the appropriate social regulation of corruption, crime and abuse. So what public policies should be advocating to ensure that we do not suffer from iatrogenic pharmacy? How can we reassure the weakest and most vulnerable in our communities that they can seek personal growth and social harmony from childhood to old age in ways that are enriching and not dehumanising? Perhaps *Self and Society*, with its new commitment to exploring authentic transpersonalism, may lead the way in discussing these issues which are of crucial importance to the creative development of the self and society.

1) Reported in Care Weekly, No. 209, 20.12.91

2) McCreadie, C. (1991) Elder Abuse, Age Concern Institute of Gerontology, London.

THE SENOI DREAMERS

by Margaret Wertheim

Margaret Meade, one of the founders of modern Social Anthropology wrote a lot of rubbish about the Samoans based on her own projections about sexuality. Samoans were puzzled and hurt by this. It took years for Coming of Age in Samoa to be taken off the lists of required reading in Anthropology. John Wren-Lewis, founder of the AHP(B), sent us this article based on an interview with him and Ann Faraday. It pricks the bubble of another example of Cultural Abuse.

Most people, including scientists, are apt to accept the words of notable scientists without question, especially if they are enshrined on that altar of respectability, the PhD. Scientists, like everyone else, are human and make mistakes. Unfortunately the ramifications of such mistakes can be difficult to rectify. An example of this was brought to light by two English researchers in Australia. It is a remarkable story of how a fallacy can become so entrenched that neither the public, nor scientists, want to see it refuted.

The story begins in 1970 when a psychologist, Dr Charles Tart, edited a book Altered States of Consciousness. It contained a series of articles by highly respected researchers about different states of consciousness including drug-induced states, hypnosis, meditation and dreams. Contained in the book was an essay called "Dream Theory in Malaya" about a Malayan tribe, the Temiar Senoi, who were able to control their dreaming. It had been written in 1951 by a relatively unknown psycho-analyst Dr Kilton Stewart.

Largely on the strength of this article the book sold fantastically well. In fact it did a great deal more than that. All over the United States, especially on campuses, Senoi dream groups began springing up to practice dreaming "the Senoi way". Kilton Stewart's article on a primitive Malayan tribe captured the imagin-

ation of a generation of young Americans in much the same way as Carlos Castaneda's "findings" about the magicians of Mexico.

In 1972 Dr Ann Faraday, an English psychologist who specialises in dreams, and her husband, John Wren-Lewis, arrived in the US. "Everywhere we went people were talking about the Senoi and saying 'Oh, we do things the Senoi way'," says Dr Faraday. "We had heard of the Senoi and were of course interested, but when we tried to find out more about them, no one else but Stewart had actually studied this dreaming. Still I, like everyone else at the time, believed it. I even wrote about it in my own books *Dream Power* and *The Dream Game.*"

Kilton Stewart's theory about the Senoi was certainly appealing. He said they were able to control their dreams and thus conquer their innermost fears. In essence he was claiming they were doing for themselves what in the West would normally be done on the psychoanalyst's couch.

Stewart said that breakfast in a Senoi household was like a "dream clinic". Every morning, he said, the families would gather together over breakfast and the first thing the children would be asked was, What did you dream? The parents would then instruct them on how they should have behaved in their dreams. For example, if a child encountered a tiger and ran away in fear he would be told that the next time he had this dream he must fight the tiger and force it to be his friend, then demand a gift from it to take back to the tribe. Such gifts were usually songs or dances.

It sounds so attractive - a noble jungle tribe living in peace through a unique method of dream control. Trouble is, this widely accepted anthropological "fact" simply never existed.

By doing this, claimed Stewart, the child learnt to overcome his fears. He described the Senoi as the most peaceful people he had ever seen and attributed this to their practice of dream control.

Most primitive tribes pay attention to their dreams but the Senoi were unique, according to Stewart, because they controlled and altered theirs.

There was another aspect of the dreaming. When a boy dreamed the same dream three times, conquering a dream spirit and getting a song or dance, he would (if the song/dance passed the tribal test) become a shaman or witch doctor. In tribal societies this is a position of power and respect. According to Stewart almost all Senoi men were shamans which is fairly unusual, and he cited this as an example of their wonderful egalitarian society. (He neglected to mention the position of the women.)

In the early 1970s violence and the threat of major war were increasing alarmingly. Many young people in the US were looking for an alternative way of life,

a non-violent, non-technological way. As Wren-Lewis puts it, "Utopia in the jungles of Malaya".

To Faraday and Wren-Lewis, the spirit of the Senoi was alive and well and living in California.

In 1970, psychologist Joseph Hart published a paper "Dreams in the classroom". He was teaching children to dream the Senoi way. Senoi dreaming began to appear in both popular and serious psychology texts. It became enthroned as fact that the Senoi did this, all on the strength of Kilton Stewart's work. "All sorts of people jumped on the bandwagon," says Wren-Lewis, "and perpetrated the myth."

Since Stewart died in 1965 and no other psychologist had worked with the Senoi there was no one to refute or even question his work. And as he had received a PhD from the London School of Economics for a thesis on the Senoi, it simply had to be true.

Stewart had been to the jungles of Malaya in the 1930s with an English anthropologist Pat Noone, who lived there and had a lot of contact with the Senoi. With World War II and later with communist guerrillas fighting first the Japanese and then the Malayan government, it became impossible to get to the Senoi, even if anyone had wanted to. It was not until 1960 when the emergency had ended that they were accessible again.

During the 1960s an American anthropologist, Robert Dentan, studied the larger of the two Senoi groups, the Semai Senoi. Stewart had written about the smaller group, the Temiar Senoi. Dentan saw enough of the Temiar to know that the differences were minor and he saw no sign of dream control among either group. Similarly, British anthropologist, Geoffrey Benjamin saw no sign of it during his studies of the Temiar at the same time.

Benjamin makes very brief mention of Stewart's work in his thesis and Dentan makes none at all. The problem, says Faraday, is that both regarded dreaming as outside their field. "Anthropologists feel uncomfortable with psychologists and vice versa." Although they saw nothing at all of what Stewart had claimed, neither felt they could refute him; it wasn't their field of expertise and perhaps they weren't reading the signs correctly.

Dentan, however, began to have doubts about it all and wrote a paper "A Dream of Senoi" in which he put down his thoughts on the matter in the late 1970s. But he didn't publish it until September 1983.

In 1976 two young English film makers, Peter Bloch and David Boatwright, went to see the Senoi "to sit at the feet of the masters" and if possible film the family dream clinics. They too saw nothing of dream control and went on, perplexed, to California. Bloch wrote a note to The Brain Mind Bulletin, a psychology journal, saying what had happened and asked anyone interested to contact him.

Faraday and Wren-Lewis did. Bloch told them, "David and I were the only ones doing dreams at breakfast." But of all the people who must have seen the Bul-

letin, only one other came forward. As Wren-Lewis puts it, " The Senoi dream workers just didn't want to know."

HOW TO EDUCATE YOUR DREAMS TO WORK FOR YOU: SENOI DREAM EDUCATION

led by
CLARA STEWART FLAGG
widow of Kilton Stewart, Ph.D.,
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Five reprinted articles by Kilton Stewart, Ph.D. are available; request information.

The Senoi of Malaya, a primitive group living in a crimeless, violence-free society, used dreams as psychological forces that the dreamer can learn to control through a process of dream education: how to change and reshape your dream symbols to work for you, using day dreams, fantasies and re-dreams. Dr. Kilton Stewart, the first psychologist to live with the Senoi and study their dream theories, developed Senoi Dream Education techniques and translated their system into a methodology applicable to our Western society. Clara Stewart Flagg, his widow, trained under his personal guidance for twenty years, and continues his work as the only dream educator practicing Senoi Dream Eduçation.

Advertisement from the AHP (USA) Perspective, August 1991

Evidently they felt threatened and began to question Bloch's ideas. They claimed he had been duped by the Malaysian government who must have shown him only a few "tame" Senoi, that he had never seen the "real" Senoi at all. Going further, they said the Malaysian government didn't want word of the harmonious Senoi to get around because it would be bad for the army.

Faraday and Wren-Lewis left America and continued on their travels. In 1982, in India, Faraday was asked by another psychologist to comment on a manuscript on dreams. It contained a chapter on the Senoi and how Bloch was duped. Faraday was astounded and decided something had to be done to settle the question once and for all. So she and Wren-Lewis took off for Malaysia.

Initially they had expected simply to talk to anthropologists, but in Perak they met educated Senoi who invited them to stay in their jungle villages.

During the next year they visited dozens of Senoi villages, living with the people and joining in their trance dance sessions. Faraday, herself a trained psychologist and specialist in dreams, was well qualified to examine Kilton Stewart's claims. She found no evidence that dream control had ever been part of their culture, in fact the exact opposite.

"The Senoi," she says, "are against coercion of any kind and were horrified when we suggested that they might control their dreams now or at any other time. If anything, it is their passive attitude that makes them such a lovely people. Perhaps there is a message for the West in this."

That they are a very peaceful, gentle people is not disputed. But Stewart's claims about their extraordinary mental and physical health is simply not true, according to Faraday.

Like most primitive tribes they die relatively young and disease is common. They do have shamans who get songs and dances from dreams but there are only a few of them. If these songs and dances come to them in dreams it is because they have been given a gift freely by the spirits, not because they have demanded one. The very idea, says Faraday, is anathema to them.

So why did Kilton Stewart make these claims? Faraday and Wren- Lewis have researched his life thoroughly and have formulated their own views on the matter. It was definitely, they say, not a deliberate attempt to defraud the scientific world. Rather, it was the result of his idiosyncratic, but sincere, desire to find a way to save mankind. The problem is that he got deeper and deeper into the myth as the years went by.

Stewart was raised as a Mormon in Salt Lake City. He later rejected his Mormon upbringing and studied psychology before becoming a world traveller. He was interested in all aborigines and spent time in the Philippines before ending up in Malaya in 1934. There he met Pat Noone who offered to take him to meet the Senoi.

The two of them took off into the jungle with six elephants, one laden down with alcohol, where they spent at most three months with the Senoi. Neither Stewart's own unpublished manuscript nor Noone's account of the trip mention dream control.

In 1935 Stewart went to Paris where he trained in Rankian analysis (Rank was a student of Freud's) in what Wren-Lewis describes as "the all-time speed record for psychoanalytic training."

While in China later that year, he formulated a theory of dream control based on his visit to the Senoi. In 1937, in Singapore, he became quite wealthy practising psychoanalysis. A year later he went to Malaya to see Noone and the Senoi again, this time accompanied by an Englishwoman Claudia Parsons.

In her book *Vagabondage* she describes meeting an extraordinary bearded psychoanalyst asleep on the steps of Ankor Wat. He woke up, told her he was going to see the Senoi and insisted she come with him as his secretary. They spent seven weeks in the jungle where, according to Parson's account, they did not live with the Senoi but stayed in separate huts outside the village. This was the extent of Stewart's field work with them.

He returned to England, via a hair raising drive from India with Claudia, where he again took up psychoanalysis. Noone followed some time later and gave a paper on the Senoi to the Royal Anthropological Society. Stewart enrolled to

do a PhD at the London School of Economics but war broke out and he went back to America and served in the navy.

Noone returned to Malaya and was never seen again. According to Dennis Holman's biography Noone of the Ulu, he was blowpiped by his Senoi wife's lover. To this day most Senoi refuse to talk about Noone.

"To them," says Faraday, "time means nothing. They are called the Timeless Temiar and still fear the white man's revenge."

After the war, Stewart went back to England and wrote his PhD on Temiar shamanism and dream control practices. It was only later that dream control became the major theme of his writings.

Faraday feels that having all of Noone's wonderful anthropological data on the Senoi and his own theory of dream control he decided to put the two together. "I believe he was sincerely interested in finding the secret of life among tribal people. He really wanted to save the world and it didn't matter to him whether the answer came from the Senoi or any other tribe or, for that matter, from his own head."

At that time he was without fear of contradiction since the only other person who knew anything about the Senoi was dead.

There is an ironical twist to the tale. When Senoi dreaming became popular in the early 1970s and Stewart something of a star, Pat Noone's brother Richard wrote a book In Search of the Dream People giving credit to his brother for the discovery of Senoi dream control. "So now," says Faraday, "an excellent anthropologist was lumbered with a fallacious theory he had nothing to do with."

Wren-Lewis says that Stewart was once described to him by someone who had known him as a "proto-hippy-guru".

"He was a totally charismatic man, especially to women. Everybody like him," he says. "He was a very creative thinker and had a gift for seeing in things what he wanted to see in them."

Although Stewart had some success in his own lifetime, it was not until after his death that his work really came to prominence. It is not Stewart so much as those who came later who have been responsible for perpetrating the myth and expanding it to what it has become today. Stewart was certainly not blameless, but the real fascination, according to Faraday, is the way in which the fallacy has been extended, particularly in California, "the Vatican of dream culture".

Faraday and Wren-Lewis have only recently returned from Malaysia and haven't yet published widely on the matter. But already, they say they are being treated hostilely, in much the same way as Derek Freeman since he repudiated Margaret Meade's findings on the Samoans.

"We have been accused of being racist and of wanting to degrade the Senoi," says Wren-Lewis. And so many people's careers are bound up in it now.

"It's not just big business," says Faraday, "many of the therapists are totally sincere. They believe they have found the answer and they don't want someone to come along and tell them it's all made up."