THE INTEGRATION OF THE SUN DANCE IN UTE RELIGION

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IN 1919, Professor Lowie briefly described the sun dance of the Shoshoni, Ute and Hidatsa.[1] In 1921, Dr Leslie Spier, in his paper entitled *The Sun Dance of the Plains Indians*, summarized the data on the Ute in the following manner:[2]

> There is little information on the Ute dance, but it suggests that here too the dance is controlled by a single individual. The leader is a medicineman. The dancers desire supernatural power, but only a few receive sufficient to qualify as medicinemen.

Later, in 1924, Lowie characterized the object of the Southern Ute dance as "primarily the attainment of a shaman's powers, secondarily the cure of sick men."According to him:[3]

> The leader was of course possessed of shamanistic powers. Sometimes as many as forty men participated in the ritual, but only a few of them attained their wish to become medicinemen. Some Ute would take part in four or five ceremonies before having their hopes fulfilled. When exhausted from fasting, a person would faint and then he might dream about eating and the Sun would tell he was to be a medicineman. After a while, he would wake up and feel quite well.

Since Lowie's helpful accounts and Spier's summary, no description of the Ute sun dance has appeared although the rite is held annually at two places on the reservation and is by all odds the most important religious ceremonial undertaken by the tribe. In 1936 and 1937 it was the author's good fortune to witness four sun dances at the Ignacio agency center and the Towaoc sub-agency. In addition, native informants furnished a number of full statements on the dance and its significance. Because the sun dance proved to be central in Ute religious organization, a thorough treatment of the subject is in order.

The ceremonial reached the Northern Ute from the Shoshoni around 1890, and in all probability originated with the Arapaho and Cheyenne. Because of its late introduction and foreign origin, it is surprising that the dance found a cardinal place of honor in Ute society. Of a number of dances

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[1] *The Sun Dance of the Shoshoni, Ute and Hidatsa* (Anthropological Papers, American Museum Natural History, vol. XVI), pp. 387–431.

[2] Anthropological Papers, American Museum Natural History, vol. XVI, Part VII, p. 486.

[3] *Notes on Shoshonean Ethnography* (Anthropological Papers, American Museum Natural History, vol. XX, Part III), p. 291.

and rituals which functioned formerly, only the bear and sun dances persist with anything like their original force. Since the latter is a borrowed complex, coming originally from Plains Indian sources, the modifications of this rite by the Ute must throw light upon the integration of their religion and upon its distinctive features.

The Ute themselves credit the Arapaho with the discovery of this dance.[4] According to them, there is the story told by Oklahoma Indians which fully accounts for the Arapaho ritual:

> It was during the hottest part of summer and an Arapaho was swimming in a river. Soon he began to hear some singing in the tall trees by the shore. He came out and went over to those trees. They were straight and tall, like pine or spruce. When he came near, the song died in the wind. He returned to the water. The sun rose higher, and the light was blinding. After a while, he heard singing again, this time louder and stronger. The songs seemed to come from the trees. He went close to the trees again. As he looked up, he saw a buffalo-head in the fork of the tallest tree. This made the songs; this gave him the idea of the sun dance.

Although the Southern Ute tell this story of the Arapaho in all seriousness and claim, furthermore, to have received this dance recently from Northern Ute and Shoshoni sources, nevertheless they have a myth to account for its religious importance among themselves. The Ute story is vague and short, but it none the less succeeds in surrounding this dated and borrowed complex with an aura of mystery befitting its supernatural dignity. According to the Ute myth:

> There was a young man who once got very tired while far from camp and fell asleep. He dreamed about sun dance, and when he awoke, there was Sunav. (Sunav is Wolf, half trickster and half culture-hero, who figures prominently in Ute mythology—MKO). Then Sunav told him there would be a time when the streams would dry up and the leaves on the trees would shrivel. He said the sun dance would harden the men for this time. There would be one tiny stream left, Sunav said, where these young men could get water for the camp. The men would be ready for that. So Sunav said he should have the people fix the poles and corral for that dance. This would make them good Indians, he said.
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> According to Sunav's wishes, the dancers were supposed to dance for twelve seasons, once they joined the sun dance. They were supposed to think seriously of that dance. The young man returned, knowing that he was supposed to take charge of the sun dance. That is why the Indians are supposed to pray for everything at sun dance. If they grow crops, they pray for them. They pray for abundance. This prepares them for the time when there will be drought. The dance is to give thanks

[4] This is accurate according to Lowie, *Shoshonean Ethnography*, *op. cit.*, p. 291, and Spier, *op. cit.*, p. 495.

for everything over the world. They heard the young man say the dance was only for once every year. The first sun dance drum was very large with twelve men around it; the whistle was an eagle-bone taken from the upper wing. Today the dancers pray for crops and the welfare of all the people. Ever since that first time they have had the sun dance.

This tale is intended to make the dance their own.

Having separated the Ute sun dance from its known Arapaho, Cheyenne, Sioux and Kiowa antecedents, my informants tell how it is incorporated into the calendar of important yearly events. After the annual bear dance in the spring, the sun dance leader always announces the date for his ceremonial to the assemblage. As custodian of the ritual, and nothing more, he warns the young men who intend to dance to be ready when the time comes. Often he recites the myth recounted above and ends by asking the co-operation of all the people. The dance itself is usually held at the first full moon in July "when the sun is strongest." Today, at Ignacio, this date is often set back to some time between the 10th and 20th of July because of urgent agricultural labors required earlier in the month.[5] However at Towaoc, where no such economic considerations interfere, the ceremony occurs on the original date.

On the surface, the decision to dance is entirely personal. The man who so wishes merely notifies the sun dance leader some time before the rite. Actually, however, more is involved. For if one dreams about dancing in sun dance, he is expected to enter the ranks of the performers voluntarily. There is no external compulsion, but such dreams come directly from the sun and have unlimited supernatural force. The reluctance of a bashful boy or aged old man to assume the heavy obligation of the public ordeal is equally swept aside in favor of the divinely ordained duty. Asked whether he would "believe such dreams," a young, emancipated Ignacio Ute told me: "If I believed it, if it was real, why then I'd go through with it and agree to dance."

This dream-vision is closely connected with the assumption of supernatural power. A dream of dancing in the ceremony is therefore something

[5] A young Ignacio farmer bewailed the recent turn of events: "This year we have sun dance here on the 10th of July and it's not regular that way. When I looked that date up on the calendar it said the last quarter of the moon began then. We have it that way because they'll just be getting through with haying then. Before they begin on something else there are a few days for sun dance. Nowadays, it must not interfere with farming. The singers go home to tend to irrigation while the dancers rest. Last year the singers hurried home to watch their farms in between. It makes you wonder whether we are Utes or farmers. The new life comes in between. Over at Towaoc, the old sun dance leader, the old chief, is dead. They're talking of combining the Ignacio and Towaoc dances, and its too bad the way those things are going."

of a promise that curing power will someday come in the course of the sun ritual. Actually, there are three ways in which such power is obtained: (1) when the shaman chooses some young man or woman and sends the required dreams or visions through his own power; (2) when the novice apprentices himself to the shaman, learning his songs and ceremonies and meanwhile awaiting the dreams which really signalize the coming of power; and (3) when a young man gets his visions directly from the sun in the course of the sun dance. In the latter case, the incumbent is reminded, again through dreams, to participate in the rite.

Although the dancers are said to benefit the whole tribe by their services, nevertheless they must pay for this privilege. In the old days, sun dancers used to give at least one horse to a friend or spectator in much the same way as Ute warriors gave away horses following a successful raid. Even today, when horses are less plentiful, shawls, blankets, buckskin and silver are used as substitutes. The gifts are presented to selected visitors and friends as tokens of the good luck they are to have during the coming year.[6] In addition, the dancers are supposed to bring sick people into the corral and pray for them or dance for them. Not only the assumption of supernatural power, but its training and strengthening takes place within the corral. The sick are cured, the religious are purified, and those with curing power already in their possession are fortified, all as a result of the group ritual.

The Southern Ute, moreover, do not torture themselves during participation in the sun dance nor do they take active part in fulfilment of a vow. While the word for sun dance literally means "dancing without water" and while its connotations of thirsting and fasting are strictly observed, there is no intention of mortifying the flesh beyond a species of religious asceticism. Water and food, they say, prevent the dancer from freeing himself of bodily encumbrances. The more oblivious the body is of what is happening, the more inert and mechanical its movements become, the greater freedom there is for concentration on visions of power. Thus the unceasing backward-forward movement of the dance, so spectacular to the observer, is intended only to lead into the deep and exhausted sleeping periods when dreams come.

No careful informant will give a blanket explanation of the visions obtained. They vary with individual supernatural power and no dancer will

[6] Contrary to expert tourist opinion, there is no remuneration for the dancers. The visitor's charge of twenty-five or fifty cents goes half to the owner of the land on which the dance is held, and half for the materials making up the corral. If anything is left after timber and wire are paid for, it goes for the melons and sweets eaten by the dancers after their ordeal.

divulge the contents of his dreams to any other. In only one case did power fail to give my informant the rule not to tell about his vision. In this instance, he saw an eagle at the fork of the center pole flapping his wings against the broken branch; water poured from the branch, and as my informant crumpled in his place, the eagle dropped to the ground, and approaching him, spoke. But what the eagle said was secret. As another informant declared, "If people aren't in sun dance, they don't know what it means; and if they are in it, then power usually tells them in a dream or some other way never to tell."

Fewer people perform in the sun dance today than was once the case. At Ignacio one finds five or six dancers and at Towaoc a dozen or more, but at one time there were close to sixty Southern Utes in a single ceremony. Not all receive power in a single ceremony and all are expected to dance year after year unless otherwise ordered by their respective powers. If the ritual is interrupted by rain or windstorm, the performers are expected to start over again when the weather clears.

As examples of the great religious force exemplified in this rite, the Ute tell a number of stories repeated on countless occasions. According to one tale, the dance had been in progress for a day when the sky suddenly became leaden with heavy rain clouds. The dancers kept moving and the singers continued with their songs, but the clouds gathered ominously. Then one of the dancers stopped to pray. The prayer was an audible appeal to the sun. Before long the clouds separated and drew back on either side of the sun. "They rolled back like a tipi-door," said one informant, "and the sun came out. It was the work of great power to make the clouds roll back like curtains."

According to another story: "A fellow was knocked flat on his back while he was dancing. They left him alone for a while, but he couldn't come to. Then E—— C——, who has strong power went over to where he was lying. E—— C—— had been dancing with the rest and he looked dry; his skin was chalky and his eyes were sunk in their sockets. But he just kneeled and squirted water from his mouth into the other one's mouth. He did this for a while, and then the man came to. C—— must have plenty of power to do that."

The affective appeal of the ritual is evidenced by informants in their generalized accounts of the dance. A typical and accurate discussion is the following:

> The Ute have sun dance to help the crops and cure people, but we Southern Ute run it also to give people power through that dance. The power is to cure the sick; not everyone gets it, but those who are chosen, who believe, who don't stop in the

middle when they begin to feel power coming to them—they're the ones who receive it. They have to dance on and on before they get power. It doesn't always come to a man in a single sun dance. If the singers are good, that always helps the dancers go through with it. If the singers don't sing so strong, they say it's harder to make the grade in the dance. I used to sing for sun dance. That way I know.

When power comes, it usually comes all at once. If the man is dancing, the power won't wait and it just knocks him down. Some fellows go through five or six times before anything happens to them, or it might come to them the first time. One never knows when the power is going to come, but when it comes you know it. Say I got power from the sun the third time I went through sun dance. I would probably dance in it the rest of my days, hoping for that power to come back stronger.

When the power is coming towards a man they say he shouldn't give up. He may feel queer, but he shouldn't stop dancing then. Then is the time to keep on dancing back and forward to that pole. When he feels it coming on, he should have the courage to keep on dancing till it really hits him. Sometimes the power waits and comes later when he sleeps. It's the same thing.

Sometimes sick people are brought around and the dancers who have power are in there dancing for them. That sun dance corral is like an Indian church. It has a gate open towards the east where the sun rises, and all around trees are planted in the shape of a circle. Usually there are twelve trees in the circle representing the twelve disciples of God. The forked tree in the center represents Creator-of-Humans. The white people see that corral and think it's just trees, but the Indians know it is their religion.

In the dance they go up to the pole and back. Back and forth, looking at that forked tree in the center. The dancers are over on the west side facing east. Back and forth. They have eagle-tail feathers attached to their little fingers in each hand, and they have eagle-bone whistles in their mouths to blow upon. As they dance, looking up, they can forget about themselves. They can get power from Creator-of-Humans through the sun. They can see visions, too, if they are moving like in a dream.

There is no one kind of vision, but usually they begin to see four things through the sun: Fish, water, buffalo, or eagle. The water is from some kind of water monster. The power comes through these things, but it comes first to them from the sun. The dancer begins to dream those things: a fish, water, buffalo, or an eagle. But he can't just give up. If he gets scared and stops dancing while the power is coming, that means he doesn't want to take it. It would look silly, after going through with it. But if he keeps going after he sees fish, water, buffalo, or eagle up there on that pole, then the power will probably come and knock him out or it will come later in his dreams.

They don't eat or drink anything during the dance. They may get water through the air if they have enough power, and I've seen them smash up against that center pole and act as if they were drinking. They say that sometimes they see water running down that pole like a clear spring and then they suck it up through the eagle-bone whistle. It runs through the whistle into their mouths, but you can't see it.

When they cure sick people on the dance grounds, the sick one goes in and stands or lies on a blanket. Any dancer with power can go over to the sick one. He comes over and presses on the part that hurts. He brushes the person back and front with a fan of eagle-tail feathers. They brush down, doing the head first, then the front, the sides, the back and finally the feet. This runs the evil sickness right out into the ground. They do this during any part of the dance usually during the daytime. That sick person is barefoot and he stands on a deer-hide or a buffalo-hide. The medicine-man doing it always prays. He usually faces the sun as he does this because that's where the power came from. Later that person can pay the medicine-man for this, —money, or a horse, or whatever he can afford. In this curing, they don't promise anything before. It's different (from the ordinary curing ceremony); they give whatever they want to.

In the morning, just before the sun comes up, the sun dance leader brushes off the dancers too. He fans them one by one at sun-up, and the dancers stretch their hands toward the sun as it rises. Then the dancers are free of evil, too.

When the people go to get the tree for the center pole, they usually take along an old warrior, the oldest man in the tribe who has brought back enemy horses or led a good raid. Then they can make the corral.

The dancers have on G-strings and they are painted. In the morning their relatives are there to help them. Any woman relative mixes the paint at the camp and brings it over for the dancer to paint himself. They are all painted different according to their own ideas. They paint up every morning after they're brushed and before the rest period. Then they can change their costumes during the three days if they want. Some do it.

The relatives also supply the willows for the corral and their dancer's bedding. They gather it up in the evening and take it over in the morning. The morning songs beginning each day's dance are always the same. You can tell it is just starting up, because the other songs can be different.

The dancers always face the pole, dancing forward toward the forked tree and back again, dancing backward. Nowadays, they don't always dance three days and three nights at Ignacio like they used to do. Now it's sometimes two nights and two and a half days. Each dancer has that whistle in his mouth and blows on it while he dances in time to the music. It takes wind. He looks up toward the fork of the center pole while he dances, so his eyes are always toward the sun. When one stops, the leader can tell him, "How do you expect power if you haven't the good courage to take it"? When they rest like that, they show they're not accepting the power, not going through with it. Dancers say it just tightens up inside the chest before the power comes.

Around the second day, the leader himself will walk to the center pole and pray. He always faces the sun. At this time he can hold his hands toward the sun. Up at the fork of the pole, they have a bundle of willows put there from the beginning. A wooden doll with its face painted is put up on the pole. It belongs to the sun dance leader and he prays to it for help in the dance. When the dancers get dizzy toward the end, they can run to one side of the pole or into it. In the morning dances, they

pray a greeting to the rising sun. But no one will tell when he gets power from the sun or how it happened. They are knocked out with the smash of all that power coming to them at once.

Having set forth at least one typical and generalized account of the purpose and emotionalized religious effects of the sun dance, it would next be helpful to have a picture of the entire ceremonial before us.

The ritual begins formally with the "capture of the centerpole," a function of the entire tribe. A day before the dance is to be held, a group of prominent tribesmen, the sun dance leader, assisting shamans and a group of warriors set out to find a suitable cottonwood tree. A typical band camp follows behind, whole families with children straggling in the rear guarded by scouts. The oldest warrior, one who had led his people on raids and had perhaps killed an enemy, acts as chief. Riding ahead with a scout, he sights the tree which is dubbed "an enemy chief." The band leader shoots for the center pole, aiming at the fork or "heart." When the arrow or bullet strikes, the others, armed also with bows and arrows, rush forward. Two men with axes chop the tree down as fast as possible. This is called "cutting down the enemy." As day dawns, the men and women circle round the fallen tree, shouting their victory. The woman help in stripping the limbs off, just as they strip a fallen enemy on the field of battle. When the loot is collected and the captive thoroughly taunted, they load him on a wagon and return to camp. Those who remained behind while the others went for the tree have a sham battle with the victors upon their arrival at the camp. "You aren't Utes! You didn't help!" the victors cry. Finally they win their right to enter the camp and the pole is placed on the ground.

On July 20, 1937, the triumphal procession drove up to the home camp with two wagonloads of such captives—the chief pole and the corral poles—out in front. The sun dance leader drove the wagon carrying the chief pole, and the second wagon was driven by his son. Four riders drew up abreast in the rear, the tribal chief among them. This procession circled the sun dance grounds twice singing victory songs in much the same way as a returning raiding expedition circled the band camp before the reservation period. They went around clockwise and then entered the camp from the east and unloaded the poles. The forks of the centerpole faced the east.

The sun dance leader then addressed the group making any announcements concerning the rite that he saw fit. In the 1937 ceremonial at Ignacio, three men were chosen to lead the sun dance in the future since the leader announced his retirement for the following year. Then the centerpole was decorated on the forked branches with brightly colored scarfs; "the warrior is decorated while lying in a bed of branches," as one informant explained.

Nanes, a blind old man almost a century in age was chosen as the oldest warrior who had killed an enemy and fought in the wars. Someone held the gun for him while he shot the tree—for the second time—amid shouting and singing. The drum started and first they sang a victory war song of the type sung after a successful raiding party returns. Then war dance songs were sung of the type used for starting out on an expedition. After each song, the onlookers shouted and gave calls. The singers lined up on either side of the centerpole and applauded by using their eagle-bone whistles.

The centerpole, a big cottonwood trunk about twenty-five feet long, forked at the top, was then stripped of bark beginning at the bottom and extending about eight feet up from the base. The bark hacked off in three foot strips was laid to one side while the men stood around and joked. A few were busy meanwhile digging fourteen holes for the circular corral, two for the gateway to the east and twelve others for the pillars of the enclosure.[7] The groundplan of the circular corral had a diameter of almost ninety feet.

Then one man took some black and red paints which one of the dancers had brought over and painted the stripped section with a wide black band in the center flanked by two broad bands of red, above and below. The bands of color encircling the trunk were so placed as to be at eye level when the pole was raised. Above this, a heavy red arrow design was painted on pointing to the fork of the tree to remind the dancers later, I was told, that they must always look up at the forked branches while they danced. The black paint was made from charcoal and the red was red ochre, mined in Mancos Canyon and mixed the day before.[8] I was also informed at this time that if a great many men were pledged to dance, they just painted the centerpole red all over. A hole was now dug in the center of the corral to receive the base of the centerpole.

Before they raise the pole, the dancers and singers sing a special song. Three times the centerpole is lifted and set back on the ground; and each time the song is repeated, the eagle-bone whistles following and the men shouting at the end. The singing is an announcement to the supernatural powers that the people are going to dance and that they need help. It is the

[7] The Ute tipi of the old days was made on a skeleton of 12 to 15 poles, two of these being ear-poles for the door. It is interesting in this connection to note that although two of my informants referred to the sun dance corral as "the Indian church," seven others called it "the tipi of the people"; the twelve pillars of the enclosure were variously called "the disciples of Christ" and "the sun dance tipi poles." Older informants, less acculturated by white contact, preferred the latter connotations.

[8] The black paint is charcoal and grease, the red a pounded red ochre mixed with water; when the sediment of the ochre settles in the bottom of the vessel, the water is drained off at the top.

kind of prayer-song sung by the men in the evening when they sit around the fire and rest. Then one of the dancers brings fresh, green willow branches, some of which are tied to the fork of the centerpole. Finally, the centerpole is girdled with a rope at the top and is raised slowly and easily by placing two crossed props (made of two poles crossed and tied together) underneath. The tree was propped higher up near the forked end since one of the crossed props was higher than the other. Then it was raised and dropped into the hole in the center of the corral, while an iron bar was held to guide it at the base. The two ends of the rope girdling the pole were used to set it perfectly upright, and once set, the pole was turned until the red arrow pointing towards the fork was at the west end, while the forks faced north and south. Now the band leader in war-bonnet and regalia announces that "the enemy chief," the tree, talked like a living person until it was cut down. Then it became the representative of God. He points over west where the forked centerpoles of three previous sun dances are still standing. The tattered silk scarfs still nailed to the top of one were bleached a dirty white and half of the oldest pole was worn away. No Ute dared remove these battered remnants once they had played their sacred role in sun dance.

The corral is completed by setting the other fourteen poles in place and joining them together with thirteen additional poles laid across the top and tied together with wire. It is almost noon when the helpers are finished and the entire afternoon is spent in gathering up brush and willows to fill in the walls of the corral. The willow brush around the sides makes a solid enclosure. The work is completed by tying fresh willow branches over the section of the centerpole painted red and black.

By five o'clock the brush has all been cut and laid in place. The dancers circle the centerpole three times blowing their whistles. Everything is ready now and they may go for a swim and have dinner. If they think it will rain, a few onlookers are instructed to build a tipi behind the corral. In all these preparations there is a great deal of co-operative effort.[9]

At sundown, the dancers have their last drink of water. The family camps are now spread out north of the agency surrounding the dance corral. On July 20, about ten main camp clusters were noted, spread out at random. A large sun dance drum is heard beating three times to call the people together and the families gather around the gate to the corral.

When all are assembled, whistles are heard over west of the corral and

[9] My help was also welcomed in making the corral. After the work was done, I was told to wear a red or bright silk scarf "like a Ute." Then, they said, the gateman who took admission each day would recognize my dress by this mark. At night, he would make no mistake and neither I nor my wife would have to pay admission.

the dancers emerge, blowing rhythmically. They circle the corral three times going clockwise and enter on the third time; they walk south of the centerpole and each man takes his place in the northwest corner of the corral.[10] The onlookers surge in and stand in the southeast corner. Finally a shaman addresses them, giving the crowd instructions and emphasizing the solemnity of the event. In the meantime, the sun dance leader approaches the centerpole and prays softly. The willows have been stripped off the middle, where the designs are, and the dance is about to begin.

A diagram of the inside of the dance grounds would show the following: The gate is to the east with a gatekeeper and helpers stationed outside. At night there is a bright brush fire east of the centerpole, lighting up the dancers on the opposite side. The five dancers (at Ignacio) are ranged diagonally from the north to the west point, facing southeast. The men in the audience are sitting and standing between the north point and the east point with a few standing before the brush fire. The singers are at the south point around the large drum; seated around them are the women and younger children opposite the dancers. Later on the women join in the singing, forming a chorus for the male singers. There are three large hoop drums covered on both sides with hide and laced around the rim like an army drum.

The dancers are dressed individualistically in bright calico skirts with G-strings over them; they are bared to the waist with only a shell gorget ornament of beadwork on the chest. They are barefoot and wear beaded belts. All have on the chest ornament, except the sun dance leader who stands now at the north point. Their bed-rolls are examined outside by the gatekeeper and then brought in. From now to the end of the ceremony, the dancers may only leave in pairs, covering themselves with sheets as they go out.

After some preliminary practice singing, during which the fire is built east of the centerpole, the large hoop-drum, three feet in diameter, begins to sound. The drum has rawhide stretched across and can be heard for miles around calling in stragglers. When all is ready, the leader again goes to the pole from the north point and prays, this time to himself. While this is going on the man at the west side announces the length of the dance in days and nights, and tells how long the dancers' sleeping and rest periods will be. He says that the dancers must fast and thirst. He finally warns the women assembled to watch themselves for the onset of menstruation since

[10] If they hold the dance for three days, they circle the corral three times. A four-day dance would require four clockwise circuits.

this is dangerous for the dancers and for the men present. He ends by thanking the spectators for coming, and then the dance songs begin.

There are two types of sun dance song, one during which the dancers rest. The other type is the dance accompaniment and for both the large drum is used. The singers have just been advised how to space the rest songs and their drum is now set before them strung to three small posts about six inches from the ground. The rhythm of their songs is appropriate for the dance step, a few short steps or hops up to the pole or towards it, and then a series of steps back to position. The dancers must always face the pole while dancing and should not rest except for the resting songs. In all the dances I saw, there were few falls from grace on the matter of resting.

The dancers stand in their places and blow on the whistles. As they dance towards the pole and back again, they blow staccato notes on the whistles in time to the rhythm of the music. Their eyes are raised to the fork of the centerpole and they dance in this manner until sunrise.

In the old days, as my informants said, the corral looked more like a large brush-covered tipi with a dozen or more poles extending from the centerpole to the walls of the corral. Inside, the spectators witnessed the ceremony which brought power to the tribe. Even today, spectators are not allowed to whistle, to lie down, or in any way to disturb the dancers.[11] For the spectators to rest, they must return to their respective camps after midnight. Few remain during the night and the singers take turns at the big drum. Toward morning, the corral looks deserted, but the dancers continue until the first sign of daybreak in the east.

In the morning of the second day, when the sun rose, the dancers went to the north side of the centerpole and lined up. They blew on their whistles and prayed while the singers sang the Morning Song as the sun rose.[12] After this song was repeated in three verses, the drums sounded to call the people together.

Posts have been placed between each dancer and his neighbors, and two small archways of birch saplings have been placed at the north and west points running diagonally toward the centerpole. The archways are made by setting four birches in a row, two together and two far apart on either side; the two close together are then bent in opposite directions and tied at the top to the two birches on the outside. These archways cut the dancers

[11] Gum-chewing is especially forbidden. It is said to trouble the performers.

[12] Some of the dance songs are changed every year and new ones are invented; but the Morning Song remains the same. One informant compared the Morning Song to the old songs sung in the Deer Hoof Rattle Dance; *vide, The Southern Ute of Colorado,* in *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes* R. Linton, editor: 1940, p. 155.

off from the spectators and visitors are not allowed beyond the archways with shoes or moccasins on. If a dancer drops anything within this smaller enclosure, he is forbidden to pick it up until the dancing stops and the rest period begins. Two men in charge may remove their shoes and retrieve the object after the singing has ceased. Whenever this occurs, the man who picks up the object must go to the centerpole, and announce that someone will tell a story. An important elderly Ute is usually chosen and his story will either be a stirring exploit of the days when the Utes raided for horses, or a humerous incident intended to please the spectators. This form was followed any time that things were dropped in the runways, or any time the dancers were stopped for a rest period, morning, noon, or night.

While this happens, sheets are strung up between the poles separating the dancers from the public. Each dancer rests alone in his separate compartment and may sleep for a brief while.

During the morning song, the dancers hold up their hands to the sun and pray. They pray individually, but those who have no power ask that it may come to them, while the others plead with their powers "to do good." After this the gatekeeper is replaced by his assistant, a guard for the day. The dancers may dream until the guard beats the drum at a specified time and the dancing begins again.

The dancers are now painted for the first time in accordance with instructions received in some dream. They paint each other with materials furnished by their relatives. The guard removes the ashes from the fire, calls for the drum and tells the dancers to hurry with their preparations. They are now to dance steadily until sundown.

On July 21, when the dancers emerged from their compartments, all had red paint on the face, around the eyes. The leader had red paint on his legs and feet, and the dancer next to him had red paint on the shoulders, arms and chest. T—— B—— Jr. had a beaded headband on with two pendants on the sides to which downy eagle feathers were attached. B—— K—— had a design in green paint on his face, consisting of three parallel lines drawn up toward the cheekbones with three dots directly below each line. When L—— F—— H——, the tribal matriarch came into the corral, she began to applaud with a highpitched keening tone. Then all the women applauded the appearance of the dancers. The women had bunches of willows in their hands which they pounded on the ground in time to the music to produce a rustling sound. The dancing then continued all day with rest periods in between.

On the afternoon of the second day, three new things made their appearance:

(1) Three willow trees were planted in a row going east and west between the singers and the centerpole. This was so that the dancers would not be troubled by the sight of the people on the other side.

(2) The sun dance doll was tied to the west side of the centerpole about six feet from the ground. The doll was dressed like a sun dancer with a feather in its hair and a skirt around its legs; it also wore a tiny chest ornament. The doll was about nine inches high, made of wood and painted.

(3) One more archway of birch saplings was set up between the dancers' runways and the rest of the corral on both sides. The additional archway was made of two birches planted in the same row and tied at the top about three feet from the ground. The leaves were left on and tied to the stem, or trunk. The posts between the dancers' quarters were painted red halfway up from the bottom. These were called the shaman's tipis.

On the afternoon of the second day, it began to rain slightly, but not enough to stop the dance. T—— B—— Jr. came forward and raised his arms as if to push the rain back. During the rain, the crowd thinned only slightly and the dancing went on a little more slowly.

On the evening of the second day, the drum was sounded three times to assemble the people. At the beginning the sun dance leader danced up to the centerpole alone, hugged it, patted it, and fanned it with the fan of eagle-tail feathers he was carrying. He then fanned his chest and legs to drive out the tired feeling. When the dancing began, there was no change in dance step but the tempo had increased appreciably. The dancers went continuously and one danced up to the center pole and grasped it with both hands as the leader had done earlier. (The leader must set a good example to the other performers.) The shell gorgets were changed; some on ribbon or brown mink skin. Some dancers carried fans of eagle-tail feathers used by Ute shamans to drive illness away. One carried nothing; and one carried wildflowers in one hand mixed with bright green brush which he smelled from time to time (to revive him, I was told).[13] The crowd, on the evening of the second day, included a large group of whites. Among the Ute also, this time is regarded as the peak of the ritual. Usually, if power is going to be manifest, the first symptoms appear.

The morning of the third day was the same as the preceding one. Two morning songs were sung by the singers who had remained up all night. Then the dancers went right on dancing until noon before taking a rest. Fresh willows were brought in to the dancers by friends or relatives. Both men and women brought them as a sign of good will.

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[13] If dancers cannot stand the ordeal, they can be excused, according to the leader.

Following a brief rest, there were further changes in facial design. O—— Rabbit had red around the eyes with red spots painted down the sides of his cheeks. T—— B—— had his cheeks painted red and a green spot appeared on his forehead. R—— Cloud had green circles on his shoulders fringed with yellow. The dance leader had no paint on, but the man to his right had the right upper part of his face in green (around the eyes) and the left upper part of the face red. The dancers had again changed their skirts and chest ornaments. One of them had two eagle-tail feathers planted before his stall, according to the dictates of his power. The dance was finally interrupted again while one of the shamans, not in the ritual, but a former sun dance leader, gave a long talk on the history of the sun dance: how the Arapaho had it, then the Cheyenne; how it spread throughout the Plains to the Shoshoni and then the Northern Ute; how it started at Towaoc and how they brought it to Ignacio. He ended with a plea to the people not to lose the dance because of its importance in curing and its greater service in keeping the Ute together. Then someone brought flowers for the sun dance leader: the tops of hollyhocks of numerous shades. The dancers carried these gifts to their leader. Willows and flowers arrived for a few more dancers.

Now one of the dancers carried a mounted horn in his left hand and an eagle-tail fan in his right; he lifted these to the center pole and to the sun. He stared straight at the sun for some time with his arms lifted. After this he staggered a little. Another dancer held the willows and hollyhock stalks to each side of the sun dance doll and prayed while looking at the sun. The sun dance leader then tied a wreath of hollyhock flowers around the neck of the sun dance doll. Another shaman not dancing in the ceremony received the willows and flowers and called the designated dancers out to receive them. Another dancer appeared with two mounted horns in his hands and danced in his place blowing on his eagle whistle.

Until late in the afternoon of the third day, the dancers when not advancing toward the center pole, bent their knees to the rhythm of the songs in place. After the merest flurry of rain, the leader fanned the four other dancers, the pole and himself to prevent any mishap. Daisies and other flowers were planted around the centerpole and willows were placed on the fork of the pole.

On the evening of the third day, the dancers began to sing songs through their whistles, which had been sent them in dreams or in the course of the dance. The dancing again continued all night, ending on the morning of the fourth day with the regular morning ceremony and Morning Songs. After that the dancers painted again, this time as they had the preceding day; and danced on until noon.

After the last song, the tribal chief spoke for the first time wishing the visitors and guests well, and ushering in the final gift-giving ceremony. The first part of the gift-giving took place when certain of the Ute women went over to the women visitors[14] and presented them with rolls of cloth, beads, bags and bandanas. The Ute women who gave things away were relatives of men who had danced. Then the male dancers came out of their stalls, one by one, put willows on the ground, stepped upon them and gave presents to the men visitors. After each gift was given, the men visitors took the fan of eagle-tail feathers carried by the dancer and fanned him ceremonially: first his head; then his left shoulder; then his right shoulder; then his left side; then his right side; then the front of the body from top to bottom; and finally the back. The dancers reciprocated with the ritual fanning and prayed for each man.[15] Then the people began to leave and the dancers were brought drinking water.

The final act of the ceremony occurs when the gatekeeper fans the sun dance pole and then himself in the above prescribed manner. Others who so wish may do the same, the fanning of the pole being construed as a prayer for all the Ute. The sun dance leader's explanation of the fanning of a person was simply that "it gets rid of all evil and sickness. It drives evil power away. When you do it to someone else, it wishes him good luck and a long life." The shaman went on to explain:

> In this dance, you dance for power and the good of all the people. Usually you dream about dancing in the sun dance. In those dreams you are dancing with a bunch you don't know. You see marks and signs on the tree that you'll expect to see later when you really get into it. The spirit of the dance, the sun, will tell you you're going to dance.
>
> Every morning when the sun comes over the mountains, the dancers go to the north side of the pole and whistle and pray. Even if the singers are going, they stop and sing that morning song when the sun comes up. They sing the same old song when they start in every morning.
>
> The man from the west point prays aloud during the morning song. He's praying for the whole tribe, their good, and for all the people. Nowadays, he prays for the cattle and farms, too. The man from the north point, the leader, is praying for the dancers. On the first or second day he walks to the pole, not dancing, and prays specially. He talks to the tree. He turns and talks to the sun. He can point to the

[14] Visiting Sioux and Jicarilla Apache women.

[15] A visiting Sioux from Dakota was given five silver dollars, three rugs and some buckskin by different dancers. A visiting Jicarilla was given a Navajo blanket. A Navajo was given a beaded belt. Another Jicarilla received a sun dance breast ornament. The author received a Navajo blanket from the sun dance leader and the gift-giving speech announced him a member of the Ute tribe.

dancers and ask the sun to help them out. They can look right at the sun. Maybe they rest and dream about it for a few times in the evening, but they dance all night and it's hard work dreaming for power, dancing for it.

The shaman continued:

After the morning song, the dancers go to their stalls one by one starting with the man at the north or the man at the west. When the men went to their stalls after watching the sun-rise, the leader (north point man) fans them one by one with eagle-tail feathers. He fans going across, front and back, downwards. Some see colors turn in the sun at this time; some get sun-blind. Then they go to the stalls. When the last man is gone, the drums stop.

We have two men to take the ashes out of the fire, the ones who pick things up. When the drumming stops and the singers go out, they take the drum with them so the dancers can rest. They can sleep.

Any friend can take in fresh willows for a dancer's stall. He gets a new stall every day, and the second day even two. The willow, after it's rolled and cut, is looked at by one of those two watchers to see there's no food or water in it. They dance barefoot and they get blistered.

Then the bones begin aching; all the water, like tears, dry out; the water in the mouth stops flowing. The water is harder to do without than the food. That is why they don't call it sun dance, but "thirsty-dance," *taguṅqai*.

One man saw a green ball in the sky. It came down nearer and nearer. The drier he got, the nearer it came until it's in the fork of the tree. It hit the ground and he wanted to run for it. Then it went back up, and away. It meant the power was going to come to him soon.

The green ball is often seen if they get thirsty enough. Many dancers have told me this. They can hear and see everything in there after they get going. They can smell anything and hear whistling or the softest whispers.

That is why, if a woman starts her monthly in the corral, the dancers know it. After two days and two nights it can begin to affect them. They say they feel it and then they begin bleeding through the mouth.

You can't talk to those dancers except through the two men who inspect the willows, the watchers. They must tend to their business, and work for power. Their eye sockets get hard so that they can't wink the eye; the skin gets dull; the eyes sink in. Barefoot, they keep their eyes on the centerpole. Sometimes in dancing, they turn and look right into the sun. They say you can dance ten or fifteen years and not get enough power for Indian doctoring. Maybe that sounds long, but I never heard of getting power in just one dance.

A Northern Ute dancing with us got power. I saw him stop, face the sun, stare at it a long time. Then water spurted out of his whistle like a spray. Others crashed into the centerpole that time and seemed to drink up water through their whistles. The whistles sounded like they had water inside, or they began to drip. Since that time there have been many dances. Sometimes they get knocked out, and still don't

get enough power for curing. You've got to pay attention to your dream—believe in it—to get power. You can't just go on dancing.

If power came, it would be through the sun. There might be other things, but if you went back far enough, it would be the sun. It would be that man's dream about sun dance working. He would dream that he was in sun dance, that others around him are strangers, that he sees things. If he believed the dream, he danced that year and he might see the same things in the real dance as in the dream. He could rest and dream those things in the stall. That means the power is working on him and can reach him through the dance. You usually can tell when a man is getting power. You don't ask him either. It's pretty individual.

A few days later, the sun dance leader's understudy summed up the purpose of the entire ceremony:

Old E—— C—— says he's getting too old to carry on the dance. He's done a lot in his day. But he says the dance must go on because it's for the Ute people, for their medicine power, for their whole good. He said he doesn't want to see us stopped. So he named me, and R—— Cloud, and O—— Rabbit to carry the dance on. He knows that the dancers can get *pö'rat* (power to cure) in there. He knows it keeps the people together.

We dancers can get that power moving up and back, up and back. You don't have to be knocked down, but some of them are. You can forget you're in there moving at all. You see things clearly then. You see everything when you're resting in between. I've joined up and danced with it for years. The dancers are in there for themselves—to get power. That's one way I see it. But that whole dance is for the good luck and long life of the Ute people. When they use that fan, they are doing just what any Indian doctor will do. They drive evil out with the same fan a Ute doctor has been using. When they fan, it is always like a medicine-man does it.

They fan the head first so no sickness will stick up there. Next they clean off the left shoulder; then the right one. They drive the sickness down the sides, down the front, down the back. When people are sick, they come sit east of the centerpole. We dance for them. Any dancer who wants to, any man they ask, will run that sickness right into the ground. That way, they cure sick people in there too. Every year they call for sick ones to come forward. Last year, E—— Buck sat east of the centerpole and every dancer danced for her and fanned her.

That's why the sun dancers carry those things, those fans and whistles. They are a special kind of sun dance doctor, even when they haven't found their own power yet. They have this kind of power from the sun, and they all carry those things in the dance, trying out for special kind of power.[16]

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[16] The equipment of the dancers is not so individualized as their painting or their dress. The eagle-bone whistle, made always of eagle shin-bone, is a standard article tied around the neck and held between the teeth while dancing. The eagle-tail fan is the kind used by Ute shamans to drive illness away. Most of the dancers tied downy eagle feathers to the little finger of each hand. The beaded belt which all wear has long strips of beadwork falling down

Emphasizing the same sentiments of group solidarity naturally accompanying this rite, festive social functions often follow the dance itself. Outside the corral grounds, gambling games are begun and sometimes social dancing is in progress. Few families break camp and drive their wagons off the sun dance grounds without first stopping to enjoy the visits and story-telling which today occur only too infrequently. It is a time to exchange gossip, to carry on flirtations; for the younger romantics, it is the best possible time to hear the stories of the old days. The general mood of the people is certainly more decorous than that noted after the less sacred bear dance in the spring; but feelings of fellowship are definitely evident. In 1937, following the dance described above, the tribal elders called an open meeting to discuss matters relating to the welfare of the people as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

The dance which we have just witnessed is admittedly a borrowed complex. It arrived among Shoshoneans of the Great Basin late in the reservation period and reached the Southern Ute of Towaoc when they had already settled down in their present arid habitat near Ute Mountain, intent upon preserving their aboriginal way of life. At the Ignacio, or eastern end of the reservation, the sun dance was likewise introduced before agriculture (modern American model) was firmly established as the economic mainstay. At both ends of the reservation, this ceremony was recognized immediately as the analogue of the sun dance found among Plains tribes.

The Ute, however, insist that the ritual is for them much more than an Arapaho or Cheyenne dance repeated before a Ute audience. Following Spier's generalized picture of the Plains sun dance,[17] it is possible to discover many differences between their performance of the rite and its more typical forms. For them, the sun dance was never the occasion for summer buffalo hunts or for the consolidation of the summer camp. Among the Ute, the bear dance early in spring marked the temporary establishment of the large band camp and the subsequent social activities of this group.[18] Nor was their holding of this dance in any sense the fulfilment of a vow or the supplication for individual help from the supernatural in some definite emergency. Sacred bundles were absent among this Basin tribe, also, and their common connection with sun dance ritual was, consequently, lacking.

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to the ankle. The breast ornament is a white sea-shell with two holes drilled in it for mounting on a colored ribbon; often a brown weasel skin is sewed to the middle of the bright ribbon with the sea shell over it, and often, too, the center of the shell is decorated with beadwork.

[17] Spier, *op. cit.*, see especially pp. 461–2 ff. and p. 477.

[18] M. K. Opler, *The Southern Ute of Colorado*, *op. cit.*

Rather, the Ute sun dance leader was, as we have seen, merely the informal custodian of the rite, his temporary guardianship symbolized only by the possession of the sun dance doll from which he could derive no special force. There was no pledger for the dance as is common on the Plains, and there were, moreover, no priestly functions engaged other than those completely shamanistic features described above. The control of the dance by a single man was entirely missing in the Ute accounts, and sacrificial torture was looked upon as contrary to the dictates of individual supernatural power. Finally to distinguish the Ute dance in minor details as well, there was no feast of buffalo tongues, no use of white paint, and no preliminary rehearsals including purification in a tipi ceremony.

On the other hand, there are similarities in the Ute ceremony to many sun dances of the Plains, especially in the tree-felling ritual which among the Ute was phrased typically as a raid. The enemy chief was captured, later killed according to the Ute way of dealing with male captives. The vanquished were looted, women warriors playing their accustomed role of stripping clean the fallen enemies. The triumphal party returned to the main camp singing of victory, not unlike the glorious days of raiding. The entire party impersonated an idealized band camp of pre-reservation days with its scouts, its band leaders, its women camp followers who followed the warriors into battle as in the days of band society after the introduction of the horse. While it is true that the centerpole was decorated as among the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Blackfoot and Wind River, this act was without particular significance. Unlike most Plains tribes, the Ute dispensed with the altar.[19]

In the dance proper, the dream feature added to the fasting, thirsting, gazing complex was the most characteristic Ute trait. Their whole dance was first of all a response to dream-experience, the decision to dance being wholly a matter dictated by the call of supernatural power. The individuality of shamanistic and semi-shamanistic behavior corresponded closely to the uniqueness of individual supernatural power among these people. From this point of view, unification of the performance was achieved by virtue of the fact that all the dancers sought *rapport* with the supernatural at the same time.

If we carefully scrutinize Ute religious beliefs, other incontestable links are found between aboriginal norms of religious conduct and the procedure

[19] The author is aware of the variations in the sun dance on the Plains. To quote Spier, *op. cit.*, p. 476: "In considering the significance of these analogies we must not lose sight of the fact that there is everywhere in the Plains a marked uniformity in the fundamental elements of the dance."

solemnized in the sun dance. The training of shamanistic powers under a medicine-man is an old established method of attaining the ranks of a practitioner. Here the tutelary functions of the sun dance leader emerge as the main point of correspondence to the ordinary, everyday shamanistic guidance. The dreaming for power in the course of the sun dance; the conception of the sun as synonymous with God (Creator-of-Humans); and finally, the faith in a limited number of supernatural agencies (eagle, water, fish, and buffalo) who transmit supernatural power directly from deity to human practitioners or doctors—all of these central religious doctrines of the sun dance find solid agreement in older aboriginal beliefs.

If we seek further in the sun dance for congruity with ancient Ute lore, we find it exemplified chiefly in those rites of curing formerly associated with the Ute Round Dance. This former ritual, called *mawö'qwipani*, or Round Dance, was once held frequently to combat the spread of illness. It was the Ute quarantine against epidemic. This dance was held at least once a year following directly upon the bear dance ceremonial. It bore a marked similarity to the curing functions of the sun dance, and later to the peyote rite curing as well. For in the course of this ritual, the Ute shamans pooled their respective powers to drive illness away. As with the sun dance, any number of people could be treated in the curing ceremony of Round Dance. Between the songs and the steady, monotonous movements of the dance-step (a clockwise circuit around the shamans), these men with power prayed for the whole tribe. As the dancers went around, the shamans fanned them with eagle-tail feather wands in the characteristic method noted above for all shamanistic fanning ceremonials: first the head, then the left shoulder, then the right, then the left side, then the right, and lastly the front and back from head to foot. The prayers uttered during the Round Dance were addressed to the sun in an effort to bring health and vigor for all the people. The shamanistic use of eagle-tail feather wands, the invocation of the central deity, the co-operation of all the medicine-men in curing practice, and finally the participation of the entire band in the group ritual—these features belong alike to the modern sun dance and the older Round Dance routine.

Looking further into aboriginal Ute ceremonialism, one finds other striking similarities to ideas dramatized in the sun dance of 1937. The Deer-Hoof Rattle Dance, no longer practiced among these people, was at one time the group ritual *par excellence* for the invocation of their central diety, the sun. In this dance, the sun was prayed to as the prime generator, the source of all power and life. In a former publication, this ceremony is briefly summarized as follows:[20]

[20] M. K. Opler, *The Southern Ute of Colorado, op. cit.*, p. 155.

. . . The *tsau'tcinqap* or deer-hoof rattle dance is today reported only by informants over eighty . . . Willows three feet long were cut, covered with buckskin, and deer-hoof rattles were attached to the top. These sticks were then handed to men and women present who ranged themselves in parallel lines, each man side by side with a woman, and each holding a staff in the right hand. In single files they faced the east. An eagle feather or some brightly colored bird feather was tied to the top of the staff which was then stamped on the ground rhythmically in time to the songs. The singer who knew the proper songs to the sun sat apart and likewise pounded the earth with a similar staff. The dancers just shook their bodies in place. Their faces were painted symbolically as personal power individually directed them; in addition, their hair was streaked with red and yellow paint to represent the sundown. Both the songs of the leader and the prayers of the dancers called for the regeneration of the sun since the dance occurred late in the afternoon after the sun had passed far beyond its zenith and when its reappearance the following morning was urgently requested. Finally, they prayed to the sun, facing its eastern home with an implicit faith in the powers of their appeal for the multiplication of plant and animal life, for food, health, and vigor. There is some evidence, then, that the Ute formerly held fertility ceremonies in connection with sun-worship.

The modern prayers for crops and cattle so prominent in the sun dance of 1937 may be viewed, therefore, as having ancient prototypes deeply rooted in the past. As is pointed out elsewhere, the Ute addressed the bulk of their prayers to the sun, for each family head was expected to begin the day with invocations to this central deity.

At any rate, when we have subtracted these remembrances of things past from the Ute sun dance of the present, little is left of formal elements beyond the spectacular trappings of a Plains ritual, and nothing remains in ideology which was not already there. In a real sense, the Ute never borrowed the sun dance of the Plains at all. Rather, they seized upon its existence, hastening to reinterpret it in the light of their own religious experience. Readapted to fit their own needs, the ritual swung out of its Plains orbit and was reinvented to meet the needs of a Basin culture.

That this is true is shown by the subsequent history of the Deer-Hoof Rattle and the Round Dance. The introduction of the sun dance coincides with the passing of the former ritual and the lessening of interest in the latter dance as well. If a reason is required for explaining this diffusion of the sun dance to the Ute, it is found in this amazing correspondence to deeply rooted practices. Because of this fact, the spectacular Plains rite provided suitable instrumentalities for the reaffirmation of essential ideological features in Ute religious organization. At the same time, very little shift was required in formal elements of the Plains pattern to effect the substitution.

It remains to be seen why this substitution of new dances for old was

made at all. The chief answer is perhaps that sun dance welded together a number of former Ute conceptions and merged them together into a unified whole. Its introduction coincided with a period in Ute history when the toll of disease and disillusionment threatened the very existence of this society. Revivalistic cults of the Ghost Dance and Peyote varieties were finding fertile soil for mushroom growth. Thus the shamans proclaimed the rite a powerful force in "keeping the people together." A perusal of the accounts cited above will find them still proclaiming this truth.

Today the sun dance is something more. Its stress upon the major features of Ute shamanism, its great success in centralizing the more important aspects of religious life is a last wager against the destructive tides of cultural oblivion. To throw back these tides a final effort is needed. With every sun dance, the clock turns back to a brighter past. In this sense, the ritual becomes the instructive symbol of the vitality of primitive culture fighting for existence in the midst of modern civilization.

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