the meetings," but he was more

than sheepish about it. The mistake was ritualistic rather than musical alone, and from this standpoint it seemed to make a great deal of difference; it was clearly a mistake and it was commented upon by others as indicating a lack of attention, or flippancy, or worse, depending upon what the listener felt about the singer.

It is at least possible that the singer's mistake in this case was brought about by nervousness. The person involved had been the victim of a faulty tape recorder—the tape was blank after his first rendition of songs, and this threw him into a state of terrified depression which was only partially relieved when the songs came out perfectly on second try. Other evidences of nervousness appeared in jocular or serious remarks addressed to or about the machine—a mistake was made “maybe because I was lazy or worried about that tape recorder.”

Any errors made were exploited by rival musicians. In the case noted above, the singer's chief rival remarked: “Maybe that machine don't want your songs; maybe the medicine won't let those songs get taken down.” In the cases of two leading singers who drummed for each other, both remarked semi-privately that it had been difficult to sing because of the poor drumming—“X was hitting all over the place. It threw me off and I made a lot of mistakes”; “Y had his thumb wrong; the sound was too open”; “I had a hard time keeping up with him; he was getting ahead of me all the time.” Such rivalry is sometimes verbalized directly—“maybe he was trying to mess up my singing”—and in general it seems to be one of the means by which hostility is expressed among Peyotists. It is expected that one person expresses his feelings about another by the way he either “helps” or “holds him back” in singing.

Values

There are some values in respect to Washo Peyote music which may be directly listed; they are those most frequently and clearly verbalized.

1. The most important thing about a song is that it is like a prayer. It has a unity and power of its own which cannot be “broke into parts.”
2. Songs are gifts of Peyote and should be taken for what they are, rather than being talked about and analyzed.
3. Singing a song at the wrong time, or talking about it, may spoil it so that it loses its power.
4. Certain songs are to be admired for their intricacy, and the singer who can learn them is also admired.

On a somewhat different plane are other values, which are expressed as:

1. There is a certain length of time a song should be sung to feel right; it has to build up a certain amount of emotion and concentration in the singer and the listener.
2. “He drags the song out a little too long, like he don't want to let go of it. You can waste a song that way.”
3. “He liked that song, I guess. He sang it good and he feels good. You can tell that.

He was *in* that song and it made a connection—took him down the road. You can tell he liked the gourd and drum, too. They really keep him going.”

4. “He has that real Indian sound in his voice—like the old-time Indians.”

There is little real response to questions dealing, for example, with the difference between good and bad songs; it is evident that “good” and “bad” take the musician immediately to the texts rather than to music analysis—“No, it all depends on the wording, but we don’t know the wording of the other tribes’ language so we have to trust that it is a good song”; “Just the sound might sound better in some song, but it don’t mean any better as long as the man singing is a good man. There are no bad songs unless a man is thinking bad.”

It seems clear that a song is judged not so much for or by itself as it is in terms of a total situation. No informant speaks of technique or structure; any special effect of technical finesse is seen as a whole, that is, as a total reaction of the commentator to the personality, association, and potency of the performer as well as to his equipment—the perfection of his rattle, and whether he was in good voice. Songs are not things in themselves but are vehicles through which religious emotions and concepts are expressed. They are something that has to be dreamed, heard in the mind’s ear, performed; and the concept of “song” abstracted from “performance” is not present. The singer himself is caught in the totality of the performance; it is a religious and emotional experience for him—he may “take a trip when he sings,” and he never just “sings a song.” “When I’m singing,” said Z, “I’m praying in the Tipi and going on the journey over that road.”

III

Vocal style

McAllester (1949:65–6) has noted a special Peyote vocal technique which corresponds best to Herzog’s Type B. “In general the Peyote songs are sung in a rather simple vocal style. There is usually somewhat greater tension on the vocal chords than is used by Europeans, there is somewhat greater use of accents and grace notes, and there are occasional pulsations on certain notes, particularly if they are quarter notes or longer. But the high degree of tension, the quavers, breaks, shakes and shouts of Type A American Indian singing are, often, much reduced or quite absent” (p. 65). These conclusions fit the Washo Peyote vocal style almost perfectly.

There is, however, one special vocal effect called a “shaking sound”; the ability to produce it is considered to be the mark of an excellent singer. At the same time, according to one informant, “That shaking sound you hear sometimes in the Tipi is the medicine working, not just the man does that; the medicine and good thoughts do that.” The sound referred to is a particularly vibrant quality to the voice which gives the impression that many voices are singing at once in a slightly disharmonic, vibrating manner. Within the tipi the effect is quite dramatic; the tipi seems to be shuddering and at moments the tent poles appear to be shaking against a strong wind. Singing of this sort is

usually thought of as the high point of the meeting when it occurs, and it elicits a stir of excitement; the men discuss the technique and point to their throats to indicate where and how the singer must be making the sound. A common phrase heard in this connection is that "he made the tent poles wobble," and "he made a connection there."

The exact nature of the shaking sound is not known to the authors; it seems to be a combination of effects—first, a special "ventriloquistic" effect common in American Indian singing and in contrast to the normal Washo Peyote vocal technique; and second, a reverberation sound echo set up in the tipi or cabin due to a combination of singing, drumming, and rattling operating in a certain acoustic situation. It may also be induced by a high-pitched whining or humming on the part of others in the room; this is formalized and given the name "helping the singer along." In any case, the effect is real to the degree that it is heard distinctly in recordings; it has an apparent religious significance in that it indicates the "medicine is working."

Song texts

Song texts are made up almost exclusively of meaningless syllables with a very few words in English providing the only exception. Some apparently typical syllabic configurations may be noted as: *yo wa no hay nay*; / *no wa nay o na*. In some cases syllables beginning with k, w, and l are used, but these are relatively infrequent.

Nettl (1953:161) has noted that in the Peyote songs of the Arapaho there is a definite repetition of syllables when melodic rhythms are repeated; that is, not only when the same line is repeated but when the line is varied in the same rhythm. This is also characteristic of the Washo songs. Nettl further reports the existence of "an almost universal . . . closing formula . . . which is sung on four long notes, or three long and one short note on the tonic" (1953:162). To a certain degree, this pattern is found in the Washo songs, but it is by no means "almost universal"; twelve of the 21 songs show the characteristic clearly, the remaining nine either vaguely or not at all.

Finally, Nettl notes that in closing, "the vowels of the first and second syllables are identical; they are usually higher than, or identical with, the fourth vowel. The first, second, and fourth vowels are front vowels, the third is a back vowel" (ibid: 162). Again, this is a pattern found frequently though not exclusively in the Washo songs. The most frequent closing pattern in those songs in which four final tones are used is *hay nay yo wa*, found in seven songs. In four other songs, the closing pattern is *hay nay yo way*, an obvious corollary. These patterns correspond closely to those reported by Nettl (1953:162) and McAllester (1949:68). Some other patterns include *hay yo wa nay*; / *hay ya no*; / *hay no hay ya ha*; / *hi ya ya no*.

The Washo themselves, of course, note that the syllables are meaningless and they speak of them as "words of another tribe's language"; at the same time, they admit that they sometimes make up their own meaningless words. One informant said that he would use Washo words except that "serious words in Washo are too long and don't fit the time of the songs." Another reported

that some sounds have a "happy sound," others a "sad and serious sound," but he was unable to give examples of what was meant.

It is worthwhile to cite the words of two other informants in this connection. Informant X noted:

The Shoshone and Paiute use their own words. The Washo language is too slow . . . and words that have the right meaning are too long. The only meaning is in the other language, but I don't know the meaning. I only know my own feelings. We just sing the songs as a tune.

Informant Y reported:

The words got a meaning, but not like ordinary words. We sing different songs for different times. We start out with certain songs before midnight and other songs later. . . . That's the way I was told about them. Each song represents some things . . . like a sick person sings to feel good. The words mean something in another Indian language. Sometimes we put Washo words in. It is pretty good to put your own words in; then you know what you are saying. But I follow the song just as I learned it, because the Washo didn't have that way of worshipping.

The English words, "Jesus only one," appear in three songs. It is not unusual to find English words and phrases appearing in American Indian songs, but they are not usually of this particular context. In connection with the song, the singer noted that the words were "a necessary part of the song. They are always sung with it," while another informant reported that the English words are put in the songs "for the benefit of people who don't speak the language of the song. That's so they can understand something."

In general, the Washo texts seem to conform to the overall Peyote style.

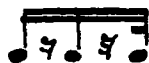
Instrumental accompaniment

All songs are accompanied by the rattle shaken by the singer, and the drum played by a second musician. There is no other instrumental or vocal accompaniment.

The rhythmic patterns used by the drummer are almost totally unvaried—the standard beat is a steady evenly-spaced series of eighth notes. The rattle, on the other hand, is played in a considerable variety of patterns ranging from a simple succession of quarter or eighth notes to such configurations as:



Of special note is a pattern in which the rattle player establishes a beat which can only be classified as "hot":



while the "hot" beat is admittedly a somewhat vague concept from the analytical standpoint, it is readily apparent to the ear and distinctly present in several of the Washo songs. This is the only instance of a hot beat in American Indian music known to the present authors.

There is no suggestion of polymeter in the songs, even in such usage as melodic triplets on a duple rhythmic base.

It is difficult to establish clearly the relationship, if any, between melodic and drum pitches. In songs in which the subjective tonic and duration tones (see below, p. 638) are identical, drum pitch is the same in but one case. In three songs, the drum pitch is two semitones above the ST-DT; in six songs it falls on the sixth degree of scale, in one case on the fourth degree, and in one case on the third degree. These relationships do not seem to indicate a clear tuning of drum in order that melodic pitch may be taken from it. At the same time, it is fairly noticeable that when drum pitch changes within a song cycle, the subjective tonic seems also to change; when drum pitch remains stable, subjective tonic tends to remain stable. It should be pointed out that the drummer changes pitch before the singer—that is, between songs—and thus it seems unlikely that it is he who alters his drum pitch to conform to the pitch chosen by the singer. At the same time, Washo singers say that “the drummer is supposed to tune to the singer and follow the rhythm of the gourd,” or “the drummer has to tune the drum according to the singer’s pitch.” No distinct relationship can be established here; it seems, however, that drum pitch is probably used by the singer, either consciously or unconsciously, as a guide.

Instrumental and vocal introductions and closings

In discussing instrumental introductions and closings, it is perhaps wisest to follow through a single cycle of four songs. Cycle I is begun with 72 beats of drum and rattle alone, and the first song terminated by a drum tremolo which decrescendos from *forte* to *piano* and which is followed by a single eighth note tap. The tempo is then resumed almost immediately on the drum, the rattle rejoins it, volume is increased to *forte*, and 52 beats mark what seems to be the introduction to the second song. Song 2 again closes with a drum tremolo alone, the same decrescendo, followed by the resumption of tempo, the rejoining of the rattle, and crescendo, for 48 beats to the third song. Song 3 is not closed by a tremolo; rather, there is a brief space of two beats of silence, after which drum and rattle resume at tempo for 96 beats. The final song ends with a drum tremolo. In general, this is the pattern for all songs, with some slight variations such as the substitution of a rattle for the drum tremolo, changes in length of percussion material between songs, and other minor points. It should be pointed out that there is but one clear break between songs in any cycle; this occurs between songs 2 and 3 in Cycle III and is probably traceable to nervousness on the part of the performers.

There are four instances of vocal introductions in the 21 songs; in song II,1, typical of the group, the singer uses a succession of tones on the tonic:



This introductory material, if it can be called such, is separated from the true

beginning of the song by seven beats' rest. In song II,3, the same kind of pattern is separated by ten beats; in songs IV,1 and 3 by sixteen and three beats respectively. The pattern occurs only in the songs of one individual who, when queried on the matter, reported: "it is not a real part of the song; it's only warming up and getting the tune before you start. That's to remember the tune and get in line with the drum." Such introductions, then, cannot be considered typical of the group of songs; they appear instead to be a personal idiosyncrasy of the singer.

Tonal range

The tonal ranges of the 21 Washo Peyote songs are divided sharply into two distinct groups, one of exceptionally wide range and the other of medium distribution. In the former group are ten songs, five with a range of 19 semitones, three with a range of 17 semitones, and one each with a range of 18 and 23 semitones; these are exceptionally wide ranges. The second group of eleven songs shows a scattering of range—three songs have ranges of 7 semitones, two songs of 9 and two of 12 semitones, and one song each with a range of 13, 11, 10, and 8 semitones. The two groupings are distributed, then, about centers of 19 and 10 semitones respectively. There appears to be no correlation to singer (the same singer uses wide and narrow ranges in different songs); to the supposed or real place of origin of the songs (some songs learned from the Bannock have wide ranges, and some narrow); to variation or repetition, which will be discussed below; or to any other observable cause. Thus the sharp double grouping appears perhaps to be simply a statistical anomaly which would be erased with consideration of a wider sampling, but until such a sampling is obtained, no definite conclusion can be reached here.

Melodic direction and contour

The general contour of the melodic lines of the Washo songs is indicated clearly by the relationships among the beginning (B), ending (E), highest (H), and lowest (L) tones. Thus a clear downward direction is demonstrated by the fact that the ending tone is never higher than, or equal to the beginning tone in pitch; the smallest distance between B and E is seven semitones. Further, the distance from B to E, with but five exceptions, is also the total tonal range. In nine songs the ending tone is seven semitones below the beginning tone; in three songs, it is 17 semitones below; in six songs, 19 semitones, and in one song each, 12, 13, or 15 semitones below.

This strong downward direction is further emphasized by the relationships between B-H and E-L. In the former case, with but five exceptions the beginning tone is equal to the highest tone; in two songs the highest tone is one semitone above B, in one song each two, three, or four semitones. Similarly, the ending and lowest tones are identical in all but five of the songs; the exceptions show the lowest tone two semitones below E in two songs, and three semitones below in three songs.

Since in most cases B is identical with H, and E is identical with L, there

is no advantage in exploring the relationships B-L and E-H. Almost without exception, the songs show a clear downward melodic direction—in this respect, they are remarkably homogeneous.

There is, of course, some variation within this general contour. Taking the definition of the term “phrase” in its broadest sense, the melodic type seems to correspond reasonably well to what has been termed the “collapsing” mode of descent. In its simplest form, “the line is likely to descend in a series of smooth curves, most of which reach the tonic at the latter end and increasingly so as the song progresses” (McAllester 1949:71–2). In the Washo songs, while the initial introduction of the phrase is high and moves downward, it is not necessarily unbroken nor does it always become successively compressed toward the end of the song. Furthermore, in some cases the descent pattern is greatly elongated into an elaborate drop which, although collapsing in one sense, is not sharply or necessarily directly so.

At the same time, the subjective tonic is quite definitely reached very early in the song in the majority of cases; in twelve songs it is reached by the end of the first phrase, in seven songs by the end of the second phrase, and in one song not until the end of the fifth phrase. In one song, the phrase begins on the subjective tonic.

Flattening is the phenomenon whereby “as the final phrase approaches, the melody characteristically loses contour until it is perfectly flat on the tonic” (McAllester 1949:75). Again, this is basically characteristic of the Washo songs but does not seem to be marked as a total pattern. While the ends of songs are generally flat, they are not especially extended in relationship to earlier finals in the phrasing, and in some cases are shorter.

Melodic meter, note values, and ornamental devices

The melodic meter of the songs is rather widely varied both in the group at large and within specific songs; the exception is provided by six songs in which an unbroken 4/4 time division can logically be made. The remaining songs, however, cannot be written in any single meter and depend, rather, on the unit of the phrase for their division. Thus combinations of meters appear in a single song; for example, in song II,1: 4/4, 5/4 and 6/4 divisions are made; in an extreme case, IV,2: 7/4, 10/4, 6/4, 9/4 and 4/4 appear. Melodic meter, then, is not usually steady throughout the song, but is broken into irregular phrasing.

Note values in the melodic line are almost exclusively quarters and eighths, with a few dotted eighths also appearing. Syncopation is almost never used.

Ornamental devices include the rather consistent use of a strong falling release in which the singer allows his voice to drop downward from a tone; this device appears in thirteen of the twenty-one songs. Rising attack is used in eleven songs; in this case the singer begins his tone below its proper pitch and slides up to it. In one song a falling attack is used; this is a most unusual configuration and is possibly accidental in this single case. Portamento in the form of sliding from tone to tone appears in eighteen of the songs.

In addition, the dip or "double portamento," in which a pitch is established, allowed to slide downward for variable distance, and then returned to its original frequency, is found in three songs. The bend, a less marked version of the dip, appears in one song. No auxiliary tones are used as such.

Some use of dynamics is evident in both instrumental and vocal lines; the former is discussed elsewhere in this paper. Strong dynamics on the part of the singer are found in two songs; in II,3, a closing *sforzando* on the final tone; in song II,2, a definite decrescendo in a long falling phrase which is repeated in subsequent renditions. While strong dynamic ranges are not characteristic

Song I,2: As is: 128

Drum Voice

Rattle Percussion continues

Song II,1: As is: 124

Drum Voice

Rattle Percussion continues

Song III, 4: As is: 128 *Voice*

Drum
Rattle *Percussion continues*

Song IV, 3: 2u: 144 *Voice*

Drum
Rattle *Percussion continues*

Song V, 2: 2d: 132 *Voice*

Drum
Rattle *Percussion continues*

of the Washo songs, they are used for special effect and emphasized by the use of heavy accent which helps structure the melodic phrases.

Melodic intervals

Of a total of 336 ascending intervals, the major second, used most frequently, accounts for 44.3 percent, the minor third for 24 percent, the major third for 12.8 percent, the perfect fourth for 11 percent, the minor second and perfect fifth for 3.8 percent each. Of a total of 715 descending intervals, the major second accounts for 48.1 percent, the minor third 31.6 percent, the major third 10.8 percent, the perfect fourth 5.4 percent, minor second 3.7 percent, and perfect fifth .3 percent.

Thus of a total of 1051 ascending and descending intervals, the major second is most frequently used, 46.9 percent, followed by the minor third 29.2 percent, the major third 11.4 percent, the perfect fourth 7.2 percent, the minor second 3.8 percent, and the perfect fifth 1.4 percent.

This indicates a very high percentage of major seconds, which is a characteristic pattern for the Plains Indian area. It should also be noted that only five kinds of intervals are used and that none is wider than a perfect fifth, a very limited usage. Further, exactly the same kinds of intervals are used both ascending and descending, and in the same proportion. In general, a relatively conservative use of intervals seems to be indicated.

Sixty-eight percent of the total intervals used are descending, and 32 percent ascending, a marked differentiation which is again characteristic of Plains style. 79.9 percent of the intervals are narrow, that is, a minor third or less; 11.4 percent are medium, that is, a major third; and 8.7 percent are wide, that is, more than a major third. These proportions are striking in the heavy use of narrow intervals as opposed to wide.

Eight of the 21 songs use no wide intervals whatever. Three songs use only two types of intervals ascending, and one song uses but one ascending interval, a major second. On the other hand, song I,4, uses all intervals, both ascending and descending, with the exception of the minor second in both cases.

Melodic interval patterns

Usage of patterns of intervals wider than seconds is quite restricted in the Washo songs. Triadic split fifths (for example, CEG consecutively in the melodic line) appear in six songs, mf and Mf.¹ Pendular thirds (for example, CECE) also appear in six songs, patterns including mfrf, Mfrf, mfrfrf, and mfrfrfrf. Pendular fourths, a relatively unusual formation, are found in five songs, rf, fr, frf, frfrf, and frfrfr. And finally, pendular fifths, rf, appear in one song.

No single song, however, seems to be dominated by patterns of this kind, not even song II,5, for example, which uses three pendular fourth patterns and two pendular third patterns. This lack of emphasis again seems to reflect the predominance of use of major seconds as well as the contour of the melodic line in which the movement, steadily downward, does not allow for alternation

and elaboration. The patterns which are found are few in number and slight in importance; other patterns such as interlocked intervals, which appear frequently in, for example, many African songs, are not used at all in the Washo Peyote songs.

The repetitive monotone—four or more successive tones sung on the same pitch—appears in almost every song as a characteristic phrase and especially as a song ending. It is not important in other respects.

Formal structure

The phenomenon of paired phrases in its strictest sense does not seem characteristic of the Washo Peyote songs. However, as internal pairing it appears in ten of the twenty-one songs; it is strong in six of these. The variation ranges from a very weak usage in II,1—as Aab Bcd Ce Bcc' Cfe—to a strong usage, as in song III,4—Aaa Bbb'b'' Aa'a' Bbb'b''.

There are three major types of formal structure used in the Washo songs. Taking them in an order most convenient for discussion, Type III is least important, consisting simply of two songs, II,3, and III,3, which are irregular in pattern. The former shows a structure of Aab Bcd C Bcd Def E; in this case, the only repetition is phrase Bcd which appears twice. The formal structure for song III,3, begins with Aab Bcd Cef, of which the first two phrases are then repeated, followed by new melodic material Dghii'h. Another unique melodic section follows—Ejk—succeeded by further repeat which is not fully realized. The total structure, then, is: Aab Bcd Cef Aa'b' Bcd Dghii'h Ejk Aab' Bcd Dghjk.

The Type I structure, represented by five songs, is, in its "purest" form, a straight ABC pattern which may or may not be repeated. The simplest form is found in song V,2—Aaa B C Aaa B C—and the most complex in song IV,3—Aaa' Bbc Cdef Dgh Aaa' Bbc Cdef Dgh. A variation of this form, which may be designated Type Ia, appears in song IV,1, in which the ABC pattern is still basic but the order is varied. Thus X (an introductory phrase which never reappears) Aab Bcd Cef Bccd Aab Bd Cef Bcd, or A B C B A B C B with slight variation. A second divergence from the same basic type may be designated Type Ib; this is represented by two songs, and is perhaps the most esoteric type found. Again, the structure is essentially ABC, but in repetition the initial part of the phrase is condensed. Thus V,3 is first presented as Aaa B C; on repetition, however, some melodic material is dropped so that the phrase becomes A½aa B C. This usage is identical in the two songs in which the pattern is found.

Most frequently used in the Washo Peyote songs is the formal structure Type II, which is clearly exemplified in nine songs and varied in two others. The form is also noted among Menomini Peyote songs (McAllester 1952: 682). In this particular type, melodic material stated in the first phrase of a song is not repeated, although subsequent material is. Thus, in simplest form (II,2) it may appear as A B C D B C D, with A never reappearing but B C D repeated. A more complex example (III,1) appears as: Aaa' Bbb Cccc' Bcc

Cccc', and the most complex (I,4) is: Aab Bcd Cef D E F G H Cef D E F G H. It is at least conceivable that a type of "paired" phrase is indicated here, with the pairing occurring in terms of combinations or groups of phrases; however, this seems to be too far from the original conception to allow reasonable use of the term. Finally, two variations of this form are found, the first (II,4) stated: Aaa' Bbb Ccd Bb'bb'' Ccd, the variation to be noted in the addition of an extra subphrase, b. The second variation (II,5) is more distinct: Aa Bb C D Bb' C D Aa' Bb'' C D; in this case, almost a hybrid between Types I and II is formed.

It is of considerable interest in this connection to note the problem of what constitutes variation in the Washo songs. The Washo themselves distinguish three forms in listening to playbacks of their own recordings; these can be designated as follows: (A) a song is sung but once; (B) a song is sung and repeated; (C) a song is sung and is then varied. These seem to represent fairly clear-cut categories, but cursory inspection shows the formal structural analysis undertaken above simply does not coincide with Washo opinion. Thus, in the first cycle, the formal structures are, in order, Types Ib, II, II, II; the singers analyze all four songs as having been sung once, or their Form A. The problem becomes more difficult when it is noted that several songs which are Type II in structure are considered by the singers to be Form B, that is, an exposition and a repetition. Again, of the songs considered by the singers to be varied, that is, Form C, one is Type Ia and the other Type I in structure, both of which are almost straight repetitions. Further, another song considered by the singers as Form C with three variations falls clearly into Type II. It should be noted here that the singers, in studying their performances, were considering the total rendition in differentiating among variation, repetition, and a single singing.

Without laboring the point further, it is clear that while the principles upon which such differentiation is made may be clear to the Washo, they must be based upon something other than structure as it is conceived in Western music analysis. While these principles are not known to the present authors, some possibilities and also some contradictions may be discerned from comments made by the singers. Thus informant Y distinguished between a song that is repeated and one that is sung through only once by indicating that all Peyote songs begin on a high line and slowly descend to the end of the song. If the song is then being repeated, it returns to the highest beginning note; the same informant reports that if a song is "repeated" on a lower register, it is "part of the same song." At another time, this informant reported that one of his songs with a Type Ib formal structure was sung through only once: although it might sound as though it has been repeated once, "that's because the same tune is sung high and then low." Again, informant Y pointed out that "you can tell when a song is finished when the singer reaches that real heavy low voice. If he is going to repeat the song he starts up high again. If there is no pause this makes it all part of the same song." The point to be

made, obviously of considerable importance in discovering the meaning of "variation" and "repetition" so far as the Washo are concerned, is that the informant was indicating that the melodic line, repeated in two registers, is the form of a complete single song and not two variations of the same song.

That there is some formulation of the principles involved is made clear from the comment of X, who, in hearing his version of a song, noted somewhat lamely that only one variation had been sung—"maybe because I was lazy or worried about that tape recorder. It ought to be sung twice (two variations)." Again, X noted that time is an important factor in making a song sound correct, and that a song has to be repeated or varied for a certain number of times over the "right" period of time to make it complete. It also seems fairly certain that aspects of song texts have some bearing on the problem—"it isn't the same song; the words are all different." "It is almost the same song as the second one . . . but it has a little different words."

It is finally of interest to report that comments of two singers on the songs of a third tend only to cloud the issue further. For the four songs of Cycle I considered, the following shows, in order, the type indicated by Western structural analysis, the form declared by informant Y, the form indicated by informant X: Song 1: Type II; Form B (repeated twice); Form B (repeated one and a half times); Song 2: Type I; Form C (two variations); Form B (repeated twice); Song 3: Type Ib; Form B (repeated twice); Form B (sung through one and a half times); Song 4: Type II; Form B (repeated six times); Form B ("he sings it one and a half times"). Further inquiry among other Peyotists and Peyote singers yielded the same confusing results; agreement on what constitutes repetition and/or variation is quite rare. This may perhaps indicate only the short period of time that the Washo have had Peyote songs; on the other hand, since the terms are at least verbalized, this may be a period in which such concepts with respect to music are only just emerging. Comparison of the Peyote with "ordinary" Washo songs could conceivably shed some light upon this problem.

The shortest phrase length is found in song I,4; it is four beats in duration. The longest phrase, 32 beats, is found in song I,1. The average length seems to center about approximately 14 beats. Phrases of odd numbers of beats are common, appearing in thirteen of 21 songs; such beat lengths as 9, 11, 17, and up to 29 are present, the most common—appearing in ten songs—being 13 beats.

Two songs (IV,1, and III,4) are constructed in what has been called the "broken triad" form, that is, exclusively on the three tones of a major triad. McAllester (1949:71) points out that 15 of his 84 examples are based on this type (17 percent plus) which, he says, is a higher percentage than normal. In the present case, two of 21 songs (9 percent plus) use the structure, and thus its significance remains to be determined. On the face of it, it would seem that this is a Comanche Peyote concentration, as posited by McAllester, rather than a Peyote concentration at large.

Scale, mode, duration tone, and subjective tonic

Confining discussion to the number of tones actually utilized within the octave, the majority of scales of the Washo songs is pentatonic; there are twelve such songs. Six songs are tetratonic; two are the relatively rare tritonic, and one is hexatonic. Modally, six songs are penta do, five penta la, and one penta sol; three are tetra la, one each tetra sol, tetra mi, and tetra re-mi; the duration tone of the tri types is do in both cases; the hexatonic is hexa sol. These are all quite normal types.

The subjective tonic and duration tones² are identical in 16 of the 21 songs, indicating again the normality of the modal structures. Further, the duration tone is found on the fifth of the subjective tonic scale in four of the remaining songs, indicating a tonic-dominant relationship, and on the sixth degree in the fifth, indicating a probable major-minor confusion on the part of the transcriber.

Tonality seems to be fairly well defined, although sometimes slightly confusing; there are no modulations.

Tempo

The range of tempi for the Washo songs is not especially wide, varying from 116 to 148 beats per minute, based on the quarter note; in addition, there is one drum tempo of 160 beats, which seems to be abnormal for the series. The average tempo may be placed in the range from 136–40.

The problem of tempo, however, is complicated by the fact that the tempi of voice, drum, and rattle are frequently dissimilar; the extreme example is song I,1, in which the melodic tempo is 120, that of the drum 160, and that of the rattle 148. In twelve of the songs, the vocal and rattle tempi are identical, but different from that of the drum—the largest disparity is 28 beats, the smallest 8. In eight songs the tempi of all three parts are equal.

The widest range of tempi noted above—116 to 148 beats per minute—is found in the drum. Vocal tempi range from 120–44, rattle tempi from 124–48.

McAllester (1949:76–8) has noted that Peyote songs are “prevailingly *faster* than most Indian music,” in pointing out that the range of songs he studied was from 92 to 164 beats per minute. This contention seems to be borne out substantially by the present findings.

The Cycles

Since the songs are sung in sets or cycles, their relationship to one another within the cycle is of interest here. This relationship is quite close in one of the cycles, relatively distant in the others; there seems to be no basis for assuming a structural musical relationship.

Cycle I is rather remarkably homogeneous. Its meter is an unvarying 4/4 throughout the four songs; the tonal ranges are almost identical (17, 17, 19, 19); patterns of melodic direction show practically the same degrees of movement in the same directions; with the exception of song 1, phrases are very similar (Types Ia, II, II, II); the subjective tonic and duration tone are

identical in three of the four songs; the distribution of interval usage is very similar; the modal structures are almost identical (3 penta do and 1 penta la). Whether by accident or design, the four songs in Cycle I are markedly homogeneous.

Cycle IV, as an example, shows considerable diversity in musical material. Metric changes are apparent not only within songs but between them; tonal range varies from 7 to 23 semitones; melodic direction patterns are fairly similar; phrase patterns are varied (Types II, I, I, II); subjective tonic and duration tone are identical in three of the four songs; distribution of interval usage is quite varied; the modal structures are by no means identical (tri, tetra, penta, penta).

It remains to be pointed out that Cycle V is considered by the singer to consist of four variations or repetitions of the same song; to the ear, the similarities among the versions is clear. In analysis, however, some differences are noted: meter varies; tonal range is fairly close, as is melodic direction; phrase patterns vary markedly; subjective tonic and duration tone are equal in two of four songs; interval usage is very similar throughout the cycle with no wide intervals used at all; modal structures are varied (penta, tetra, tetra, hexa).

The conclusion to be drawn is simply that the ethnographic evidence in the matter of choice of songs for a cycle is borne out by the musical evidence—the choice may clearly be cohesive or not cohesive musically, and the basis for choice seems to rest on considerations other than musical sound.

IV

Comparison

A comparison of the songs under discussion here with the Washo songs analyzed by McAllester (1949:54-6) is slightly disturbing in the fairly consistent differences which appear between the two. Thus, McAllester speaks of uncomplicated structure, moderate tempo (106-36), simplicity of melodic line, short length, normalcy of five, six, or seven repetitions, no rhythmic changes at the ends of the songs, range almost never more than an octave and often as little as a fourth or fifth, most songs in the simple ABC pattern, and uniform phrase lengths; each of these is in almost direct contradistinction to the songs analyzed here. Some similarities are present, however, including the facts of no introductory formulae, time values of individual notes almost wholly restricted to eighth and quarter notes, general contour of melodic line, the division of each phrase into two sections, textual material consisting almost entirely of vocables, the sameness of these vocables, the use of something like *heya wana yo wana* in almost all songs, and the singing of one syllable to the note. So far as the present authors are concerned, the question of why the differences occur remains a problem for future research.

In comparison with the general characteristics of Peyote style summarized by McAllester (1949:80-2), there is considerably more agreement, and the Washo songs for the most part seem clearly to fall within the general pattern.

1) In manner of singing, the Peyote style is lacking in the tenseness frequently noted as characteristic of American Indian singing in general. The Washo songs conform to the Peyote style in this respect.

2) Peyote songs are usually sung at a brisk tempo averaging approximately 130-140 beats per minute; moreover, this tempo is maintained throughout the song with little variation. The Washo songs conform to the Peyote style.

3) The characteristics of drum and rattle accompaniment noted by McAllester cannot always be applied to the Washo Peyote songs. Thus it is not true in the Washo songs that "these instruments are played at the same speed as the vocal part of the song," and that "it is clear that the intention is for [the voice and instruments] to be at least approximately together. . . ." In these respects, the Washo songs do not concur with McAllester's Peyote style.

4) Note values in the Peyote style are restricted almost exclusively to the quarter and eighth note; the Washo songs show this characteristic.

5) In structure, there are again some differences. In the following Peyote characteristics, the Washo songs do not conform: vocal introductions present, a tendency toward restricted range, and long flattened coda-like section at the end of the song. In the following respects, the Washo songs do conform: phrase patterns of Plains type; and an incidence of a type of paired phrases.

6) The cumulative use of the tonic in finals is partially apparent in the Washo songs.

7) There is considerable textual consistency in the Washo songs, including the use of variations of what seems to be the standard Peyote phrase, *he ne ne yo wa*.

In four of seven characteristics, then, the Washo songs are close to the general Peyote style indicated by McAllester. In the remaining three characteristics there are some marked differences, such as in structure, and some partial similarities, such as the cumulative use of the tonic in finals. It seems clear that the Washo songs are basically in the Peyote style with some individual idiosyncracies apparent.

NOTE ON THE TRANSCRIPTIONS

The songs notated are representative of the various cycles; each is headed with pertinent information in abbreviated form. Thus the legend for the fourth song, "Song IV,3: 2u: 144," indicates that the song is the third in the fourth cycle, that the original pitch was 2 semitones higher (2d would indicate the original pitch to be 2 semitones lower, in each case without regard for octave), and that the tempo of the vocal line is 144 beats per minute. The basis for the tempo figure is the quarter note; the songs are notated in that key in which the majority of notes falls within the limits of the regular staff lines. Special signs used are those standard in ethnomusicology.

NOTES

¹ Abbreviations used: M—major; m—minor; dim—diminished; r—rising, f—falling. Further explanations of the various interval patterns may be found in Kolinski 1936:498-501.

² Duration tone refers to that tone which is most heavily weighted throughout the song as defined by actual duration count. The subjective tonic designates the subjective criterion of a key feeling, or tonality, as observed by Western musicians in respect to Western musical traditions.

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