

A photograph of a Native American man in traditional regalia, including a large feathered headdress with red and white feathers, and a fringed skirt. He is standing in a desert landscape with sand dunes and sparse vegetation under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

Ethnomusicology
of the
Flathead
Indians

Alan P. Merriam

Ethnomusicology
of the
Flathead Indians



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians

Alan P. Merriam

 Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Originally published in 1967 by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research

Published 2011 by Transaction Publishers

Published 2017 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © 1967 by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 2011003370

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Merriam, Alan P., 1923-1980.

Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians / Alan P. Merriam.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-4128-4244-0

1. Salish Indians--Music--History and criticism. I. Title.

ML3557.M49 2011

781.62'979435--dc22

2011003370

ISBN 13: 978-1-4128-4244-0 (pbk)

Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

PREFACE

THE FLATHEAD INDIANS of Western Montana today inhabit a reservation consisting of 632,516 acres of land in the Jocko and Flathead Valleys and the Camas Prairie country which lie roughly between Evaro and Kalispell, Montana. Some sixty-five miles long from north to south and about thirty-five miles wide, the reservation is bounded on the east by the Mission Range, on the west by the Cabinet National Forest, on the south by the Lolo National Forest, and on the north by an arbitrary line approximately bisecting Flathead Lake about twenty-four miles south of Kalispell. The area is one of the richest agricultural regions in Montana, and fish and game are abundant. The Flathead are engaged in stock-raising, timbering, and various agricultural enterprises.

In the first culture area mapping of Indian North America, Clark Wissler (1938: 223) placed the Flathead in the Plains area, though he did not regard them as clearly typical. Wissler's original mapping was changed by A. L. Kroeber, who located the Flathead in the Plateau area (1923:337); in a later work, however, Kroeber rearranged his first mapping and included the Flathead in the Intermountain SubArea of the Intermediate area (1948:788). Still later, Julian H. Steward (1940) placed the group in the Intermontane (Great Basin) area. Most recently, Driver (1961) returned the Flathead to the Plateau, and it is within this framework that they are most often located by students of the North American Indian.

The origin of the Flathead is not known, though it is generally assumed that they are a Salish people who came into contact with Plains culture after the introduction of the horse, probably in the period 1710-1730. We will have occasion in succeeding pages to discuss this matter at some length. Their first contact with the West occurred in 1805 when Lewis and Clark traveled through the area, and subsequently they met trappers and traders in ever-increasing numbers. In 1840 Father Pierre Jean de Smet arrived to establish a Catholic mission in the Bitterroot Valley. By 1855 pressures from the West had so seriously encroached upon the Flathead way of life that a treaty was undertaken between the chiefs of the confederated tribes of the Flathead, Kutenai, and Upper Pend d'Oreille Indians and the United States government. Commonly known as the Hell Gate Treaty, it was signed July 16, 1855, ratified by Congress and proclaimed April 18, 1859. By its terms

the Indians relinquished all territory claimed in the Bitterroot Valley and received in return the exclusive use and occupancy of the Flathead Valley. The treaty also provided that a survey and examination of the Bitterroot Valley should be made and that if the area were found more suitable than the Flathead Valley, portions of it would be set aside as a reservation. On November 14, 1871, President Grant signed an Executive Order which stated that the Flathead Valley was the more suitable area and ordered that the Indians be removed to the Jocko Reservation; this order was underlined by an act of Congress of July 5, 1872, which authorized implementation of the move.

In the summer of 1872, James A. Garfield was sent to Montana in this connection, and an agreement was signed which provided certain material benefits to the Indians and signified their willingness to move to the Jocko. The treaty was signed by representatives of the various tribes, but subsequent investigation established clearly that the signature of Chief Charlot of the Flathead was forged to the document. Two years later, in 1874, several families under the leadership of Arlee were persuaded to move, but Charlot and his band held out in the Bitterroot until 1891, when poverty and continued harrassment forced their move as well. Subsequent acts of the United States government, particularly between 1904 and 1910, confirmed Charlot's mistrust, stripped the original reservation of more than 610,000 acres of land, and defaulted on many of the promises of material allotment. The Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934 stopped many of these abuses and restored about a third of the land which had been lost.

The Flathead are a small and geographically homogeneous group which today is centered in the Jocko Valley. Population figures indicate an average estimate of slightly under five hundred persons for the Flathead proper. In 1878 the population figures given by the Indian Agent were changed to include reservation rather than tribal estimates, and since that time no official figures for the Flathead have been available (see Appendix I).

Historically, there is a remarkably extensive literature concerning the Flathead, virtually unbroken since the observations made by Lewis and Clark in 1805. These explorers were followed by a number of traders and trappers whose journals have been preserved: David Thompson, who arrived in 1808, Ross Cox in 1811, Gabriel Franchere in 1814, and various others through the years. Peter Ogden and Jedediah Smith arrived in 1824, George Simpson in 1825, and James Pattie in 1826. Warren Angus Ferris first reached the Flathead in 1832, and he was followed by a number of religiously oriented travellers including Nathaniel Wyeth in 1832, Jason Lee in 1834, and Samuel Parker in 1835. Father de Smet's writings, dating from 1840, are extensive and extremely useful, and his cohort, Father Mengarini, left a substantial amount of linguistic and other information. Granville Stuart wrote broadly in the 1860's of Flathead customs, and he was followed by a number of Indian agents, including Peter Ronan and others, who left not only their official reports but other documentation as well. Road and rail builders such as John Mullan,

Isaac Stevens, and George Gibbs all wrote of the Indians they encountered, including the Flathead, and pioneers and early settlers such as Frank H. Woody and Arthur L. Stone continued the record.

Thus our knowledge of some aspects, at least, of the Flathead way of life is almost continuous since the first contact in 1805, and the early reports mesh well with the first "ethnographic" efforts of W. J. Hoffman, who, in the 1880's, concerned himself with Flathead folklore and linguistics.

The first extensive ethnography of the Flathead was written by James A. Teit—one hundred pages devoted to "The Flathead Group" in a volume edited by Franz Boas, *The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus*. The record does not tell us exactly when Teit visited the Flathead. In the introduction to the volume, Boas said that Teit collected information in 1904, 1908, and 1909 and that he traveled "over British Columbia and the States of Washington and Montana for the purpose of determining the distribution of Salishan dialects and the general movements of tribes so far as these could be ascertained by tradition. . . . It will be understood that the information given here is almost entirely based upon questioning of the Indians. The ancient customs have disappeared to such an extent that direct observation is impossible" (Teit 1930:25). Teit himself noted that "I spent only about a week among the Flathead" (1930:326)—which makes the achievement of his monograph simultaneously more remarkable and perhaps more suspect. There seems to be no reason, however, to doubt the reliability of Teit's ethnographic information beyond the usual questioning of details.

By the time Teit's work was published in 1930, research for a second major ethnography of the Flathead was already under way. This resulted, in 1937, in the publication of Harry Holbert Turney-High's memoir for the American Anthropological Association, *The Flathead Indians of Montana*. There are differences between Teit's and Turney-High's work and, indeed, among the work of all ethnographers of the Flathead, but these do not seem to be any wider than are always to be expected.

In 1934 and 1935, coterminously with Turney-High's investigations, Claude Schaeffer carried out field research on the Flathead reservation, which was followed, in turn, by brief field work conducted by John C. Ewers, apparently sometime during the period 1941–44. In 1948 Carling I. Malouf joined the faculty of Montana State University in Missoula and signaled the beginning of an extensive period of Flathead research which continues to the present. The work of Malouf, of his colleagues such as George F. Weisel, and of his students, including Richard G. Forbis and others, has substantially increased our knowledge of the Flathead.

Research in the ethnomusicology of the Flathead had not been undertaken directly until my wife and I arrived on the Flathead Reservation early in the summer of 1950, although some recordings had been made. Turney-High took several disc recordings in the early 1930's, and Claude Schaeffer recorded 20 songs in 1934. Mrs. Mary Ferguson made a few recordings in the 1940's, and Professors Malouf

and Paul Phillips recorded eight songs in 1949. Other small collections have been made since that time, but the most important work was done by Mr. Bennett H. Stein, then of Great Falls, Montana, who recorded a number of items in the late 1940's. All this material has been made available to the present writer by those concerned, and this kindness is gratefully acknowledged.

My own research began in mid-June of 1950 and continued throughout the summer to mid-September. It was carried out under a grant from the Montana State University Music Foundation, which at that time was administered by the late John Crowder, Dean of the School of Music at the University. During this initial period my wife and I concentrated heavily upon recording an adequate sample of Flathead music and making a photographic record of music and dance activities. In the summer of 1958 we returned to the Flathead under a grant from the Graduate School of Northwestern University and stayed from approximately mid-June to early September. During this second summer some further minimal recording was done, but most of our efforts were concentrated upon observation and informant questioning concerning the ethnographic and ethnological details of Flathead music.

During both periods the work was carried out primarily with older informants, persons in their late fifties and older, although some recordings were made by and some information elicited from younger Flathead. The information presented in this book, then, is based upon the spoken word of older persons who could recall the past, but equally upon observation of present customs and behavior as well as attitudes of the younger generation. Much material concerning the past has become fragmentary today, but an attempt is made to view Flathead music, insofar as possible, as a continuum from 1805 to the present. I am well aware that the information presented here is not complete, but field work is never-ending, and I have no doubt that future ethnographers and ethnomusicologists will fill in whatever gaps we have left.

So many kindnesses were shown my wife and me during the course of our research that it is impossible to detail them here. Our special thanks, however, go to C. C. Wright, Superintendent of the Flathead Reservation when we arrived in 1950; Professor Bert Hansen and Dr. Paul Phillips, who first introduced us to the Flathead; and particularly to Professor Carling I. Malouf, who made materials available to us and with whom we have had countless hours of instructive and pleasant conversation concerning the Flathead. Bennett H. Stein contributed much to our early understanding of Flathead music, and Professors Harold E. Driver and Carling I. Malouf to our later understanding through reading portions of this manuscript.

Library research was carried out at the University of Montana, Northwestern and Indiana Universities, the Montana State Historical Society, the Missoula Public Library, and the offices of the *Missoulian-Sentinel*. In addition, Professors Bert Hansen and Harold Tascher provided access to unpublished materials. We are grateful for the willing assistance offered by all these institutions and individuals. Professor John Krueger contributed substantial cooperation and advice concerning

Flathead linguistics, and an early transcription of Flathead word lists of music terminology was completed by George Landon. Appendix IV, "Flathead Music Terminology," is the work of Susan Houston. It results from field research carried out on the Flathead reservation in the summer of 1965, based upon language lists recorded in 1950. Finally, two short revised portions of this book appear elsewhere, in the journal *Ethnomusicology* (Merriam 1965), and in the *Papers . . . of the Second Inter-American Conference on Ethnomusicology* (Merriam 1967); the editors of both publications have given their kind permission to use these materials in this, the original context.

Of course it is to the Flathead themselves that we owe our greatest acknowledgment. They were kind, patient and friendly in the face of our persistent prying into their affairs. We cannot name them all, but we treasure the friendship of Jerome and Agnes Vanderburg; the Big Sam family; Louis, Adolph, and Andrew Nine Pipe; Pierre Pichette; Paul Finley; Sophie Moiese; and "Mrs. Pretty Voice." We hope that those of them still living will approve of this book.

A. P. M.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

CONTENTS

PART I. THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF FLATHEAD MUSIC

	Page
CHAPTER I. THE SOURCES OF MUSIC	3
Music and the Supernatural World	3
Individual Composition	19
Borrowed Songs	21
Summary and Conclusions	23
CHAPTER II. IDEAS OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANSHIP	25
Individual and Group Activity	25
Why People Make Music	27
The Sounds of Music	28
Humor and Music	29
Music as Property	30
The Ability to Sing	30
Attitudes toward Singing	31
The Problem of Song Texts	32
The Musician	37
Learning	39
Criteria for a Good Musician	40
Verbalizations about Formal Structure	41
Cueing	42
The Problem of a Flathead Aesthetic	43
CHAPTER III. SOUND INSTRUMENTS	47
Ownership of Instruments	47
Hand and War Drums	48
Flageolets and Whistles	50
Rasps, Rattles, and Bells	52
CHAPTER IV. THE USES OF MUSIC	55
Songs of Personal Power	55
Shamans' Songs	55
Love Songs	59
Sweathouse Songs	61

	Page
Songs of the Life Cycle	64
Songs of Birth and Childhood	64
Songs of Betrothal and Marriage	65
Death Songs, Wakes, and Dirges	69
Social Songs and Dances	70
The Round Dance	71
The Gift Dance	71
The Owl Dance	75
The Hand or Stick Game	77
The Wake-Up Song	78
Evening Ride Songs	79
Songs and Dances of the War Complex	79
The Snake Dance	81
Dance Leaders	83
Other Parades	83
The Dance Pavilion	84
The War Dance Proper	86
The Canvas Dance	98
The Scout Song	102
The Dog Song	103
The Victory Song	107
The Scalp Dance	109
Ceremonial Songs and Dances	113
First Roots Ceremony	114
Prayer and Thanksgiving Dances	115
The Jumpin' Dance	117
The Winter Spirit Dance	119
Miscellaneous Songs and Dances	120
Bear Dance	120
Songs of Peace	120
Buffalo Dance	120
Dance of the Chase	120
Turkey and Other Animal Dances	120
Joy of Living Song	121
Glad Song	121
Thunder Song	121
Grass Dance	121
Songs in Folklore	121
CHAPTER V. ACCULTURATION AND CULTURE CHANGE	123
Early Influences	124
Recent Changes	137
CHAPTER VI. SOME PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION	148
The Origin of the Flathead	148
Individual and Consensual Beliefs about Music	154
Stability of Forms	156
Function of Music	158

PART II. SONGS AND ANALYSIS

	Page
CHAPTER VII. THE SAMPLE	161
CHAPTER VIII. ANALYSIS.	170
Songs of Personal Power.	171
Shamans' Songs	171
Love Songs—Flageolet	179
Love Songs—Vocal	184
Sweathouse Songs	192
Songs of the Life Cycle	206
Songs of Birth and Childhood	206
Songs of Betrothal and Marriage	208
Death Songs, Wakes, and Dirges	208
Social Songs and Dances.	208
The Round Dance	208
The Gift Dance.	208
The Owl Dance.	216
The Hand or Stick Game	224
The Wake-Up Song	237
Evening Ride and Other Parade Songs	239
Songs and Dances of the War Complex	244
The Snake Dance	244
The War Dance Proper	246
Special Subtypes of War Dance Songs	253
The Canvas Dance	274
The Scout Song.	286
The Dog Song	288
The Victory Song.	290
The Scalp Dance	291
Ceremonial Songs and Dances	301
First Roots Ceremony	301
Prayer and Thanksgiving Dances	301
The Jumpin' Dance I	303
The Jumpin' Dance II	307
Additional Remarks	315
CHAPTER IX. SOME CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER PROBLEMS	316
The Whole versus the Parts	316
Internal Groupings of Structural Elements.	322
Identification of General Style	324
Some Conclusions.	330
Charts I-V.	332
Appendix I. Population of the Flathead	347
Appendix II. The name "Flathead"	350
Appendix III. Early Flathead-White relations	353
Appendix IV. Flathead Music Terminology, by Susan Houston.	356
Bibliography.	365
Index	379

PLATES

Following Page 362

Plate I.	Formal Drumming and Singing for the War Dance
Plate II.	Informal Drumming and Singing for the War Dance
Plate III.	Hand Drum, Frame of Wood, with Stick
Plate IV.	Hand Drum, Frame of Wood, with Stick
Plate V.	Hand Drum, Metal Frame, with Stick
Plate VI.	Hand Drum, Metal Frame, with Stick
Plate VII.	Flageolet, Elderberry Wood
Plate VIII.	Flageolet, Fir
Plate IX.	Flageolet with Chinese Carving
Plate X.	Flageolet with Chinese Carving
Plate XI.	War Dance
Plate XII.	War Dance
Plate XIII.	War Dance
Plate XIV.	War Dance
Plate XV.	War Dance
Plate XVI.	Owl Dancers
Plate XVII.	Owl Dancers
Plate XVIII.	Sweathouse
Plate XIX.	Dance Pavilion
Plate XX.	Stick Game Equipment
Plate XXI.	Jerome Vanderburg
Plate XXII.	Louis Nine Pipe
Plate XXIII.	Adolphe Nine Pipe
Plate XXIV.	Andrew Nine Pipe
Plate XXV.	Adolphe, Andrew, and Louis Nine Pipe
Plate XVI, left.	John Delaware
Plate XXVII.	Sophie Moiese
Plate XXVIII.	Ellen Big Sam
Plate XXIX.	Mary Kizer

Photo credits: Plates I–IV, XI–XIX, XXI–XXIX, by Barbara A. Merriam.
Plates V–X, XX, by Justine M. Cordwell.

I. The Ethnography of Flathead Music



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

CHAPTER I

THE SOURCES OF MUSIC

ALL PEOPLE, in no matter what culture, must be able to place their music firmly in the context of the totality of their beliefs, experiences, and activities, for without such ties, music cannot exist. This means that there must be a body of theory connected with any music system—not necessarily a theory of the structure of music sound, although that may be present as well, but rather a theory of what music is, what it does, and how it is coordinated with the total environment, both natural and cultural, in which man moves.

MUSIC AND THE SUPERNATURAL WORLD

For the Flathead, the most important single fact about music and its relationship to the total world is its origin in the supernatural sphere. While it is recognized that some songs are individually composed by human beings, and that some other songs are borrowed from neighboring peoples, all true and proper songs, particularly in the past, owe their origin to a variety of contacts experienced by humans with beings which, though a part of this world, are superhuman and the source of both individual and tribal powers and skills. Thus a sharp distinction is drawn by the Flathead between what they call "make-up" and all other songs. "Make-up" songs are those which are composed by individuals in a conscious process of creation and those which are known to be borrowed from other peoples. These songs have no inherent power and, according to the Flathead, are "used for enjoyment." Non-make-up songs, on the other hand, are those which are taught or given to human beings by superhuman forces in a variety of situations. The Flathead believe that in former times all songs derived from such experiences and that none were made up by individuals or borrowed from other tribes. Today's music is a melange of all three sources, and it is a matter of regret and concern to older members of the society that the "real" Flathead songs are steadily decreasing in importance in the total repertoire.

Songs which derive from the supernatural lead to two types of power for the individual who receives them. In one case this is shamanistic power, while in the other, power is scattered and of such a nature that the individual remains simply

a person with special capabilities for doing or effecting special things. Thus while a person may have special powers in love, gambling, hunting, war, or other social situations, the shaman has a concentration of songs which center primarily about curing, although he may have obtained other skills through song as well.

The source of such songs is the supernatural experience which, traditionally at least, comes from the vision quest, a part of Flathead culture still practiced today but with decreasing frequency. The Plains vision quest in general has been discussed by Benedict (1922, 1923) and the Plateau version by Ray (1939), and these general references apply broadly to Flathead practice. That the Flathead vision quest has been a part of normal Flathead experience for at least more than one hundred years is borne out by early references to it in the reports of explorers, missionaries, traders, and the like. Father Mengarini, speaking from his experience with the Flathead in the 1840's, wrote:

The methods of obtaining medicine was the following: When an Indian had arrived at the age of manhood, he departed alone to the mountains, and there tasted neither food nor drink for six or eight days. Dancing was necessary for obtaining medicine. When all was over, his genius appeared to him under the form of some bird or beast, and taught him how to procure the medicine. Each Indian kept the nature of his medicine a profound secret, used it only for himself and family in sickness, and carried it about his person in battle, to charm away the arrows of his enemies. Medicine against sickness was oftentimes a real natural remedy, and such as a wise physician would have prescribed had he been there. But this apparent good served only as an excuse for the superstitious use of it against the evils and dangers of life. (Partoll 1938b:201)

Father de Smet, speaking of approximately the same period, quotes Governor Isaac Stevens as follows:

They were great believers in charms or medicine. . . . When a young man grew up, he was not yet considered a man until he had discovered his medicine. His father would send him to the top of a high mountain in the neighborhood of the present mission; here he was obliged to remain without food until he had dreamed of an animal; the first one so dreamed about becoming his medicine for life. Of course, anxiety, fatigue, cold, and fasting, would render his sleep troubled, and replete with dreams. In a short time he would have dreamed of what he wanted, and return to his home a man. (Smet 1863:285-86)

The continuity of the practice is indicated by James Teit, who wrote some sixty years later that "young men fasted, prayed, exercised, and kept vigils until they acquired one or more guardian spirits. . . . For this purpose [they] went through a long course of training. Bathing in running water, fasting, praying, and keeping vigil in lonely places were prominent features" (Teit 1930:382, 384).

More recently, Turney-High has emphasized much the same set of practices, including the vigil in the wilderness, preparation by bathing and fasting, choosing a spot famous for medicine experiences, and construction of a low wall of stone in which the suppliant lies down "to fast, pray, and wait for the guardian." However,

Turney-High adds two major points to the previous discussions of the Flathead vision quest. The first concerns the nature of the guardians:

Most commonly the sumesh appears to the individual in theriomorphic form, the rattlesnake and bear being the most usual. Anthropomorphic guardians also occur; the dwarfs . . . being especially powerful. Peripatetic decomposed corpses and skeletons are also encountered. A common guardian is the spirit of some ancestor, or rarely of some famous person to whom the seeker is not related. (Turney-High 1937:27)

His second point concerns the reliability of information obtainable from the Flathead on the vision quest experience.

A conscientious ethnographer cannot get a compendium of trustworthy sumesh dreams. Only the completely acculturized or untrustworthy will discuss the matter. Sumesh was, and among honest Indians still is, strictly a matter of personal property. . . . No Flathead who sincerely thinks he has sumesh is going to give this to an ethnographer except under circumstances of extraordinary friendship or filial relation. To ask a Flathead to describe his medicine experience is considered an unforgivable impertinence. Therefore, although the writer has heard several alleged sumesh songs and has been told of some purported medicine experiences, he considers them utterly unreliable. (1937:28)

In general, this pattern is probably true, but three elements bear upon Turney-High's reservations. The first is that times have changed for the Flathead in the thirty years since Turney-High did his work, and although true medicine experiences are still closely guarded secrets, some of the reluctance to disclose them has disappeared. Second, although medicine experiences are personal and guarded, the restrictions are lifted upon the death of the individual involved. That is, it is held that personal power obtained through the supernatural is specific to the individual and disappears with his death. Thus both vision experiences and vision songs pass into the domain of public property—in some cases becoming part of the common song repertoire. The third point is that older people, at least at present, tend to be much less reserved about relating supernatural experiences than, apparently, were their ancestors. Old age seems to bring a certain resignation, as though the power of the medicine begins to falter as does the body. It should be added, however, that the pattern of secrecy definitely does persist, particularly in respect to the content of medicine bundles. Some songs and some vision experiences have been told the author and other ethnographers, and if these are not to be taken literally, they at least form a general pattern. Indeed, in certain ways to be discussed below, vision experiences are so clearly patterned and parallel that it would be difficult to challenge their general veracity.

At present there is reason to believe that some young Flathead continue to pursue the vision quest, and a contemporary resumé of the practice is given by Malouf:

Such spirits appeared to them in a dream, or they would suddenly appear to the person while walking in the mountains, or valleys, away from camp. They came in the form of an

animal, such as a deer, bear, or elk, or they appeared as birds, monsters, dwarfs, trees, plants, insects, or even inanimate objects, such as stones. . . . In former times they were obtained at ages from five to adulthood, and could be obtained by both sexes.

If dreams were sought deliberately there were certain places where the spirits were known to dwell, such as hill tops, or in rock shelters. Often small circles of rocks were located on some of these hill tops and the suppliant remained there all night, inside the circle, in order to receive his spiritual visitor. There is one such hill near Stevensville, now called Chaffin Butte . . . Another well known circle was located above an unusually steep cliff, north of Elmo, Montana, on Flathead Lake. (Malouf n.d. (a):52)

Contemporary accounts by older people tend to confirm this general vision quest pattern. In 1950 one older informant phrased the matter roughly as follows:

When children, both boys and girls, are about four to six, they are taken into the wilderness, maybe the high mountains, and left alone—"the parents sneak off and leave them." "The child wanders around and finally something appears and talks" to them "while they are in a trance."

Another informant reported in 1958 that to her knowledge some "boys of eight or nine" were being sent to McLeod Peak in the area "by their fathers. They make a little trench and lie there until something does come and talk to them. It tells them how to be, what to do. When they get there, they start crying; can't eat, can't drink. You must always make a new place; you cannot lie in an old one." Still other similar bits of information could be added, but it seems reasonably clear that communication with the supernatural on special occasions, though less frequent now than in the past, is still practiced.

While the presence of such experiences is confirmed in the literature on the Flathead since the 1840's, the nature of the situations in which it can occur is not so well known. It will be recalled that Mengarini, Stevens, Teit, Turney-High, and Malouf, all cited above, stressed the "artificial" nature of the experience. That is, contact with the supernatural is something sought deliberately by the suppliant under non-normal conditions of self-denial in a place removed from human contact and an environment deliberately chosen for its remoteness. Such experiences are properly called "visions," and they may well account for the greatest part of Flathead supernatural contacts, but it is clear that other occasions may also provide the opportunity for obtaining power. Verne Ray (1939) drew distinctions between experiences obtained in visions and in dreams and stated that among the Flathead it is the vision which is found exclusively (p. 92). This statement is not borne out by the evidence from other investigators. For example, Malouf reported on "a traditional type of dream which gave an Indian such powers. He stated, 'I dreamt of a song one night while sleeping. I dreamt that if I sang this song I would not get hit or shot by a bullet. Even though the enemy was about five or ten yards away they would run from me'" (n.d. (a):27). In connection with the sweat-house complex, one of my own informants reported:

Sometimes in the old days the people would dream about the sweathouse. The dream would

tell this person that "tomorrow at such and such a time you build a sweathouse and take a sweat, and you'll be cured if you are sick. If anything comes your way, you'll get out of it." Then certain songs are given in this dream, and you sing them while sweating. Also, if hunting is bad, you may dream that you must take a sweat.

It is equally clear that experiences with the superhuman may come on still other types of occasions, although in all known cases it is a constant that the person, or occasionally a man and his wife, is alone at the time. Some of these occasions are "random" in the sense that they are unpredictable, but they seem always to be triggered by specific events. Thus, the following:

There was a man who was out hunting. He was sneaking up on the game by sitting at a spot on the game trail when he heard somebody singing. He thought, "There must be people around." So he stood there and waited to see who was coming. Pretty soon a spike bull elk came out from the brush and told him, "This is your song. If you really need this song, sing it." It was a love song. So he didn't kill the spike, and never killed an elk again.

When I was about six years old, my father lost my horse in the stick game. The man who won the horse took it and led it away; I followed, crying. I saw a woman coming toward me in a buckskin dress singing this song. She told me to turn back, that I would have better horses. "Don't cry over one horse."

A situation in which learning appears to have taken place on no special occasion seems also to be possible. An informant described such a case as follows:

There's two little marriage birds; you see them way down in the meadows, in the hay fields, in the grain fields. That's where they hang around in the summer. They're nice little birds. They sound lonesome when the sun is going down. You can hear them in Grass Valley. The two birds are singing this song. I learned this from the birds.

Thus the occasions on which contact is made with the supernatural are more varied than is usually indicated in the literature on the Flathead. Such occasions include the formal vision quest, dreams in an otherwise normal context, surprise encounters at unpredictable times though apparently always when the person or persons sharing the experience are isolated from others, and in what seems to be a relatively extended learning situation. It may be noted in passing that although the Flathead report numerous experiences with ghosts, using the word in its Western sense, these are experiences of a clearly different nature, not involving the acquisition of power—they are unfortunate and unpleasant experiences not desired by the Flathead.

The acquisition of song in these contacts with the supernatural, particularly in connection with the vision quest, has often been commented upon, but its importance to the total experience has not received the stress it deserves. In many respects song is the central concern in the quest; it is through the conferring of a song or songs that the experience is made meaningful and that the powers conferred by the guardian spirit are made operative. Indeed, without song, many visions would

cease to have a purpose. Speaking more or less generally for the pattern in the Plateau, but using the Kutenai as an example, Ray wrote:

A song is invariably conferred. Indeed, in some cases the spirit does not appear at all; only a song is heard. In this event the song conveys the nature of the power and the identity of the spirit. The spirit or song, is conceived as actually entering the visionary's body at a particular spot . . . The song is all-important and all-sufficient to the experience. (1939:71)

Others have made similar points about the Flathead vision quest, including Teit (1930:384), Turney-High (1937:27), and Curtis (1911:82). It is interesting, and even significant, that Curtis, in a novel of Flathead Indian life, used the vision quest as the climax of his story and emphasized the role song played in the quest (1915:220-21). Most, but not all, Flathead insist that a song is always conveyed by the guardian spirit, and almost all such experiences told to the writer do include learning a song or songs.

One of the most striking points which emerges in an examination of the connection between song and supernatural experience among the Flathead is the patterning of the experience itself. It has already been suggested that such experiences take place when the individual—or, in the case of a joint experience, individuals—is isolated from his fellows, whether the occasion be a formal vision quest or an unpredictable encounter. But an examination of these encounters reveals other patterning, particularly in connection with song. Bearing in mind those experiences already cited, let us note a few others which deal in one way or another with supernatural contact:

There was a guy who was looking for power once, and he heard a guy coming from a long way off, singing a song. He finally met the guy, and the guy was singing a stick game song. He told the young feller, "When you get to be a certain age, you can use that song for the stick game." The young man remembered the song until the time came to use it.

One time long ago EBS and her husband attended a war dance near where PP's cabin is now. They were coming home and crossed the creek below the present BS house. They decided to camp there for the night. It was just dawn and as they lay down to sleep they heard a flute playing from a long way off. It came closer and closer, but when they arose up to see who was playing, it went away again a long distance. They did not know who it was and never found out.

In speaking of lonesome songs, one informant generalized the kind of experience that might be met:

The father gets lonesome, and goes off into the hills alone. He lies down and he hears someone coming, singing; the spirit says to him, "Sing this and you'll be happy; you'll see your child."

Yet another informant generalized the entire type of experience:

When somebody is discouraged or he doesn't know what to do, he may be sitting around his tipi and a spirit comes to tell him what to do. Sometimes he can hear the singing from

way far off, and hear it approaching. Before daylight he hears the spirit coming, always from the East. The tipi always faces east, with its ears up. [The "ears" refer to the open smoke flaps of the tipi.] The spirit comes from afar and hits the ears; then it comes down the ears and stands in front of the person. It tells him what to do, and it sings the song. As it comes toward the tipi it has been singing the same song many times as it comes.

There is one factor which is common to all these experiences, and indeed to almost all of those recounted to the writer; this is the element of distance which is gradually closed between the spirit and the novice. That is, the song which the individual will later learn is first heard from far away; the being who is singing it comes closer and closer, singing constantly, until it finally actually appears. This pattern is found again and again in Flathead accounts which concern the supernatural and song.

The most reasonable explanation for this patterning seems to be that the distance factor is a symbolic reflection of the actual process of composition. In looking at the vision quest and attempting to assess the actual means whereby the songs are brought into being, we apparently have but two choices: First, we can assume that songs do come to the suppliant in a flash of supernatural, or other, inspiration and that the process is therefore practically instantaneous. The second and more likely possibility is that the weakened condition of the petitioner in the case of the formal quest, and the general conditions of expectation of this type of meeting with the supernatural in less formal situations, make the experiences "real" to the individual but at the same time "force" him to be prepared to create songs. In other words, the expectation of the culturally conditioned situation makes it clear to the individual that he must be a composer of music in order to be a successful person in the society. This general climate is further strengthened, according to Malouf, by the fact that stories concerning quest experiences are recounted to children and that these stories include singing of the quest songs involved (personal communication).

Given our Western assumption that the ability to compose varies from individual to individual, the question is twofold: first, how is the process of composition actually effected in this situation; and second, what happens to the individual who is incapable of composition? In respect to the first, it is suggested that the distance factor does much to explain how songs are composed in the supernatural situation. That is, the song is dimly heard (dimly formulated) at first and then becomes clearer and clearer as the supernatural being approaches (as the petitioner gains a stronger sense of the structure of the song he is, in fact, composing). There is almost no such experience involving the supernatural and song among the Flathead in which this pattern fails to appear. While this interpretation would in no way seem reasonable to the Flathead themselves, it does seem likely that hallucination and cultural expectation are closely connected with composition in the manner suggested.

This is borne out by other facts about music and the vision quest. Thus, in the

following quest report it is significant to note that although the pattern of slow approach is not suggested, there is substituted a type of situation in which the individual is subjected to a number of repetitions of the songs he will learn. The informant recalled that he was "eight or nine" years old at the time. His parents had left him and his sister alone in the wilderness while they were investigating some aspects of a placer mine. His sister looked up suddenly and saw a "great big grizzly bear" coming toward them; she caught her brother's attention and, he said:

I went out of my head. I was up on top of a mountain. People were dancing, singing, playing stick game, cards. I looked around and it was me singing. Then I went out again. I was on another mountain and the same people were there doing the same thing. The grizzly bear took me back each time, and this happened on four mountains. The people all had otter skins around their heads. All the animals were singing and dancing in there. It was always me singing.

The magic number four is part of the pattern, but the present significance of the story is that the boy, who later became an important shaman on the basis of this and other visions, "heard" the songs four times at least. It seems logical that given the expectation of success in obtaining a song or songs in the supernatural situation, four times is probably enough to fix a new song in the composer's mind.

A further part of the relationship of this kind of experience to composition is indicated by the differences of opinion among informants about how the song is actually learned. Some informants insisted that "a song is sung just once, and the person will learn that song from one hearing, providing that he believes in the thing which has appeared to him." Others said, however, that the being must sing the song many times before it is learned by the suppliant. This problem has been noted in the literature on the Flathead. Turney-High, writing presumably from what he was told by informants, said that the guardian "teaches him at least one song, at times even more, and rehearses him until he can sing it. Ordinarily the seeker has never heard the song before. It is supposed to be new and individual" (1937:27). Teit was even more specific in discussing the source of songs:

Some songs were merely modifications and new variations of those already known to the people as a whole. The themes were usually suggested by something seen during the vigils or while training. A song might begin with the words, "I saw a bear," and so on. Sometimes songs expressed the desires or expectations of the person, and might begin with the words, "May my friend the eagle come!" "May such and such happen!" "May I see such and such a thing!" "May I do this or that!" (1930:384)

Indeed, it is implied strongly by Teit in this passage that songs were perhaps consciously composed *before* the appearance of the supernatural being and thus before, and in hopeful anticipation of, a vision experience.

We suggest here that the different conditions of learning the song or songs reflect the individual's skill at composition. Those who are relatively quick "learn" the songs after but one hearing, i.e., are able to compose with relative ease, while

those who had difficulty and "learned" the songs only after "rehearsal" by the new guardian are those who have lesser skills at composing a new song. This interpretation suggests, in turn, the answer to the second question posed above: what happens to the individual who is incapable of composition? The answer seems most probably to be that such persons are those who fail to obtain a guardian spirit, a known situation among the Flathead as well as among other tribes who stress the importance of the vision quest.

But failure can be circumvented by the deliberate and secret composition of songs. Teit said of the Flathead that "some [songs] were received directly from the guardian spirit, others were heard in dreams or visions. When not obtainable in this way, songs were occasionally composed by the novice in secret" (1930:384). That this may have been a broad pattern in cultures which stress the vision quest was emphasized by a similar statement by Wissler about the Blackfoot:

We are convinced that the deliberate composing of new songs is going on at the present time. One individual asked the writer to let him hear songs from the distant tribes. Having at hand such a phonographic record, his request was complied with. After several repetitions he was able to follow accurately and went away humming it over and over. Some time afterward he reluctantly admitted that he had now arranged words for this song and "expected to dream something." (1912:104)

In his autobiography, *Crashing Thunder*, a Winnebago Indian, tells us that he falsely claimed a visitation from the supernatural during a vision quest (Radin 1926: 26). Since he did not say so specifically, we can only speculate about whether he also composed a song or songs to go with the false vision, but if he did so, he apparently would not have been undertaking a unique deception.

What is stressed here is that visitation from and communication with the supernatural is an expected experience in Flathead culture. Further, it is of enormous importance, for such experiences are intimately tied up with manhood, the "normal" situation in the culture, and obtaining vital powers which allow the individual to excel in certain spheres of activity and thus to hold his own with other members of the society. These experiences are intimately connected with song, for it is song which provides the vehicle through which powers can be exercised. Indeed, song is so important that in most cases power cannot be exercised without it, and therefore a successful vision cannot be obtained if the individual is incapable of composing a song. If we assume that such capability differs from one person to another, then we can also assume that inability to compose often means inability to obtain a guardian spirit, since the two go hand in hand; thus failures in the vision quest are failures because they cannot compose. The importance of song to the supernatural experience is further emphasized by the occasional allusions to "cheating," that is, to the deliberate composition of songs before the guardian spirit is sought. The implication is clearly that without song, there can be no vision.

Given the importance of song, particularly in respect to the power it unleashes,

we should expect to find that it is handled with considerable care, and such is, indeed, the case. Informants agreed that at the time the song is conferred, the guardian spirit also gives explicit instructions about when and for what reasons it is to be sung. Thus it is said, for example:

The person is also told what the song is for and when to sing it. The songs are for many things. Every song has a reason behind it. . . . When the proper time comes to sing it, then one can sing it and sometimes others will hear it. . . . When one sings his personal song he must first announce why he is singing it. When one does announce and tell about his song, "Be careful! Don't give anything false, because you are responsible for misfortune and even to death."

Other informants added that all suppliants are told not to use their songs immediately, but this prohibition is probably more idiosyncratic than general. Finally, instructions for the use of song seem to be exclusively positive; that is, the person is told when to use the song, but he does not receive instructions covering all the occasions on which he must *not* use it. If such instruction is given, it is again specific to a particular case. This lack of blanket coverage, as we shall see below, can cause difficulties in the context of present-day situations which did not occur in earlier times.

The Flathead are not precisely clear about the exact means by which the power embodied in the song is translated into action. No "song spirit" is involved, but there is some indication that the singing of the song invokes the presence of the guardian spirit itself, which is then the agent of the power. That is, if one sings a song which gives him the power to win in a gambling game, it is the guardian spirit which comes and "tells you how to find where the bones are hidden." This does not involve the actual appearance of the spirit; rather, the empiric knowledge of success indicates that it has been the unseen presence of the spirit which has made the power operate. The same is true in the case of love songs, which are always given by guardian spirits and which are usually played on the flageolet. When a man plays his private song on the instrument, he directs it in thought to a particular woman. Whether or not she can physically hear it, the woman knows that the song is being directed toward her, and it is the man's guardian spirit which causes her to know. Thus the power of the song apparently lies not in itself but rather in what it evokes. It is a means of calling upon the spirit which has given it, and it is the spirit which causes whatever specific action or knowledge ensues.

While songs are used as a means of employing power in defined ways, they can also be abused, and the consequences of such abuse can be severe, although opinion differs on the point. Some persons, as noted above, learn specific prohibitions from the guardian. One informant was told not to use his songs immediately and was also instructed that failure to sing his songs in the Winter Spirit Dance would result in his being killed by his guardian. Another informant felt that difficulty could result from overuse of songs given for success in gambling. A person, he said, should probably not use his songs in more than two, three, or four hand games in a single

day. If he did so, the songs would "not work any more," but they could be used successfully again on the following day with the same limitation.

In more general terms, informants differed about the extent of punishment which may be forthcoming if songs are abused, and the possible consequences may be ranged on a sort of continuum. Some felt that if a person uses his song incorrectly, he will lose his power temporarily. The length of the loss may or may not be correlated with the extent of the abuse, but most people felt that it would be "a long time" before the power would be returned by the guardian spirit. When it is returned, however, it is as efficacious as before.

Other informants felt that the abuse of power has more serious consequences. They held that such actions cause power to be withdrawn permanently. Since the power is never returned, the individual must "start all over again," repeat the vision quest, and hope that new power will come to him.

At the severest end of the continuum, some people felt that misuse of power can bring death. This might happen if a person were to sing his personal song in direct contradiction of the orders given him by his guardian, or even in cases of continued misuse of a less severe nature. A case in point was given by one informant as follows:

There was a guy riding on horseback going on a visit. All of a sudden a blue hawk flew down and dived and hit him right in the small of the back. The blue hawk was his power. He fell off the horse and it was not long before he was dead. Because he was doing what he wasn't supposed to do. He was telling lies about his power.

Another informant, reporting on a spirit experience, wrote:

Well, my child, said Mother Bear to me, listen closely and carefully as I am going to grant you medicine power by which you will be a great help to your people in the future which will be after you pass middle age, but remember you must not try to do more than I am allowing you or granting you because if you do, it will be nothing more than false and you will be responsible to sufferings and even to death . . . (Anon 1947:np)

Two further points can be made in connection with the use and abuse of power. In the first place, the Flathead do not seem to make the punishment for abuse of songs fit the crime; that is, the continuum constructed here, from temporary withdrawal of power to death, does not represent what might happen to a single individual over a period of time. Rather, these tend to be absolute judgements based on individual belief. Those who hold with temporary withdrawal of power as punishment tend also to deny that death could be the result of transgression of power; those who hold that death is the result do not usually mention temporary withdrawal of power. It is possible that this may correlate with the individual's own power experience; that is, those who hold death as punishment may have been threatened with death by their own guardian spirits. No such correlation, however, can be proven or disproven by present evidence. This in turn brings us to the second point concerning the abuse of power, which is that there is considerable evident difference of opinion in the matter. In fact, the entire vision quest is an individual experience

rather than a matter of group ideas or actions, and difference of opinion is thus to be expected. We shall return to this point later.

Questions of handling power through song are further complicated by the Flathead feeling that, in theory at least, such power is inherently individual. All personal songs are specific to the individual who receives them; they are owned by him and they have power only for him. If another person sings his song, it has no power unless some kind of formal transfer has been made. Singing the personal song of another person is a neutral act with no significant result. Personal songs of the deceased can be, and are, sung by anyone who wishes to do so.

In fact, the situation is more complex than this. Power is an important part of Flathead life and is not something to be regarded or handled casually. While informants insist on the neutrality of power in the hands of the "wrong" individual, situations do arise in this connection which cause considerable anxiety. One informant, for example, indicated that if X sings Y's personal song, Y knows it immediately and is very likely to faint; other informants, however, denied this categorically.

More specifically, a series of situations occurred among a small group of Flathead in 1950 which illustrates dramatically the difference between theory and fact in the handling of individual songs. These incidents depend to some extent as well upon the changing nature of Flathead life in relation to instructions given by the guardian spirit.

In 1949 a person other than the writer recorded a number of songs on wire, including a good many from informant X. Several months later he received an urgent letter from X asking him to return, bringing his recordings with him. When he did so, he was told by X that ever since a certain song had been recorded, X had had "bad luck" and wished the song to be erased. This was done, and X reported almost immediately that he "felt much better."

Some weeks later Y, who lived with X, sang for the author his "personal song," which he had promised to do several months earlier. This was done in the presence of X. The song sung was the same that X had recorded and asked to have erased. X showed no concern whatsoever, but when asked to assist Y in singing, he refused.

There are several points of interest concerning this incident. In the first place, it led to considerable discussion among X, Y, myself, and others about the problem of recording songs. The Flathead realized that guardian spirits had not visualized the advent of recording apparatus, and they were uncertain, having received no instruction in this respect, whether recording was an acceptable or unacceptable situation for their personal songs. X, in the end, decided that it probably was unacceptable; Y at this point was hesitant, but did record the one song and did not ask to have it erased. A third informant made a joke of the matter and later wrote the author that her husband, Z, "don't even sing no more because you got all of his songs, ha! ha!"

A second point concerns the fact that X had sung Y's song which, in theory,

could cause no trouble either for himself or for Y. In fact, so far as X was concerned, it did indeed cause him such serious trouble that he felt obliged to know for himself that the song had been erased from the recording. His attitude was clearly that while theory is all right, things do not always work out in the expected ways.

The story, however, has a sequel. Y and the author were very good friends, and early in the course of field work, Y told the author that he could not expect to record any personal songs at all. This did not turn out to be the case, and late in the research the author told Y that he had indeed done some, though very little, such recording. The result, over a period of about a week, was an intense reaction on the part of Y. His first response was to indicate his belief that whatever songs had been recorded must have been songs of persons now deceased. When assured that, among others, a living shaman had recorded his purported personal songs, Y immediately mounted an intense campaign to discover the identity of the singer. When this was unsuccessful, Y's anxieties increased, and a few days later he engaged the author in very serious conversation. He said that he had talked about the matter with X, X's brother, and X's wife, and that all of them were very worried about it. Subsequent discussion revealed that their fears were quite different from what might have been expected. They were not upset in principle about recording, nor were they worried about the possible folly of others in the community who might have made recordings. Their concern was that someone might have recorded one of their own personal songs and that this might result in harm, not to the singer, but to themselves. Verbal reassurance that this was not the case closed the matter.

But again, theory does not accord with fact. In theory, singing someone else's personal song brings no harm to either party; but, in fact, it is a matter of considerable concern. The nature of conferred power is clearly regarded ambiguously by the Flathead. This is not surprising, for it is of such central concern and the powers involved are of such magnitude that misuse can be of the greatest importance. Further, power *is* personal, and although this *should* make it neutral, its nature is such that it remains specific to the individual and causes anxiety when handled by someone else.

What has been said above, however, applies to one kind of song and not to another. If we return for a moment to the vision experience itself, it will be recalled that power is obtained for a variety of situations and that explicit instructions are given to the suppliant by his guardian. It is obvious that some kinds of songs must be private, while others are "public" in the sense that they must be sung on public occasions. Such is the case, for example, with most gambling songs—if success is to be assured, the song must be sung during the hand game and, indeed, in most cases by the entire team of players. This means that such songs are known to and can be learned by any individual in the tribe who cares to listen. On the other hand, love songs are usually private, sung or played on the flageolet privately and not meant to be heard by others.

In short, the personal song is private, but some are public, though individually

directed, because the guardian gives instruction that they are to be sung in the course of a group activity. Further, the Flathead realize that because of the nature of the social interaction within their small group, it is difficult to keep even private songs fully private. This being the case, it is postulated here that *de facto* recognition of the situation is expressed by the theory that singing someone else's song brings no harm to either party. But this recognition of social context cannot be easily reconciled with the knowledge that power is indeed powerful and that its misuse can have dire consequences—and thus the ambivalent attitude of the Flathead about the private-public nature of their personal songs. These difficulties are further compounded when the general nature of Flathead social life changes and when they are visited by anthropologists with tape recorders, which situation has not been visualized in connection with the guardian spirit concept. This new uncertainty, coupled with those already existing, leads to further ambivalence as to how, precisely, the songs and their power are to be handled.

One further problem remains: whether songs and their power can be transferred from one individual to another. Malouf recorded instances of transfer (personal communication), and Turney-High was definite in his statement that such transfer can take place. The latter wrote:

The property in sumesh is transferred by gift, never by sale. Such a gift was ordinarily from parent or elder close relative to a younger person. . . . In order to do this the elder announces the fact in council or at a dance. He then surrenders the bundle and takes the younger person to some secluded spot to teach him the song. After this the elder never sings the song again, for it is not his. Should he try, his invocation would be ineffectual. Some minor songs which do not relate to one's great secret were sometimes casually given away but these were of slight importance. (1937:28)

On the other hand, Ray held that although such transfer of power was found in the Plateau area, the Flathead did not follow the practice in any form (1939:88–9).

The response of present-day informants is definitely mixed, with some holding flatly that power and song cannot be transferred, and others holding that it can, citing instances to "prove" it. On the former side, one informant stated that transfer is not possible even if the songs are taught and the tangible bundle handed over, and another summarized the denial by saying that "the 'animal' didn't give the power to the other guy!" Such flat denials seem, however, to be in the minority, though those who hold the opposite point of view are not always clear about the mechanism of transfer, and no one cited the public announcement suggested by Turney-High. Making a distinction between dreams on the one hand and visions on the other, one informant reported that when an individual has power obtained through a dream, he may lose it when it is dreamed by another. Whether this is willed by the guardian, whether it is punishment for abuse of power, or whether it is the special nature of power obtained through dreams is not clear in this case. More specifically, another informant reported that power and songs can be trans-

ferred, although he knew of no special ceremony for the purpose. He cited the following story from his personal experience:

There was a guy who was looking for power once, and he heard a guy coming from a long way off singing a song. He finally met the guy, and the guy was singing a stick game song. He told the young feller, "When you get to be a certain age, you can use that song for the stick game." The young man remembered the song until the time came to use it. And he met the man who had given him the song and they started playing the stick game against each other. And the young feller beat the man who had given him the song—the guy didn't have his power any more.

Other informants have sung songs for the writer which are definitely claimed to have been transferred from another individual. One man, for example, sang a Jumpin' Dance song which he regards as a personal song with power but which was given to him "by its owner, and he said I could use it when I wanted. It is my song." Again, a woman uses a personal "lonesome" song which she learned "long ago" from a sweetheart.

Concerning transfer of songs and power, then, clearly there is ambivalence, as there is concerning other similar questions. The nature of the experience is individual, and power is a difficult matter. Given these points, it is not surprising that agreement among the Flathead is not unanimous.

It has been noted above that shamanistic power depends to a considerable extent upon song, and that the songs of the shaman do not differ in kind from those obtained by any individual through the vision quest or other supernatural contact. The difference between the shaman and the ordinary individual is that the former usually has more songs and that these songs tend to be connected with curing. An ordinary individual may have a curing song, but the shaman is likely to have several, each of which applies to a different curing situation.

The connection between shamanistic practice and song is noted very early in the literature concerning the Flathead. One of the first descriptions is that given by Warren Ferris for the period 1830 to 1835; although he was generalizing to "the Rocky Mountain Indians" in this particular passage, he knew the Flathead well and doubtless drew upon them, as well as upon others, for the following:

These medicine men also forewarn them of coming events, and profess to cure them of their diseases, by wearing the skin, assuming the characters, imitating the voices, and mimicking the actions of bears, and other animals; accompanying their demoniac capers by discordant yells, and deafening sounds, extracted from a kind of drum by violent thumpings, alone sufficient, one would imagine, to frighten away both the demon of distemper, and the spirit of the afflicted together. . . . At least they may claim the merit of performing, without any fees, all the various ceremonies of their profession; their only reward being the esteem of their companions, and a more extended influence. (1940:234)

Samuel Parker, who passed through the Flathead area in the period 1835–37 on his way to Protestant missionary activity farther West, reported:

Among their superstitions may be classed their mode of curing diseases. They have what are

called medicine men, who make no pretensions to any knowledge of diseases or skill in medicine; but they have a bag in which is deposited various relics. The patient is stretched upon the ground; a number of persons encircle him and sing the medicine song. The medicine man enters the circle and commences his magical incantations by holding the medicine bag over him, which is to operate as a charm; he uses many gestures, grimaces, and inarticulate sounds; pats or kneads the patient with his hands, beginning very softly, and gradually increasing to a considerable degree of severity; blows into his ears, and practices other like ceremonies. By this process the patient is often much fatigued, and thrown into a free perspiration, and his imagination is much excited. When the friction has been sufficiently employed, the imagination well wrought upon, and the medicine bag has invisibly imparted its virtues, the medicine man presents some trifling article, such as small bone, a stick, or pebble, and says he has taken it from the body of the patient, and that it was the cause of the disease; or he gives a heavy puff upwards and says the disease has come out of the patient and gone upward, and then asks him if he does not feel better. . . . The medicine man stands responsible for the life of his patient, and if the patient dies, not unfrequently his own life is taken by some of the relatives of the deceased. He makes a heavy charge for his services, often a horse . . . (1842:240-41)

Father de Smet's description, written in December, 1841, is remarkably similar:

Conjurers are found here as well as in some parts of Europe. They are a kind of physicians. Whatever may be the complaint of the patient these gentlemen have him stretched out on his back, and his friends and relatives are ordered to stand around him, each one armed with two sticks of unequal length. The doctor or conjurer neither feels the pulse nor looks at the tongue but with a solemn countenance commences to sing some mournful strain, whilst those present accompany him with their voices and beat time with the sticks. During the singing the doctor operates on the patient, he kneels before him, and placing his closed fists on the stomach, leans on him with all his might. Excessive pain makes the patient roar, but his roarings are lost in the noise, for the doctor and the bystanders raise their voices higher in proportion as the sick man gives utterance to his sufferings. At the end of each stanza the doctor joins his hands, applies them to the patient's lips, and blows with all his strength. This operation is repeated till at last the doctor takes from the patient's mouth, either a little white stone, or the claw of some bird or animal, which he exhibits to the bystanders, protesting that he has removed the cause of the disease, and that the patient will soon recover. But whether he recover or die, the quack is here as elsewhere rewarded for his exertions. . . . I received this description of their method of curing diseases from a clerk of the Hudson Bay Company. (1906a:300-01)

Later, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Curtis commented that illness "was combated by a treatment consisting of singing and either blowing the disease away with the breath or sucking it out with the lips" (1911:83); and Turney-High, writing in the 1930's, gives a number of examples of shamanistic practice, most of which involve song and dance (1937:28-34).

Contemporary writers seem to agree in general that shamans among the Flathead hold greater but not different power than the ordinary person (Park 1938:92; Turney-High 1937:33) and that their operation is based upon the so-called "intrusive object theory" (Ray 1939:96) of disease. The latter refers, of course, to the practice of removing an offending object from the body of the patient by sucking or

blowing. Informants today confirm these principles in general, as indicated by the following reports of shamanistic practice:

S says that A is a shaman; he uses his flageolet in curing. B says she saw A working. There was a woman who was sick and A blew his flageolet to sound like a bird. Then he touched her slowly with his hands and rubbed his hands along her body. She was cured. S says that A can cure toothache. He puts his hands on the sides of the jaw; he rubs his hands together. He told her that the tooth would stop aching and that later it would fall out.

P had a little horn which he used in curing. He did not touch A, but he put the horn up to his lips without touching them, and the other end on her hurt back, but without touching it. Then he sucked in and drew blood out of her back, which he spit out of his mouth into a basin.

Another shaman treated A for her back trouble. He also had a little horn on which he sucked. He put sinew in the mouth of the horn and the sinew stayed there; he sucked and sucked and when the horn was full of her blood the sinew dropped out and he washed it out in a basin.

It is evident from these descriptions that shamanistic practice can and does occur without song, and it is tempting to suggest that two kinds of curing are used by shamans among the Flathead. Those who touch, blow, suck—in other words, actually manipulate the body of the patient—seem less often to use song. On the other hand, singing itself, often in conjunction with the use of some tangible object, perhaps forms a second mechanism. In such a case, for example, G was given curing songs by his guardian spirit; he uses otterskins which he puts around his waist while singing. He then puts the skin around the afflicted person's waist and sings again. The same person has special power in hunting, which he uses not only for personal gain but for the group as a whole. "When I can't find any tracks, I go up on a little hill and sing my song; then all the animals come to me." From present evidence it is not possible to do more than suggest the two kinds of shamanistic practice, but it seems possible that differences, based upon the presence or absence of song, do exist.

The Flathead view of music, then, is based upon its supernatural source and the power that goes with it. Power is not simple to manipulate, and the consequences of poor manipulation can be serious. At the same time, the guardian experience is an individual one which in many cases must be kept secret; thus beliefs about song in connection with the supernatural tend to be somewhat contradictory from individual to individual. Still, the same general principles apply to all, and the source of *real* songs is always the supernatural. It is within this major framework and against this background that the Flathead view their music.

INDIVIDUAL COMPOSITION

It has been noted above that the Flathead believe that in former times all songs came from contact with the supernatural world but that in more recent times this

pattern has changed. Thus there is a sharp distinction drawn between personal songs from the guardian spirits and that class of songs the Flathead call "make-up songs." Existence of the latter is acknowledged by virtually everyone, and besides their source, other distinctions are made about the nature of make-up songs. All informants agree, for example, that make-up songs can have no power—a made-up love song may please the composer, but it cannot possibly operate to compel the love of a person of the opposite sex. Some informants hold that a distinction can be drawn on the presence or absence of song texts; personal songs have texts while make-up songs do not. Other informants indicate that make-up songs are by their very nature transient while real personal songs are not: "If you make up your song, you'll soon forget it; if you get it from a power, you will remember it forever." Some say, finally, that *all* songs today are make-up songs and that therefore there are no *real* Flathead songs extant.

Given this attitude, we might expect to be able to find individual composers in Flathead society without much difficulty, but such is not the case. While a few individuals acknowledge having composed a specific song or songs, most deny having done so, and those who do acknowledge their ability are reluctant to do so. This is not surprising when it is remembered that make-up songs are considered to be a recent innovation and an inferior product by definition. High value is placed upon the songs conferred by the guardian spirit, not only because they are the only songs which have power, but because contact with the supernatural is a value in itself. "Make-up songs"—and, by extension, those who make them up—are a substitute product which represents change as well as a second-rate substitution for something which lies at the core of Flathead values and beliefs.

Thus the compositional process is extremely difficult to observe in Flathead culture. One informant, in speaking of a lullaby, indicated that she had heard "the old people" singing songs like this and had then made up one herself. She "changed the tune," the implication being that the words remained the same as those sung by the old people. Indeed, there is some evidence to indicate that small changes in the musical shape of the song are enough to create a new song, but it is mostly negative evidence based on the narrow allowable limits of variation in known songs. For example, the author had considerable difficulty recording flageolet songs from one informant because of the degree of certitude the performer required before he would allow his songs to be recorded. V insisted on knowing the songs "perfectly." On one occasion he said that he had been practicing the flageolet and that he had recalled three songs previously forgotten; on being asked to play them, he discovered that he had forgotten them again. This occasioned further practice for about twenty minutes; having failed to recollect the songs properly, he gave up, disgusted. At one point, the author suggested that V had recalled a song, but V said that he *almost* had it, and refused to record it. Before recording another song on the same occasion, he practiced for fifteen minutes; afterward he worked further on yet another song but was never satisfied with it and refused to record it. Other informants followed very

similar patterns, humming or singing quietly to themselves, and refusing to record unless they were satisfied that the song was exactly correct.

Similarly, when songs by one singer were played to others, criticism often tended to be couched in terms of the "mistakes" made. In one case L pointed out that S had sung "just a couple of notes wrong" and that this spoiled the authenticity of the song. Singers are also quick to apologize in advance if they feel that their memory may be faulty: "I haven't heard this song for a long time, maybe fifteen years. I might sing it a little different, like S did."

Since allowable variation in Flathead songs seems to be very small, composition of "new" songs should not be difficult. But, as noted above, new songs have nowhere near the value of old songs for the Flathead, and the writer has never had the opportunity of observing the process of creation at work.

When we return to the framework of personal songs, however, it will be recalled that some understanding of the process of composition has already been suggested. Teit, for example, spoke of "modifications" and "new variations of those already known to the people" and suggested how new themes were obtained. He also indicated that composition as a process may have been known and recognized by the Flathead when he wrote that "songs were also composed in later life after notable dreams, important events, or war exploits" (1930:384). Turney-High emphasized the point that songs obtained from the guardian spirit were "supposed to be new and individual" (1937:27)—indicating that change in music, although certainly expected to fall within accepted general patterns, was of positive value.

We have gone further, having suggested above that the patterning of the quest experience in relation to sound represents a symbolic acknowledgment of the compositional process. It will be recalled that in many cases the suppliant is first aware of the approach of the guardian by a song dimly heard, which becomes louder and louder as the being approaches. Some individuals learn the spirit song on first hearing; others must be rehearsed. Some fail in the quest, while others are eminently successful, obtaining a number of songs. All these variations around a common theme may well represent the ability of the individual to create new music material, and it has been suggested that there may be a high correlation between ability to compose and success in obtaining a guardian spirit, although it is recognized that there can be successful quests without song.

In any case, individual composition, though it must be of growing importance today in contributing to the Flathead repertoire, is not a valued means of creating new music material. Therefore, few individuals are willing to admit to having composed, and none have been observed in the process by the writer.

BORROWED SONGS

While songs obtained from the supernatural constituted the only theoretical source for music material in the past, and individual composition may have contributed

more and more heavily as time went on, it appears that a certain amount of borrowing of songs from other peoples has always been acknowledged by the Flathead. This source also seems to be increasing with the passage of time.

There is considerable evidence to indicate that the Flathead were in touch with neighboring tribes at the time of the first Western contact, and there is no reason to suppose that they had not been much earlier as well. Turney-High, for example, spoke of intertribal trade, and most generally of the Crow, Snake, and, particularly, the Nez Perce (1937:136-38). After introduction of the horse to the Flathead, probably sometime between 1710 and 1730, it became customary to make one or two trips to the Plains each year to hunt buffalo. On these trips the Flathead came into contact with Plains people, particularly the Blackfoot, who became "traditional" enemies.

But contact was made with peoples of more distant groups than those immediate Salish neighbors to the west and Plains to the east. A good deal has been written about the Iroquois influence, particularly in connection with the introduction of Christianity. The first groups of Iroquois to move into the Upper Saskatchewan came with fur traders about the year 1789, according to Ewers (1963:3), and although the date of their first contact with the Flathead cannot be determined, it is known that David Thompson, an early trapper working in Flathead country, employed six Iroquois in the month of February, 1810 (Tyrrell 1916:418-19). Many accounts have been given of Iroquois among the Flathead; of particular interest and detail are those of Ewers (1948, 1963). At a slightly later date, Captain John Mullan, who was charged with constructing a military road through Flathead country in the early 1850's, wrote that "with the Flatheads are found a few Indians of the Iroquois, Shawnee, and Snakes, and one or two New Mexican Indians. They all find a friendly and welcome home with the Flatheads, into which tribe they have married" (1863:50).

Recognition that the process of borrowing has operated in the past is made by contemporary informants. L, for example, in explanation of a song he had just recorded for the author, noted that this was a song he had "learned from my dad. There was a fella' sneakin' around an enemy camp and he learned that song. He brought it back to my dad. That song never been sung 'round this tribe." He further indicated that his father had learned two such songs from the warrior, but that he, L, had forgotten the second.

Flathead contacts with other peoples, then, are attested to by the earliest historic record and to some extent by recollection of contemporary informants. While no traces of Iroquois music, for example, can be identified in Flathead music today, it is inconceivable that contact with these and other groups could have had no effect on the Flathead music style. It is to be supposed that specific foreign traits have merged with the general style and become integrated with it.

The Flathead today are sanguine about borrowing songs from other tribes, and in some cases there is a considerable manifest eagerness to do so. One informant in

particular, a leading singer, recounts with considerable pleasure his various experiences in learning songs from other groups. My own notes about him read:

L was apparently much impressed with his visit to the Shoshone in Idaho some years ago. He told me that for the Owl Dance, the Shoshone used four small drums rather than the one big war drum which the Flathead use, and he took pride in the fact that when he was there they gave him and his brother a drum each to use while singing in the Shoshone Owl Dance. L learned a lot of songs there which he still sings, and he adds, "We taught them some songs, too."

On another occasion, the same informant reported that during the Fourth of July celebration then going on (1950), he intended to learn some new songs from Blackfoot who had come to join the festivities, and he arranged a rehearsal session. Later he reported that he "couldn't catch on very well," although Blackfoot songs were sung (with his collaboration) still later for war dancing during the celebration. Eight years later the same informant greeted the author by saying that he had been "learning lots of new songs from all over lately."

Of the 226 songs recorded in the summer of 1950, nineteen were of acknowledged foreign importation. Of these, five were Blackfoot, four Shoshone, three Chippewa, two each Nez Perce and Cree, and one each had been borrowed from the Kootenai, Coeur d'Alene, and Snake. It is very likely that other foreign songs were unacknowledged, and perhaps even unknown, having been thoroughly absorbed into the common repertoire. It is also likely that a sample of similar size today would show a larger proportion of borrowed songs.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Flathead recognize three sources of songs: the supernatural, individual composition, and borrowing from other tribes. Of these, the most important, both historically and in terms of present values, is the supernatural. Theoretically, at least, all songs are considered to have emanated from this source in "olden times," and, of course, they were and are associated with the strong powers held by individuals.

If the Flathead are correct in their belief that in former times all, or the great majority, of songs came from the supernatural, and since these songs are considered personal and secret, then it is difficult to see how there could have been any generalized body of song. Several explanations are possible. In the first place it will be recalled that not all personal songs are private. In some cases the guardian spirit instructs the novice to sing his song in public, and in other cases, such as gambling, the public nature of the song is inevitable. In the second place, there is much evidence to indicate that at public ceremonies, persons with power—particularly shamans—were accustomed, if not required, to sing their personal songs. One shaman reported, for example, that he would lose his power if he did not sing publicly in the winter ceremonials. Third, the personal songs of the dead are no longer associated with their power, and if the music is remembered by someone, it

can—theoretically at least—be sung with impunity. Thus the personal, sacred, and secret songs were apparently by no means as secret as it might appear, and music could flow out into the general repertoire in both sanctioned and unsanctioned ways.

At the same time, evidence indicates that songs were continually being composed by individuals in the “olden days” and that borrowing was always an ongoing process. Both the historic record and the recollections of informants substantiate this statement. But both individual composition and borrowing are of less importance, interest, and value to the Flathead, for the acquisition of song from the supernatural, along with the power the songs represent, is of basic value in the Flathead world view.

It is apparent that the sources of music for the Flathead today are changing. Individual composition probably contributes more and more songs, though dominant values tend to submerge reports of the process. As communication among tribes increases through appearances at rodeos, fairs, pageants, and Fourth of July celebrations, more and more songs are probably borrowed. Some leading singers among the Flathead are, indeed, eager to acquire new music experiences through this means. At the same time, evidence indicates that the vision quest is being practiced less and less frequently by the younger generation and that unplanned visits from the supernatural are similarly decreasing. The balance is changing from sources which formerly relied upon contact with a world not controlled by man to those which man himself initiates. Whether this will result in marked changes in Flathead music style, only time will tell.

CHAPTER II

IDEAS OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANSHIP

WHILE THE FLATHEAD place their music in a particular context in relation to the total environment in which they live, emphasizing the importance of the relationship between music and the supernatural, they are by no means devoid of other ideas about music and musicianship. The supernatural is not a total and all-embracing principle which automatically takes care of all music problems, leaving individuals as limp pawns in the hands of fate. On the contrary, music is a living part of the environment, used and manipulated by people, and conceptualized in an ordered framework of belief. As in its connection with the supernatural, however, beliefs about music vary, which is to be expected since in all cultures belief and behavior vary from individual to individual and from what is idealized to what is actually done.

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP ACTIVITY

Music for the Flathead may be either an individual or a group activity, and a correlation is evident with the type of song being sung. Personal songs constitute the occasion for individual activity, for these, as noted in the preceding chapter, are often private and secret. But there are many social occasions in Flathead life when music, usually coupled with dance, is performed by the group, often as many persons as wish to participate. The outstanding example of such a present-day occasion is the War Dance held most often during the summer months at the Fourth of July celebration and for events outside Flathead culture such as rodeos and fairs.

The degree to which a group is brought together in its music and dance activities is difficult to ascertain, for it is not easy to determine the point at which integration is complete. We can cite Blacking's observations on the *tsbikona*, a social dance of the South African Venda. He wrote:

It is communal music par excellence, because the participants cannot merely gratify themselves, but must submit to the strict discipline of the dance. Many African dances seem to be little more than a messy conglomeration of individual antics, but *tsbikona* is a graceful and orderly movement of people who are united and voluntarily overwhelmed, for the time being, by a force greater than themselves. (1957:21)

Using Blacking's report as a yardstick, we can make several observations about Flathead individuality versus group cohesion in social dances.

It seems clear that the Flathead are rarely, if ever, as "united and voluntarily overwhelmed" in their singing and dancing as are the Venda. Relatively few people at the War Dance, for example, are actual participants—there may be five or six musicians, possibly an equal number of women assisting the musicians in singing, and perhaps forty or fifty dancers. But the gathered crowd may well number several hundred spectators, who participate only vicariously. Also, the Flathead War Dance allows a considerable amount of variation in individual steps, although always within certain limitations. Thus the dancers all move in the same counterclockwise direction, but emphasis is placed upon individual skill in dancing the same basic step patterns. There is, then, no Flathead music or dance activity in which the entire group is directly involved, all people singing together in a single mighty chorus, or the entire group swept up in a unified series of identical dance steps.

At the same time, the performance of the War Dance, and of other social dances like it, is a group activity in which large numbers of people do participate in one way or another—some as musicians, some as dancers, and some as spectators. It is clear, too, that the spectators are involved with the spectacle before them and that they derive considerable satisfaction and renewal of group pride and solidarity.

In short, Flathead music activity can be individual as in the case, particularly, of personal songs, and group, as in the case, for example, of the War Dance where songs are designed for a group occasion. Using the yardstick provided by Blacking, however, group activity never reaches the point described for the Venda *tsbikona*.

Music is also primarily an adult activity for the Flathead. There are no children's songs extant today, and informants differ about whether such songs existed in the past. The literature on the Flathead is devoid of references to children's songs. Rather than singing songs specific to their age group, the children linger on the edges of adult music activity, sometimes taking active part in dancing for social occasions, but never singing with the established performance groups. We shall have occasion to return to this matter later but call attention at this point to the probable significance of the fact that it is children who are sent on the vision quest, through which mechanism they enter the adult realm of music before they are adults. Hence it seems logical that children's songs, as a distinct body of music, should be absent in Flathead culture. In any case, music today is an adult activity with the children participating in adult music and dance as soon as they are able and as soon as the adults will allow them to do so.

Music for the Flathead is for both males and females. Boys and girls can and do participate in the formal vision quest, and girls and women as well as males receive songs of personal power through other less structured visits from the supernatural. Most Flathead believe that fewer women than men have guardian spirits and personal songs, which is probably the case, but women are in no way enjoined from receiving such advantages. One female informant recalled a woman with

special powers. She reported:

One time at the celebration it was terribly hot and the people wished it would rain. The woman took a pan of water and went out from camp; she sang her song, and a terrific storm came up. It rained very hard, and there was a big wind and a lot of the tipis were blown down.

This same woman once saved the Flathead. One time they were being ganged up on by other Indians, several tribes, and they were in bad trouble. The woman wrapped her head and shoulders in a shawl and went riding out through a hail of arrows, but none of them touched her. She was singing her song, and pretty soon it began to rain and then it hailed very hard. All the warriors with no clothes on had to run for shelter, and the Flathead were saved.

It is a commentary either on the attitude of men toward women, or of women toward men, that the informant closed her account by reporting that her father, who told her the story, said, "Boy, I sure hated to have to be saved by a woman!"

Certain kinds of songs are the business of women primarily, as in the case of certain Scalp Dance songs, or almost exclusively, as in the case of the First Roots ceremony. Women participate in still other music activities; in the War Dance, the ideal is that women come to the center of the circle and assist the male musicians by joining them in singing.

At the same time some prohibitions do exist. Although women can play the hand drum on certain occasions such as the Scalp Dance, these occasions are very limited. Informants agree that women never play flageolets or the war drum. They seem never to have any connection with eagle bone whistles or with rattles and bells. A woman may be considered an excellent singer, but she is never part of the inner coterie, which is exclusively male—this may have something to do with women never playing the war drum. Certain dances, such as parts of the Scalp Dance, are reserved to women; others, such as the more recently introduced Owl Dance, are performed by men and women in couples; and still others, such as the War Dance, are reserved to males.

In sum, women take a full part in music activities among the Flathead. Prohibitions against female participation are about equally balanced with prohibitions on other occasions against male participation. The only exceptions, which make male music participation more frequent and probably more important, are related to music instruments and such approaches to professionalism as are practiced among the Flathead.

WHY PEOPLE MAKE MUSIC

Why people make music is a question that has not been considered in detail by the Flathead. Some informants can make no direct answer to such a question, and others indicate by their responses that the problem is of no concern to them. The clearest single response came from a woman who said, "In my time, and in my