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**Graceful women: An ethnographic account of women's
experience in the Healthy-Happy-Holy-Organization, and of the
interplay of socio-cultural tensions, organization-building and
selfhood in one of the new religions**

Elsberg, Constance Waeber, Ph.D.

University of Maryland College Park, 1988

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GRACEFUL WOMEN: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF WOMEN'S
EXPERIENCE IN THE HEALTHY-HAPPY-HOLY-ORGANIZATION, AND OF
THE INTERPLAY OF SOCIO-CULTURAL TENSIONS, ORGANIZATION-
BUILDING AND SELFHOOD IN ONE OF THE NEW RELIGIONS

by

Constance Elsberg

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Maryland in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
1988

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: Graceful Women: An Ethnographic Account of Women's Experience in the Healthy-Happy-Holy Organization, and of the Interplay of Socio-Cultural Tensions, Organization-Building and Selfhood in One of the New Religions

Constance Waeber Elsberg, Doctor of Philosophy, 1988

Dissertation directed by: John Caughey, Associate Professor, American Studies Department, University of Maryland

Alternative religions and lifestyles no longer proliferate as they did in the 1960's and early 1970's. Some of these experiments, however, have survived into the 1980's. Study of their characteristics, accomplishments, and compromises can improve our understanding of the developmental patterns of such groups, and of their potential and their limitations.

This dissertation is an ethnographic account of women's lives in one such group: the Healthy-Happy-Holy-Organization (3HO). 3HO sprang from the counterculture and was incorporated in 1969. Since then, efforts to legitimate and institutionalize the 3HO belief system and lifestyle have produced a disciplined way of life and rapprochement with mainstream institutions. This has been accomplished, in part, by combining such diverse traditions as Sikhism, Tantric and Kundalini yoga, and aspects of Hinduism, with many conventional American beliefs and attitudes. Not surprisingly, this has led to some internal contradictions. It has also resulted in an organization

whose structure, beliefs and imagery have come to reflect many of the tensions that exist in the surrounding society.

This paper looks at members' accounts of life in 3HO and at the incorporation of sociocultural tensions in 3HO life. Further, it examines gender roles, the life course, and identity processes in 3HO. It describes ways in which organizational definitions of the self have come to be aligned with organizational structure. It examines some of the 3HO imagery and the ways this imagery is employed in members' interpretations of their experience. Some of the author's reactions to participation in 3HO events are included, as well as an analysis of the author's ambivalence about the organization. Research methods were participant observation, intensive interviews and content analysis.

PREFACE

This study grows out of almost seven years of contact with the Healthy-Happy-Holy-Organization and Sikh Dharma. My research for this ethnography has in many ways proved personally beneficial and has been the occasion of many interesting and enjoyable personal contacts. It has also been the source of considerable ambivalence, as the reader will discover. I have concentrated primarily on individual lives, on women's experience in the organization, on their sense of self and their adoption of a spiritual identity, and on social and cultural factors that shape the organization. I have not looked at the politics of the organization and its interaction with the larger society.

In the period in which I conducted fieldwork there have been developments in this arena. The director of one of the larger American ashrams and his wife left the organization in 1983. At approximately the same time a central figure in the Espanola ashram also left disillusioned, and many members accompanied him. In 1986 two highly placed women, after leaving the organization, filed suit against Yogi Bajan and several officers of the 3HO Foundation and the Sikh Dharma Brotherhood. Charges included Fraud and Deceit and Assault and Battery. At present (March 1988) a trial date has not been set and discovery and the taking of the depositions continues. In March, 1988 the Director of the Washington ashram was

arrested and charged with "Continuing Criminal Conspiracy." The charge involves extensive sales of marijuana. He is awaiting trial.

Members view these events from several perspectives. Often, decisions to leave are attributed to spiritual confusion, pride, or desires for self aggrandizement. Many believe that Sikh opponents are indirectly attacking Yogi Bhajan. The official position regarding the arrest of the Washington director is that he was actually trying to expose drug dealers and was caught in the middle of an operation. When the confusion is cleared up his good intentions and his service will be evident, ashram residents say.

The organization is clearly facing significant strain and its future course and shape are unclear. It has long encompassed contradictory elements and multiple realities; current troubles may be the outcome of long-term tensions and processes. Almost from my first contact with the organization I was aware of seeming contradictions and tensions. I often had an intuitive feeling that some members were putting considerable effort into feeling, saying, and thinking as they thought they should. Sometimes, exchanges and settings suggested multiple layers of meaning and intention, and I knew that I was only scratching the surface. There seemed to be insider and outsider realities, as well as realities for those at the

upper reaches of the organizational hierarchy and for those at the lower levels. There was what was said and what was felt. There were the realities of the belief systems on which JHO/Sikh Dharma draws, and there were the realities of organization-building, of status seeking, and of power. There were socio-cultural tensions that exist outside of the organization have been incorporated within it. I made these tensions the underlying theme of the ethnography and recent events seem to confirm my early impressions. I hope that some of these tensions will be resolved in ways that will benefit the women I have interviewed.

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CHAPTER I

THE HEALTHY-HAPPY-HOLY-ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTION

It is a hot mid-afternoon and participants in the Khalsa Women's Training Camp are taking their siesta break before their Sikh teacher, Harbhajan Singh Khalsa,¹ delivers his afternoon lecture. The dirt paths are dusty and comparatively deserted. It is the quiet, almost slow-motion stage of a hot afternoon. Under a large yellow-and-white-striped canopy, women are seated on mats and sheepskins and they pass this time in conversation, reading, or sleep. Most are wearing turbans and are dressed almost entirely in white. To either side of the canopy are the campers' tents. An open tent flap reveals unexpected domesticity: rugs, clothes hung tidily on hangers, an oscillating fan, and a makeshift altar. The taped voice of Yogi Bhajan issues from a nearby tent, and from another comes the sound of taped chants. Nearby, in a small open structure, evidently a converted carport, a few women are ironing clothes. Cotton is a preferred material, but its drawback is that it must be ironed for special

¹ He is known to the general public as "Yogi Bhajan" and to 3HO members as the Siri Singh Sahib, a title that members translate as "Minister of the Sikh Dharma for the Western World." I will refer to him as "Yogi Bhajan," thus avoiding controversial titles and adopting the name employed by fairly sympathetic non-members.

occasions like the daily lecture. Further down the path two women are holding the ends of a long-white piece of gauze known as a chuni. It has been wetted and now the women are each holding one end and flapping it in the air so that it will dry wrinkle-free. It will be worn over a turban, falling back over the shoulders like a veil to create a desired "graceful" look, a look much appreciated by Yogi BhaJan.

The women have temporarily left their families, ashrams and jobs in various parts of the U.S. and Canada -- some have even come from overseas -- in order to participate in the camp activities. Soon, all three hundred of them will assemble under the canopy, some carrying tape recorders and notebooks to capture important points in the lecture, most carrying water bottles for relief from the perpetual thirst generated by a constant dry heat. They will chant while they wait for Yogi BhaJan to take his place on a raised platform and begin the day's talk. Typically, he will refer to women's natural spirituality and "radiance," as he delineates his vision of the ideal, graceful woman. He will also discuss what he perceives as women's most pervasive fears and vulnerabilities, and perhaps will energetically criticize both his audience for their failings and their culture for its shortcomings. Most of the women will receive his words as a blessing and most will feel that simply to be in his presence is healing.

Later, many will attest to his ability to pinpoint their anxieties and troubles, just as if he were reading their minds.

Most of the women have taken vows based on the Sikh religion. They have pledged to live piously, work "righteously," share their earnings, and be faithful in marriage. Many have taken a further step and joined the Sikh Khalsa, or brotherhood, and have embraced the "Five K's" -- wearing the kara, a steel bracelet that represents bonding to guru and truth, the kungha, a comb said to symbolize cleanliness, katschas, an undergarment representative of modesty, and kes, or uncut hair. Many are partners in arranged marriages. All participate in daily yoga sessions and take courses on spiritual growth and personal development, and many study Sikh scriptures and prayers.

While the scene may suggest the Punjab, the setting is in fact Espanola, New Mexico, and most of the women here who have adopted this religion are Americans. As is the case with most of the new alternative Eastern religions, its members are, as they might phrase it, "ex-Hippies." They have moved from the counterculture of the late 1960s and early 70s into a religion that one expert describes as "an intensely organized and voluntarily regimented religious society" (Juergensmeyer 1979, 23). All of the Sikh women who are present at the camp have some level of

involvement in an organization titled the "Healthy-Happy-Holy-Organization," known to its members as 3HO. It bears the imprint of Yogi Bajan's version of Sikhism, but it is additionally dedicated to yoga, to self-realization, to teaching, and to New Age principles. One can be affiliated with 3HO without being a Sikh, but most of the men and women who are very actively involved have taken vows.

The organization was incorporated in Los Angeles in 1969 and was originally dedicated to a particular form of yoga -- Kundalini yoga. At that time most of its members would have called it "spiritual" in intent, and many were distrustful of organized religion. Sikhism was not originally a central aspect of 3HO life, but over the years the 3HO lifestyle has become more conventionally religious, rigorous and disciplined -- much "straighter" as members would say. 3HO is a teaching and outreach organization. A parallel religious and administrative organization, Sikh Dharma, consists of an international network of ashrams, or centers, whose affairs are hierarchically organized under Yogi Bajan's leadership. Under him are regional directors, an advisory council, and ashram directors and their wives. While the two organizations are distinct legal entities, in practice members often refer to 3HO/Sikh Dharma.

3HO offers a variety of courses in subjects such as yoga, vegetarian cooking, spiritual growth and healing. It

has supported soup kitchens and drug rehabilitation projects and a research institute. The central commitment of 3HO/Sikh Dharma,² however, is to a spiritual discipline. Members are encouraged, and exhorted, to attend daily sadhana (pre-dawn yoga, meditation and worship) and this is considered the most important and distinctive aspect of the lifestyle. Service, vegetarianism, and a healthy lifestyle are also basic values. Many members participate in "family businesses" such as the vegetarian Golden Temple restaurants, a shoe manufacturing business called Shakti Shoes, or a rug cleaning business. Some choose to interact primarily with fellow 3HO participants while others work outside of the ashram and are quite active beyond its confines. Ashram members gather for Gurdwara (the traditional Sikh service, held on Sundays) and members from all over the country meet at Summer and Winter Solstice ceremonies, and the women meet at the Training Camp.

The formal intent of the organization is nicely summarized in an article written for the New Age journal, Communities, in 1975:

... a growth-enhancing milieu directed towards growth on at least four levels: a healthy body through yoga, diet, and hygiene; a healthy happy mind through meditation, Sikh Dharma...and group support; healthy-happy interpersonal relations through a group consciousness and group activities; and a spiritually-oriented attitude of gratitude, a

² For simplicity's sake I will refer to "3HO" rather than to "3HO/Sikh Dharma" throughout the rest of this paper.

realization of the oneness we all share. (Comeau and Singh, 41)

Membership is difficult to define since levels of involvement vary from peripheral participation in workshops and yoga classes to living, working, and worshipping with the community. Because of this, the leadership has not kept accurate census records until recently. An ex-member, who was in a position to know, provides a conservative estimate of the number of people actually living in ashrams at 1200 adults. Some ashrams are quite large, while others may consist of only one or two families. Some of the largest in the United States include Los Angeles; Espanola; Phoenix, Arizona; and Washington, D.C. (actually most Washington members are now located in the Virginia suburbs). A significant proportion of the organization's members live in Southern Los Angeles and in cities such as Long Beach, Altadena, Pomona, San Diego and Santa Barbara (Meyer 1984). Ashram members may live together under one roof, in a cluster of houses, or even scattered about a city. In Virginia, most share large suburban houses, two families to a house, on cul-de-sacs in two housing subdivisions. Many of the children (most of those over 12) attend an Indian boarding school, Guru Nanek Fifth Centenary School, located northwest of Delhi.

This dissertation is, first of all, an ethnographic study of women's lives in JHO -- of their reasons for

joining, of the ways their lives are patterned by membership and marked by organizational rituals and beliefs, and of their self-concepts and imagery for the self. There is also another level of analysis, however, for these women's biographies and their modes of interpreting and organizing their lives reflect significant cultural and social trends. While 3HO is certainly not a microcosm of American life, it is a setting in which cultural and structural tensions are dramatized and accentuated. Thus, this is also a study of ways in which some of these tensions and trends impinge upon and are worked into organizational life and structure.

My first encounter with 3HO occurred in 1982 when I received a flyer advertising a workshop on "Self Esteem" to be held at the downtown center. I am not certain why I happened to be a recipient, but I had attended activities sponsored by a local Human Potential group and assume that the group leader took my name from that list. I probably never would have attended the workshop if I hadn't been in search of a paper topic for the ethnography course that I was then taking (and I later found that there was an equivalent degree of serendipity in many 3HO members' first contacts with the organization).

The site proved to be an old four-story grey stone house near Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C. with a small sign reading "yoga lessons" implanted in the scrap of lawn

in front and "Ahimsa Ashram" inscribed on the door. Flyers for various courses papered an entrance hallway that was also lined with the shoes that people had removed upon entering. The hallway opened into what normally would have been a large living and dining area. It was bare of all furniture and the walls were whitewashed, trimmed in blue and gilt, and hung with paintings of the Sikh gurus. Six women sat around the room, waiting and talking fitfully until the leader entered dressed in a white turban, white skirt, white sweater and what looked to me then like white leggings. She walked briskly to the center of the room, carrying a guitar, and her freckled face, her put-everything-in-quotes humor, and her evident energy contrasted with the nun-like costume.

She wasted no time and began by telling us, quite matter-of-factly, that we would begin by "tuning in" with the chant Ong Namu Guru Dev Namu ("I call on the infinite creative consciousness. I call on the divine wisdom"). I had not been expecting anything religious or yogic and didn't know quite what to make of this, but since everybody else went along with it, I too brought my palms together, bowed my head and chanted, though feeling a peculiar mixture of sensations: at once awkward, silly, apprehensive, polite and out of place.

We proceeded to do yoga exercises, to "re-experience" situations that had left us with feelings of low self

esteem, to "access" the feelings or attitudes that could have prevented such feelings, and to "recreate" the situations so as to re-experience them in a more positive way and set the stage for future successful coping. We did yoga sets intended to "strengthen the will" and a kind of rapid breathing called the "breath of fire". For awhile the room sounded as though it were full of small dragons all huffing and puffing, and this nearly threw me into a fit of giggles. We did a meditation in which we were to breathe in on Sat ("Truth") and out on Nam ("Name of") because we were "seeking the truth." I was not accustomed to people who talked about seeking The Truth, not with a capital T and no irony, anyway. It seemed rather naive, as did the concluding song in which everybody accompanied the leader as she played on the guitar:

May the long time sun shine upon you
 all love surround you
 And the pure light within you guide your way on.

I felt uncomfortable with the sentimentality and the naivete, and yet found the song touching.

Further acquaintance revealed a community of ex-hippies who wore white Indian dress and carried briefcases, would-be mystics settling into suburban Ryan homes. They were individuals who could leap from sophisticated and ironic humor to earnest idealism and devotion. In one sentence, they could employ hip phrases like "freak out" and "far out" and pious terms like "righteous" and "noble." They

would speak with bemusement of their now comparatively "straight" lives, at once fearing and desiring the middle class lives they were constructing. They often spoke as if much of life belonged between quotation marks, but then would suddenly drop this distancing and framing device and obediently accept leaders' pronouncements and advice.

I was struck by their approach to gender, by their many magical beliefs, and by the powers they attributed to Yogi Bhanjan. I could not understand how women from a counter-culture background could readily accept ideals of service to their husbands and obedience to male leaders. I was bemused by assertions that wearing white or wearing a turban could center the self and affect the psyche, that Yogi Bhanjan could know what was in someone's mind or could see her aura (electromagnetic energy said to emanate from the individual), and by constant references to astrological signs as explanations for individuals' feelings and behavior. I was even told that as a master with sidhis (powers) Yogi Bhanjan had the ability to control water -- to make it rain or to stop a flood -- but had decided to forego use of this ability because he had abused it once.

I couldn't easily connect their hip backgrounds with their strict discipline, nor their tongue-in-cheek humor with such readiness to believe and obey. I was surprised to find that their willingness to experiment with the very essence of the self was often combined with rigid beliefs

and rote repetition of formulas. There was much blending of the alien and the familiar, of things I valued (imagination, questioning of the status quo, respect for the symbolic realm, compassion, fitness, and humor) and of things I disliked (strict obedience, unremitting discipline, distrust of the intellect, repression of feeling, followership, romanticization of women and domesticity). I was confused, alternately attracted and repelled, and eager to understand how these things had come together.

These contrasts made more sense as I began to understand the organization's blend of diverse traditions. It is a compound of Tantric and Kundalini yogic traditions, of Sikh and Hindu elements, of American counterculture and of pragmatism and Existentialism. Each element bears the imprint of Yogi Bhanjan's distinctive interpretation, and each has been adapted to his following of American youth and to such practical concerns as mobilizing members, establishing a viable organization, and solidifying leaders' positions.

Gender issues also loomed large and it became clear that an understanding of the 3HO gender ideology was essential to an understanding of the organization. Propelled by the currents of the women's movement, Yogi Bhanjan began addressing women's issues in the organization's formative years, and he has since given

numerous lectures and developed diverse teachings on the subject. While there are also special teachings for men, there is no masculine equivalent of the women's training camp, and the men's teachings are not as extensive as are the women's. Men hold most of the leadership positions in 3HO, while women receive more of the ideological attention. This may be because Yogi BhaJan depends on the support and devotion of 3HO women. He has a private staff made up of women, and they are expected to remain unmarried and devote themselves to serving him and the organization. Many of his statements express his expectation that 3HO women will bind their husbands and children to the organization and support them in any organizational work they undertake.

3HO is similar to many of the Eastern religions that attracted counterculture youth in the 1970s and have since been much studied under the rubric of the "new religions." In an effort to put some order in the many studies of these new religions, Robbins et al. (1978) suggest that four major approaches appear in the literature:

- (1) The secularization approaches that assume that charisma and religion are of no central consequence in modern bureaucratic life. From this perspective these new religions exist as

consumer options, as side-events, or as adjustments to rationality.³

- (2) Those that treat the new religions as a "quest for community" (96) in mass society. Observers of this persuasion may emphasize a contemporary disjunction between expressive and instrumental approach to life. They tend to regard the new religions as efforts to integrate these realms, or they may treat them as safety valves for unmet expressive needs.⁴
- (3) Those that posit "normative breakdown and value dissensus," (97) with the new religions providing opportunities to establish new ethical frameworks as the old utilitarian and work ethics lose their hold.⁵
- (4) Those that emphasize the effects upon the self of social complexity and differentiation. In this case it is assumed that the discontinuous experience generated by social complexity leads to a need to affirm and create holistic conceptions of the self, or, alternatively, to a need to

³ Authors cited include Richard K. Fenn, Marcello Truzzi and Bryan Wilson.

⁴ Anthony and Robbins have themselves taken this approach. See their articles under Works Cited.

⁵ Bellah, Glock and Tipton are among the better-known proponents of this point of view, as are the authors.

affirm, symbolize and give religious status to, the modern, individuated self.⁶

As Robbins et al. point out, these are not mutually exclusive perspectives. Certainly each has some validity in the 3HO case. 3HO clearly reflects adjustments to rationality and a mass consumer economy, and many of the values espoused by 3HO are appropriate to a capitalist and service economy. However much its first members may have railed against these facts of life, they were also influenced by them and have made significant accommodations to them. There is an element, at least, of a consumer ethic in many members' willingness to experiment with multiple philosophies and realities -- they suspend disbelief and consume alternative realities. For some, the community and family ambience attributed to the organization are major attractions. For many, finding a meaningful place for the self in the scheme of things is clearly important, as is a need to affirm the significance of careful and caring human relationships. Few probably joined the organization looking for clear-cut norms and values, but many were seeking "meaning" in the sense of seeking values and plausibility structures that could transcend or illuminate everyday experience. They sought to mediate or redefine the demands and realities of the

⁶ Francis Westley's contention that the new religions represent Durkheim's "cult of man" is among the most-discussed of these.

large-scale social structures they encountered. 3HO, in fact, is notable for its multiple messages and its capacity for meeting different needs.

PERSPECTIVE: ORGANIZATION, INDIVIDUAL, AND SOCIO-CULTURAL TENSIONS

My own approach is to emphasize the effects of complexity and rationality on self and organization. I view 3HO as the product of tensions and discontinuities generated by these trends. In fact, 3HO has come to replicate many of the tensions that mark American culture and society. Among these are the opposition of instrumental and expressive modes of interaction that is discussed by Anthony and Robbins.

The idea that the new religions reflect and reproduce tensions that are embedded in the dominant culture is not novel, but it has not received much attention. It is inherent in approaches to religion that reflect Durkheim's influence. Durkheim argued that many of the religious symbols that a people worship are in reality representations of social structures they have encountered. This approach has been modified and adapted by such authors as Mary Douglas (1970), Victor Turner (1967; 1974) and Francis Westley (1978; 1983). Hall (1987) treats the Jonestown lifestyle as an expression of more widespread social trends. Lopez (1981) explicitly applies this approach to his treatment of an Eastern group. He argues

that its members are carriers of the modern consciousness with its tendency to divorce public and private realms of experience. He finds a parallel separation of spheres in the group's religious concepts, particularly in their division of the self into ego (public self) and Atman (soul or private self.)

I have tried not only to isolate some of the tensions that SHO reflects but also to indicate how replication has occurred, treating it as the outcome of multiple processes. Some of the processes discussed involve internal factors such as group dynamics and leaders' strategies for mobilizing members and legitimating the organization. Others, such as identity processes, sense-making efforts, and self-concept formation are more personal and individual. Still others involve external factors such as economic pressures and the acceleration of trends towards a worldwide economy.

Further, I argue that identifiable social processes have led to the alignment of different levels of social experience. Thus members' conceptualizations of selfhood and many of their favored images and metaphors are congruent with organizational structure. The organization's structure, in turn, reflects tensions embedded in the surrounding cultural and social structures. In trying to indicate how this alignment of self, organization, and social structure has come about, I

attempt to both describe organizational processes and convey the nature of individual experience within the organization.

More specifically, I focus on feminine experience in 3HO and Sikh Dharma. This is because beliefs about gender are central to 3HO life, and because women's roles in the new religions deserve considerable attention. Many of the cultural tensions that have been worked into the beliefs and organizational forms of the new religions are of particular significance to women. Further, the new religions ask a great deal of their female members since they are often asked to make the major adjustments and sacrifices.'

SOCIO-CULTURAL TENSIONS

Because of its eclectic and pragmatic construction 3HO has come to incorporate socio-cultural trends and tensions that exist beyond its boundaries. These are tensions that are associated with the expansion of the rationalized and complex public sphere, with the growth of a service and world economy, and with the internal contradictions of capitalism. These strains also have distinctively American qualities and have been much studied by Americanists. They

⁷ There is a growing body of literature on gender in the new religions. See: Aidala (1985); Belfrage (1981); Haywood (1982, 1983); Jacobs (1984); Judah (1974); Richardson, Steward and Simmonds (1979); Rochford (1985); Rose (1987); Wagner (1982).

appear in 3HO philosophy, symbols, and metaphors and in the organization's structure. In these forms they offer opportunities for members to synthesize and reinterpret them. They also, however, may remain undigested -- a diverse and sometimes contradictory set of ideas, practices and symbols from which to choose as situations, interests and the leadership command.

The strains that are prominent in 3HO, then, include the following:

- (1) A splitting of rational and imaginative spheres of thought and activity.

As many observers have remarked, the process of rationalization, at least in the West, appears to demand linear, cost-benefit, analytical, quantitative, goal- and rule-oriented modes of thought (Berger, et al. 1973; Ornstein 1977; Ritzer 1981; Tipton 1982). In the more rationalized sectors of the society these modes are preferred over imaginative, intuitive, and symbolic forms of cognition. Imaginative modes may be pre-eminent in the arts, media and private worlds, but they are secondary near the centers of power -- although they may be called upon to support the more powerful institutions.⁹

⁹ This is a motif that appears in such American Studies works as Mathiessen's American Renaissance (1941), where he suggests that "the scientifically accurate" and the "imaginatively free"...halves of man tended to become ever more widely dissevered in the increasing specialization of the nineteenth century..." (388). It appears in Ann

Although this dichotomy may have its roots in nineteenth century industrialization, it is one that is taking on new forms with the advent of a service economy and with the increasing importance of the electronic media. Obviously the media introduce a barrage of symbol and fantasy into the culture and may reward non-linear, synthesizing modes of perception (MacLuhan 1973). Service sector employment often requires considerable empathy and intuition, or at least the appearance of these. The economy is still rationalized, but the symbolic realm is more visible and more often called upon in support of the rational. Hochschild (1983) argues that service industries often demand what she calls "emotion management." By this she means either the pretense of sympathy, empathy, concern and the like, or actual efforts to create these feelings in the self. The Eastern religions would appear to make a parallel demand, encouraging self-knowledge and exploration of personal myths, symbols and feeling, but insisting that these should be placed in the service of a disinterested, rational, higher self (referred to in 3HO as the neutral self or the higher self). At a time when the relationship between these two modes of approaching the world is

Douglas' The Feminization of American Culture (1977) where she argues that the nineteenth century saw a "cultural bifurcation" leading to "semi-autonomous" economic and symbolic realms. Leo Marx echoes this theme in The Machine in the Garden (1964) with his "root opposition" of machine and nature.

changing, the Eastern religions sometimes provide visions of a new alignment of the rational and the intuitive and at other times simply maintain that dichotomy.

Participants in the New Left and the counterculture tended to be liberal arts, rather than scientific or technical, students and to spring, in the case of political activists at least, from humanistic families (Westby 1976). Thus they were often not whole-hearted participants in the rationalized society, and were often its severest critics, but they were the products of middle-class families and risked the loss of comforts and status if they entirely abandoned the rational model in an ever-more technologically advanced society. 3HO offered compromises combined with clear priorities, a way of mining the symbolic vein and experiencing communal life without abandoning all of the rewards and comforts of middle-class life.

Within 3HO the rational-intuitive dichotomy colors the entire structure and belief system. Members divide their time between expressive and symbolic activities -- such as sadhana and solstice ceremonies -- and practical work within ashrams and bureaucracies. They divide the self into neutral and emotional components. They freely shift from intuitive accounts of action to rational and pragmatic accounts. They attempt to alter rational-sphere behavior through the use of guided imagery and to rationally alter

images of self and society. Gender attributions are very traditional, with men being primarily associated with rational and instrumental thinking and women being considered more emotional, spiritual and intuitive.

(2) A second dichotomy in 3HO is its separation of public and private spheres of life.

My analysis of this opposition is based primarily on the work of Peter Berger (1973; 1977), but the theme has been widely adopted. Berger suggests that the increasing scale and complexity of contemporary life lead to a division of the individual's experience into two, often contradictory or discontinuous, spheres. The modern state, "economic conglomerates," and large-scale bureaucracies impose a world view, a variety of legal and economic imperatives, and a distinctive pattern to life. Outside of these structures

...there is that modern phenomenon called private life. It is a curious kind of preserve left over by the large institutions and in which individuals carry on a bewildering variety of activities with only fragile institutional support. (Berger and Neuhaus 1977, 2)

Berger often appears to have little faith in the individual's capacity to design or shape a private life, much less to enjoy doing so. Presumably, many people do not regard their private lives as a "bewildering variety of activities," although more may experience real

discontinuities. A significant portion of 3HO women, however, do seem to have been aware of such discontinuities, and of a need to integrate public and private lives.

Berger's remedy is the "mediating structure," a social unit that is neither a megastructure nor an individual lifeworld. Such forms, he and Richard Neuhaus argue, should be strengthened in order to provide social buffer zones and enhanced support for the individual. 3HO is such a structure. It provides a framework within which members can analyze, filter, and interpret the input of the larger society. It has the advantages and the disadvantages of such forms. It provides meaning and community. Its members can operate alternative enterprises and work to schedules that allow them to accommodate organizational and familial responsibilities. This is particularly valuable for mothers who can work for 3HO businesses or for the ashram and thus remain close to their children during the day. They also gain the benefits of working with others who understand their family priorities. They may pay a price, however, in freedom of thought and action.

The integration of public and private spheres is central to 3HO philosophy. Tantric thought holds that the person is a microcosm of the universe. Thus all private concerns have an expanded significance, and to know and alter the self is to know and alter the larger world. The

goal is a self attuned to universal powers and one that can significantly change the world. Similarly, Sikhism integrates public and private spheres with its this-worldly piety and vows that touch upon significant areas of both public and private behavior. 3HO members often talk about being "on a spiritual path," and this concept too implies alignment of public and private realities. The woman on a spiritual path seeks to eliminate unnecessary egotism and internal noise so as to be attuned with higher powers. She seeks to apply insights attained in meditation to everyday life, hoping eventually to find that her private life has merged with the universal god force. She aims to become a channel for God's will and energy, a link between the universal and the everyday, her private self correctly aligned with the world.

This, of course, is a long-term goal rather than a present reality. For the present, discontinuities and contradictions remain and members may separate everyday and meditative realities, or slack off on sadhana attendance and become absorbed in the public life. Divisions within self and society are not easily overcome, and there is much talk of the gap between insight and action and of separation from God and the guru within.

(3) A third dichotomy in 3HO is its opposing pulls in the directions of individuation and self-extension

This is a long-standing theme in the American Studies literature. The unattached hero is a staple of American literature and film, as is a tendency to oppose self-realization and commitment to others, as if the two were mutually exclusive (Lewis 1955). Most recently it appears in Habits of the Heart (1985), Bellah and his colleagues' treatment of contemporary American values, in which "individualism" and "commitment" are treated as opposing elements in a prolonged cultural dialogue.

It also figures prominently in sociological works. Berger, et al. (1977), Inkeles (1985), and others have suggested that modernization creates powerful pressures toward individuation and towards a sense of the self as bounded, unique, and always evolving. Others have argued that, concurrently, opportunities for self-extension are being undermined as neighborhoods, communities, and regional cultures give way to superhighways, mass society, and corporate interests. Some argue that meaningful self-extension is in fact the only route to individuation so that, ironically, individualism may give rise to its own demise (e.g. Stein 1960). Some foresee a future of outward conformity and endless self-presentation coupled with internal deprivation or pain (Douglas & Johnson 1977; Lasch 1978).

The 3HO philosophy and structure are intended to provide a proper balance between self-exploration and service, individual and group. The ideal is a strengthened and spiritually-enhanced self, but one that submits to discipline and works for the good of the group. Yogi Bhajan has spoken of Kundalini and Tantric yogas as sources of empowerment and of Sikhism as a discipline that controls excessive egoism and channels the spiritual energy that is said to be generated by the yoga. By combining them he offers his followers a spiritual version of American individualism coupled with a degree of discipline and social solidarity beyond that usually experienced in American society.

(4) A fourth and final dichotomy is the coexistence of situated and transcendent visions of selfhood

This is closely-related to the previous dichotomy. Commentators maintain that the mobility, rapid change and relativism associated with modernity may pry identity loose from its customary moorings so that it no longer resides comfortably in occupational roles, in family, neighborhood, community and nation. Rather than positing a self that "migrates," as Berger puts it, between micro and macro worlds, some of these commentators suggest that a likely response is the creation of a meta self, of transcendent notions of self and humanity (Zurcher 1977, 235). Robertson and Chirico (1985, 219-242) argue that the

process of "globalization," by removing individuals from the comforts of particularistic roles and categories, forces them into a concern with identity and with universalistic concepts of humanity. They suggest that "there is an intimate link between the development of what might be called asocietality -- the mode of individual, "mystical" concern with self -- and the making available of individuals for concern with man" (235).

Transcendence, of course, is a dominant theme in many Eastern traditions, and several Eastern disciplines begin with the assumption that it is indeed possible to transcend limited self-concepts and to move beyond culture, circumstance, and social structure. Sikhism teaches that it is desirable to stand, poised and self-aware, between the situated and the transcendent, giving each its due, and, as previously mentioned, becoming a link or channel between the two.

Thus, various Eastern systems provide explanations, ethics and metaphors for the contemporary awareness of the circumscribed nature of individual lifeworlds, for the contrasts between the large and the small, the global and the local, the potential of an evolving world society and its local realities. Embracing such a tradition may be a way of stating that one is part of humankind, rather than just American-kind or woman-kind, and it provides a new location for the self in a changing reality.

GENDER AND THESE SOCIO-CULTURAL TENSIONS

The cultural tensions that have been incorporated in 3HO have distinctive meanings and sometimes special resonance and poignancy for women.

Intuitive vs. Rational/Private vs. Public Spheres

Middle-class American women have routinely been expected to preserve some of the values associated with the intuitive and private spheres of life. Women have been expected to exhibit empathy, sensitivity, kindness and caring, and to experience a broad range of emotions. Imagination, patience and loyalty have regularly been attributed to the feminine nature. Women have maintained social networks and kinship ties, created domestic environments, and made the concept of home a reality (Bernard 1981). Some structuralists would argue that women have been symbolically associated with nature and men with culture (Ortner 1974). With increasing opportunities and expectations for participation in the public and rationalized sectors of the society, women are faced with the task of assigning priorities to, or somehow uniting, the different spheres.⁹

Simply by incorporating both spheres, by treating each as significant, and by providing guidelines for linking

⁹ On the concept of separate spheres see Cott (1977), Glennon (1979), and Smith-Rosenberg (1975).

them, 3HO speaks to women's concerns. It also treats traditionally feminine accomplishments such as introspection, intuition, and empathy with respect and provides techniques for developing them. 3HO teachings emphasize the importance of the domestic life and the dignity of motherhood without demanding that women remain confined to the private sphere. 3HO allows women some latitude in choosing when and to what extent they will participate in the public sphere, and it provides a rich set of theories and metaphors for linking private and public realms.

Nonetheless, 3HO participation tends to limit women's activity within the public sphere by fostering the ideal of the "graceful woman." Yogi Bajan, viewing American women's freedoms from the perspective of his traditional Indian background, complains that American women try to imitate men, and he advocates, and idealizes, a special form of femininity. Women, he teaches, embody a basic spiritual energy (shakti) and are "the highest incarnation of planet earth." Women, he claims, are more intuitive, creative, and compassionate than men and have "sixteen times more patience, tolerance and endurance of pain." Moreover, women are capable of dividing their attention and maintaining awareness of a multitude of stimuli, events, and moods, while men can only concentrate on one thing at a time.

On the other hand, he says, a woman can easily become "uncentered," and overly emotional. A woman must guard against stress levels that will lead her to "step out of her psyche." She is psychologically vulnerable and must not expose herself to too much "lower consciousness" behavior. She will "lose her vastness" if she competes with men, "lowers" herself to using male tactics, manipulates others, or experiences too much "insecurity." Her psyche is easily invaded by the male subconscious and she is easily duped by men who seek to use and control her.¹⁰ There is much to suggest that she must remain in her own sphere and that she will encounter nothing but trouble and suffering if she dares to step out of it. Thus her empowerment has its boundaries.

Individuation vs. Self-Extension

Women, of course, have been expected to practice self-extension, to nurture and identify with others, and to devote time to friendship. Motherhood is the archetypical merger of the self with the other.

Recent research indicates that for many women individuation is a difficult and prolonged accomplishment. Gilligan found that in making ethical choices, women first

¹⁰ These assertions about gender are typically developed in lectures to the assembled feminine audience at the training camp. Each summer's lectures are transcribed, printed and sold. They are more fully analyzed and cited in the third chapter.

seek to please and to not harm others, and only later seek to protect and nurture the self, eventually reaching an ethical position that sees the good as that which does the least harm -- either to others or to the self. Men, by comparison, are more likely to base ethical decisions on interpretation of principles, with less consideration of the individuals and situations involved. They assume a world of bounded individuals, each with rights. (Gilligan 1977; Kohlberg and Kramer 1969).

A religion that recognizes the importance of self-extension and of the need to balance it with individuation, is, again, addressing women's special concerns. 3HO, with its many metaphors for, and teachings about, this issue provides a vocabulary and a setting in which women's capacity for empathy and sharing is revered while their need for self-exploration and self-actualization is recognized.

Self-extension is essential to the practice of meditation in 3HO, since this is an activity in which the intent is to move beyond the confines of the individual mind and body and to experience connection with a transpersonal realm. This capacity is regularly rewarded if a woman attends sadhana. Similarly, the 3HO emphasis on service and community, and the Sikh distrust of the ego, create an environment in which the capacity to share and

cooperate with others, and even to sacrifice for them, is acknowledged and appreciated.

At the same time, 3HO women are told that they needn't try to please everyone in the ashram, and that they should not neglect their own personal growth and their own needs for privacy and personal time. "Ladies camp" is touted as an opportunity for regeneration, as a chance to attend to the personal life and retreat from the demands of family, ashram, and occupation. There is considerable opportunity for a woman to tend to her own needs, but, as will become clear, 3HO is also a setting in which the capacity for self-extension is sometimes exploited and needs for individuation are interpreted in ways that are at odds with the dominant culture.

Coexistence of Situated and Transcendent Selves

Transcendence also has special connotations for women. It is structurally built into the gender role in the sense that female is often a master status, transcending and limiting identification with many other roles. Historically, women have been expected to abandon careers, interests, and ambitions in the name of family and femininity. Even today, women routinely move when a husband is transferred or rearrange their lives in order to nurse an ailing child or a parent. If anything, contemporary women have been expected to continue to fill

many aspects of the traditional gender role while adding activities. For feminists, and many others, the goal has been to eliminate gender's master status, but this feat is difficult to achieve. For many, the reality is some circumscription of the less gender-specific roles and a practical experience of balancing the universal female experience with specific statuses.

In 3HO, the priority is clear. Women are taught that they are women first, but the term woman is used in a special sense, to denote spiritual power and identity. Women are Shaktis (manifestations of the universal creative energy), and all temporal forms of this energy are depicted as potentially confining and limiting; they may render the woman shallow and sap her potential. She is a spiritual being first and should not forget this. She is also said to have great potential to alter the world of forms and roles and to improve it and align it with spiritual realities, although she must protect and nurture this power. 3HO thus reaffirms gender as a master, but spiritual, status, and posits the interpenetration of transcendent and contingent realms in a way that may resonate with women's gender-specific efforts to balance the universal and the specific. It provides clear guidelines for behavior and a special spiritual role for women. It may also limit practical opportunities if women must always identify with something beyond the every day.

THEORY AND METHODAmerican Studies and Ethnography

Many commentators within the field tend to view American Studies as a discipline in a state of creative uncertainty. Old methods and assumptions are held up to critical examination and found wanting. Practitioners of intellectual history are criticized for often having failed to ground their assumptions in specific social milieu. Scholars of the myth-symbol school are criticized for their holistic vision of culture and for their neglect of minority and other non-elite traditions.¹¹ As a result, members of the new generation have a heightened awareness of the methodological issues involved in studying American culture. They tend toward a pluralistic view of culture and they recognize the necessity of connecting ideas and symbols to their social and economic settings. They, like others in the social sciences and humanities, struggle with connections. They ask how consciousness is connected to circumstance, or how cultural artifacts reflect the social class of their producers. They seek the "mediating structures" (Berger and Neuhaus 1977) that shape our experience of large-scale social and cultural trends.

One of the results of this questioning is a narrowing of focus. American studies was once a discipline that sought

¹¹ See Berkhofer (1973); Kelly (1974); Kuklick (1972); (Luedtke 1977); Sklar (1975); Tate (1973); Wise (1973; 1979).

to do nothing less than locate the "main currents" of American thought and the major myths and symbols that shaped the American psyche. Today, its practitioners often aim for depth rather than breadth. They seek out more circumscribed areas of investigation. They study currents of thought in specific settings. They seek out situations in which major ideas, symbols, and values can be seen to arise, to mature or to contest. They aim to interpret information as much as to accumulate it. Thus Wise urged that

Inquirers in American culture studies should look not for facts in experience, but for "dense" facts -- facts which both reveal deeper meanings inside themselves, and point outward to other facts, other ideas, other meanings....The dense-facts model focuses not only on information in the world, but also on the perceiving and conceiving mind; it judges that mind basically on what it can do with its information, not on the volume of information it has accumulated. (1979, 530)

The new temperament is reflexive and experimental, and experimentation has often involved extensive borrowing from the social sciences.

Ethnography is one of the tools that Americanists have borrowed. It provides a wealth of techniques for in-depth study of significant settings, and it can be adapted so as to yield new insights into some of the long-standing concerns of the field. The ethnographer can choose a setting for its potential historical significance or because it appears to be a scene where major ideas or values are in conflict. Wallace (1972), for example,

combines ethnography with other techniques to study a nationally significant shift in values as manifested in a 19th century factory town. Alternatively, the ethnographer can work with a more inductive model, looking at symbols, ideas, and processes in a small social world, and working outwards from there. Barbara Myerhoff (1978) does this very successfully in her depiction of everyday life in a Jewish senior citizens center.

My study fits the new American Studies model. It is reflexive and circumscribed in scope. It is ethnographic, and I began with an inductive approach, although the study was always informed by an interest in cultural and social strains. The aim is to depict "dense facts" and to reveal the several layers of social and cultural experience that coexist in an organizational setting. I look at self processes, at metaphors and symbols, at group norms and dynamics, at organizational history and structure, and at cultural strains and tensions that are reflected in the organization. I also look at the interplay between these different elements.

Organization of the Paper and Research Methodology

I focus on three major settings of 3HO life: (1) the women's training camp, (2) an ashram and (3) workshops organized by a Sikh woman for non-members. The "ladies camp" is a setting in which many beliefs about gender are

enunciated and elaborated. It is also a setting in which the self is altered and the dominant culture is criticized. The ashram is the setting in which alternative cultural and religious beliefs must be adapted to the exigencies of everyday life. Here, religion and ideology are shaped by and adapted to prevailing social and economic trends. Beliefs and values are shaped by group processes and by individual efforts to interpret and make sense of "the teachings" in terms of individual knowledge and biography. Finally, the workshops are an outreach activity. Here ideas and beliefs are open to the inspection of outsiders who may sift and adapt them to meet individual needs and expectations. Workshop leaders must develop an awareness of participants' perspectives and beliefs and learn to speak in the language of the dominant culture. To be successful, they must straddle insider and outsider points of view. One of the reasons that the 3HO worldview incorporates social and cultural strains is that it is elaborated in these different settings. In these settings 3HO members experience different pressures and take different stances vis-a-vis dominant institutions. I begin with the setting that is furthest removed from the dominant culture, and then move to the middle ground, and finally to the setting in which there is the most accommodation to the surrounding society.

I have employed several methodologies in my research. This ethnography is based on interviews, participant observation and content analysis. The primary focus is the Washington ashram. I began the research in 1981 with eight preliminary interviews with Washington ashram residents. At that time I also began to attend workshops and occasional yoga classes led by ashram residents, and I continued this practice through 1986. My participation was intensive in 1984 and 1985 when I attended a monthly women's group. I made extensive notes following each workshop and taped several of them. In June of 1983 I attended the Khalsa Women's Training Camp for the first two weeks of that session. I lived in a tent there and followed the daily routine, attending lectures and classes and rising early in the morning for yoga and meditation. I took extensive notes and maintained a field journal, from which I quote in this paper, and I taped several classes and lectures. When I returned I read the printed transcriptions of the lectures that Yogi Bhanjan had delivered to the camp in previous years, and analyzed the themes of his talks. In December and January of 1984 I was in the Los Angeles area and visited the organizational headquarters and conducted four interviews there.

In the spring of 1985 I began to conduct intensive interviews with the women residents of the Washington ashram. In the course of approximately a year I conducted

eighteen of these interviews, along with similar interviews with three regular workshop participants. These were followed by brief demographic telephone interviews with another nine of the resident women. There were then 31 women residents in the three Washington settlements, so I spoke with all but four of them. Two women refused to be interviewed, one I had interviewed previously, and the other I was unable to reach. Two of the women I interviewed have since left 3HO, and one shifted from workshop participant to resident. (She is counted as a resident.) The subjects for intensive interviews were chosen to represent a cross-section of the community. They represented all 3HO age groups, as well as women from several parts of the country, recent and long-term members, working and non-working women, single and divorced women, those who were active outside of the ashram and those whose lives were more intensely centered on 3HO. All of the intensive interviews were taped and the informants were promised anonymity.^{1 2}

I followed a general outline in the interviews, but I did not follow it rigidly since I wanted individuals to

^{1 2} The tapes have been coded so as to protect the informant's privacy while still providing the reader with some knowledge about sources. AP represents an intensive personal interview with a Washington ashram resident. AT represents a telephone interview with a Washington resident. AW represents a Washington workshop participant. TI represents an informational telephone call to another part of the country, or overseas. L.A. represents a Los Angeles interview, and K represents an interview at the camp.

tell their stories without too much direction on my part and I wanted them to feel free to raise issues that had not occurred to me. Questions covered the following areas: (1) Members' backgrounds; (2) Their current roles both within and outside of 3HO; (3) How and when residents came to join the organization; (4) Stages they experienced in their spiritual development and in their affiliation with the organization; (5) Their interpretations of significant concepts such as commitment, spiritual path, graceful womanhood, God, and obedience; (6) Descriptions of themselves as they were when they joined, as they are now, and as they envision themselves in the future.

I supplemented the Washington interviews with telephone interviews and letters to 3HO women in other parts of the country when I required information about specific subjects. Thus I contacted women who were active in early 3HO women's programs and women who knew about the early history of the Washington ashram. When a court case loomed I added interviews with one of the litigants, with another woman who had once been influential but chose to leave the organization, and with an official who was connected with the East-West Cultural Center when Yogi BhaJan taught yoga classes there. I also studied some of the organization's publications: some of their yoga and sadhana manuals, their magazine, Beads of Truth, and the women's camp Notes.

THEORY

Because a variety of processes, ranging from the individual to the macro levels, have combined to create the distinctive structure of 3MO, it has been necessary to draw upon a variety of theoretical sources and stances to understand its current shape. Here I begin at the macro level and work down to the individual.

Culture As Drama:East Meets West

For the broad view I have depended upon the concept of culture as drama (Stein 1960; Turner 1974; Wise 1979). Basic to this approach is the idea that, in any time period, there are major trends and paradigms that come to be focused in specific acts, conflicts or struggles. For example, as the world grows smaller and Asia becomes more powerful, Eastern and Western modes of thought and organization come into contact. Individuals attempt to adapt alien cultural forms to their own needs or to synthesize Eastern and Western forms. The other culture offers fresh insights and new approaches to problems, and it may provide a useful vehicle for making ideological statements. There may also, of course, be a price to pay for adapting pieces of another culture. These adaptations are as likely to occur in the business world as in the religious sphere, but the formation and elaboration of the

new Eastern religions in the Western countries offers an excellent specific example of this more general trend.

The Growing Autonomy of Objective and Subjective Realities

Another general trend, with implications for the social sciences, is the growing gulf between subjective and objective aspects of culture and society. Roland Robertson (1975, 241-266) argues, and I would agree, that contemporary processes of rationalization and differentiation lead to semi-autonomous objective and subjective domains. The solid, pervasive, and complex quality of the social structure renders it undeniable, but, as a by-product of the security and the specialization it creates, it generates opportunities for the flowering of the subjective and the mystical. The result, as he suggests, is individual mysticism alongside of bureaucratic structures.

Another result, I suggest, is that objectivity and subjectivity are often juxtaposed. The individual learns, on the one hand, to accept intuition, relativity and the constructed nature of reality, and, on the other, to adapt to a demanding and complex social structure. In such circumstances individuals often choose rather arbitrarily whether to favor logic or intuition. They may consciously decide what to believe and what to reject, and the place of

logic and factual knowledge can become ambiguous. 3HO members, for example, can be seen to choose when to believe and when to suspend disbelief. They often attempt to adjust external realities to subjective points of view and, conversely, to alter subjective definitions of reality so as to better cope with external circumstances.

The separation of objective and subjective realms is one source of the American Studies concern with integrating ideas and milieux, consciousness and social structure. It may also contribute to the opposition in Sociology between interpretive and "social factist" (Ritzer 1980) approaches to studying society. I attempt to develop these parallels by comparing 3HO assumptions to some of those current in the social sciences.

Sikhism, for example, posits the existence of both an objective man-made realm and the existence of a higher order that is experienced subjectively. Unlike Hinduism, which often views the objective world as maya, Sikhism assigns validity to each realm. Individuals must adapt to the realities of the objective realm, but must also infuse it with the higher reality and, in time, come to see it as an expression of God and of invisible energy. In raising this issue of duality, 3HO and other Eastern religions may be responding to the division between objective and subjective spheres.

The Eastern esoteric religions also provide standards of truth that, practitioners claim, transcend both subjectivity and the realities of the social structuring of knowledge. Thus, they address the issue of the relationship of objective and subjective realities. This is also an issue of concern to ethnomethodologists and other interpretive sociologists. Ethnomethodologists argue that much of social life involves efforts to "make sense" of actions and feelings and to make situations appear rational. People, they say, are constantly accounting for events, putting a logical or meaningful construction on a flow of happenings. Ethnomethodologists view this accounting process as a pragmatic activity because all sense-making arises in specific situations and tends to be coextensive with a particular project or interest. (Handel 1982). From this perspective, 3HO is a system of accounts created in response to specific situations and strategically applied.

There are broad areas where 3HO and ethnomethodological views of the world overlap. 3HO, in common with other Eastern traditions and with ethnomethodology, teaches that to a significant degree we define our realities, and these realities are often narrow, interested, and tied to small worlds and specific tasks. Many of the Eastern disciplines are intended to reveal the constructed nature of our realities and the circumscribed quality of our cognitive

maps, and towards these ends they train practitioners to distance themselves from their own cognitive processes in order to observe recurrent patterns. Similarly, ethnomethodologists and other interpretive sociologists attempt to "bracket" common sense assumptions and much-used academic concepts. In ethnomethodology this is done in order to purge social science of common sense assumptions and to better understand the process of sense-making. The hope is to recreate sociology as a more self-aware discipline based on an understanding of microprocesses. In the Eastern religions the intent also is to purge experience of imposed constructs and interests and to gain a more realistic vision of the world. Additionally, it is assumed that an entirely clarified vision will reveal ultimate principles and the unity of all being.

The more hard-headed and relativistic members of 3HO probably would concede that the organization is a system of accounts, and that unique situations and practical motives affect structure and policy. They allow for the existence of an objective, socio-cultural realm. They likely would differ, however, from ethnomethodologists in positing the existence of truths and revelations that are not contingent. 3HO manages to retain both the freedom and flexibility of relativism and of a belief in the constructed nature of reality while at the same time offering the certainty that an underlying, if elusive,

truth exists as an objective reality. This is a difficult position to justify, of course, since there is no way to know for certain that the underlying truth and the objective realities are not just further products of group and individual sense-making. They may be merely another set of accounts. How does one accept the subjective and constructed nature of reality and then claim privileged status for one's own reality? The SHO solution is to posit the existence of higher and lower forms of consciousness, and of a condition of being "separated" from God. When operating out of lower consciousness or in a separated state one is dealing with accounts and contingency. When operating in harmony with higher forces one is dealing with another order of reality.

Stein (1960) argues that it is the responsibility of social science to explore such cultural dramas, along with the myths and symbols that emerge as groups and individuals tussle with historical forces. Myth and symbol are particularly important, Stein maintains, because one of the major social dramas of our time is the individual's struggle to attain a rich and satisfying maturity in the face of careerism and what he sees as the symbolic impoverishment and "banalities of mass society." He urges social scientists to look for the situations in which individuals manage to confront or surmount these obstacles. He also suggests that social scientists use their own

fieldwork as a means to free themselves. This ethnography is a comment upon and continuation of his concerns since many of the members of today's alternative religions were people who, like Stein and other social critics, found their society banal, impersonal and objectifying and sought out opportunities to develop imagination and intuition. They consciously embraced new symbols and identities. Their efforts to find and live an alternative model of maturity dramatize both the needs that so many commentators identified and the advantages, limitations and costs of the impulse that they have followed.

Symbolic Anthropology

Symbolic Anthropologists address the ways in which social and cultural tensions are symbolically represented and mediated. My depiction of the new religions as the products of structural tensions is within this tradition, as is an effort to analyze their central symbols and metaphors. Victor Turner (1974, 1967), one representative of this tradition, argues that a society's "dominant symbols" tend to represent or bridge oppositions that are endemic to its social structure; some even come to encompass so many meanings, contexts and "discrepant significata" that they represent the society itself. Turner's interest, admittedly, is in the major rituals of a tribe or society, not in the borrowed symbols and rituals

of a small minority religion, but I would extend his argument to 3HO. Organizational conceptions of God and energy, of physical and "etheric" realities, of the self and gender, and of the spiritual path can all be viewed as symbolic representations of larger structural trends, strains and contradictions.

As Turner points out, people in liminal situations -- and 3HO activities were certainly liminal for many years -- tend to innovate with and reassemble significant cultural symbols. One result may be the replication of strains that already exist in the dominant culture as members develop or adapt symbols to stand for the feelings, forces, and values they are grappling with. This is all the more likely if leaders pragmatically employ symbols and images so as to simultaneously attempt to legitimate the liminal group to outsiders and provide cogent representations of group beliefs and loyalties for insiders. Then both dominant and oppositional cultural motifs are employed. The resulting adaptations and representations of experience tend to encode members' experience, along with their organizational history, and their perceptions of the group and of its relationship to the world beyond. While people use them to understand, interpret, and alter the world, they also serve to reflect contradictions in the socio-cultural surroundings.

Organization-Building and Internal Contradictions

Yogi Bajan is regarded by 3HO members as a pragmatic man who has developed an organization and a belief system that are tailor-made for the 3HO membership. They view him as a caring and inspired pragmatist. I would agree that he adapts his teachings to his audience. He has adeptly combined countercultural and dominant values, yogic traditions and more conventional religious beliefs. He has produced a creative blend of traditions -- and one that can be employed pragmatically. When attempting to recruit a member he portrays the organization in a light likely to appeal to that individual. In the early years he emphasized countercultural beliefs when these would appeal to or retain members, but he balanced these with more conventional rhetoric when this was more promising. One of the reasons that the organization encompasses opposing cultural tendencies is that Bajan's teachings and rhetoric are often shot-through with such pragmatic considerations.

In order to depict and explain these internal contradictions, I have depended primarily upon two sources. I have leaned lightly on resource mobilization theory and more heavily on Roy Wallis' (1984) typology of the new religions.

Resource mobilization theory focuses on strategies for amassing and retaining such organizational resources as members, funds, and skills. E. Burke Rochford has applied

this approach to ISKCON (1985), Bromley and Shupe (1980) to both ISKCON and the Unification Church, and Kirpal Singh Khalsa to 3HO and the Divine Light Mission (1986), so this is an extension of a current trend.

To further examine the adaptation of beliefs and ideology and the resulting balance between different cultural trends, I have depended on Roy Wallis' depiction of the new religions. He suggests that there are three types of new religion: world rejecting, world affirming and world accommodating. 3HO combines these three stances and this contributes to the internal tensions. Wallis' typology is further elaborated in the next chapter.

For an understanding of the counterculture values and outlook that many 3HO members brought to the organization I have depended on Musgrove (1974), Tipton (1982), and Yinger (1982). On group processes I have depended on Sartre's typology (Hayim 1980, 83-117).

Self, Consciousness and Interaction

For an understanding of identity processes and self-concept I have turned to Richard C. Robbins (1973), Chad Gordon (1968), and Morris Rosenberg (1979), among others. With some reservation, I have also worked with George Herbert Mead's assertion that, "the unity and structure of the complete self reflects the unity and structure of the

social process as a whole," (1934, 144), applying this principle primarily at the organizational level.

In an effort to catch the immediacy and the individuality of the SHO experience, and to capture its more creative and changeable aspects, I have included individual stories and inserted phenomenological and existential insights.

More specifically, Schutzian phenomenology provides a reminder that there is no single experience in any social setting. This reminder is particularly relevant when writing about people who dress and speak alike and share seemingly esoteric assumptions and practices. Schutz and Luckmann (1973) suggest that in any setting each individual brings to bear a distinctive biography and "stock of knowledge," and a personal set of motivations. Thus each allots her attention and concentration to different individuals, practices, ideas, arenas and symbols. For each, the picture focuses on a unique composition; for each there are different areas of light and obscurity. And each encounters the organization in specific situations, each of which carries its own "thematic elements" and connects uniquely with previous situations and with the individual's experience and knowledge, forging distinctive links and chains of reality.

I have also tried to keep in mind a perspective and a lesson that are drawn from existential sociology,

particularly from the Sartrean version. The existential sociologists are committed to treating the subjects of their studies as subjects, not objects, and this parallels a concern within 3HO, an organization that many joined in order to escape a widespread tendency, as one informant put it, "to treat people in objectifying ways."

Existentialists assume that we should not cage our subjects in determinism, but rather should look for signs of their freedom, including the possibility that they will continue to transcend the present self, and that there are alternative futures before them. I want the sensitivity, thoughtfulness and creativity of individual members of 3HO, to stand out (Craib 1976; Douglas & Johnson 1977; Hayim 1980).

Reflexivity

Caughey (1982) argues that introspection is an essential American Studies tool if we are to tap and explicate tacit cultural knowledge and begin to seriously investigate the cultural structuring of the stream of consciousness. He also suggests that American culture has not provided a sympathetic environment for the exploration of inner worlds and that this cultural predisposition has impoverished scholarship. This observation seems particularly apposite in the case of an organization like 3HO whose members have dedicated themselves to exploring

and altering consciousness, sometimes at considerable cost to themselves.

Stein also endorses a reflexive approach, as well as what he calls "identity play." He suggests that the researcher should reflect on his or her own cultural background and its implications for the study. Furthermore, the researcher should examine the methods employed and what they imply about the current assumptions of social science. Research should even liberate the social scientist:

Finally, what he finds and what he reports is determined as much by his sympathetic and experiential limits as by anything else. The quality of the study hinges largely upon his capacity to broaden these limits so as to comprehend human behavior which expresses meanings that he ordinarily would not entertain in his personal world. In doing and synthesizing the study, he dissolves the boundaries simultaneously with his creation of a new and more accurate image of the community. (319, emphasis his)

The goals he sets for the researcher parallel many of the goals of the new Eastern-influenced religious groups: self-awareness, transcendence of social and cultural background, and attainment of a more accurate and encompassing picture of the world. While the disciplines differ, the impulse behind both this type of ethnography and membership in one of the new Eastern movements may be similar. Reflexivity may increase understanding of the source and nature of these shared motives.

I include many of my own reactions, often as excerpts from my fieldwork journal. Fairly long excerpts and

recollections are included between chapters. My introspective efforts can expose some of the difficulties and rewards involved in conducting this type of exploration -- the resistance involved, the assumptions that must be encountered and questioned -- and can highlight the similarities and the differences in 3HO members' cognitive processes and my own. Furthermore my reactions dramatize the efforts made by each 3HO member as she interprets organizational precepts and structure and assimilates 3HO beliefs to her pre-existing stock of knowledge and to her own expectations for the future.

In order to further probe the nature of members experience and attitudes, I have asked two 3HO women to read the final chapter of this paper. They have commented on these, and their comments are included.

3HO is the product of a complex set of forces and cannot be simply categorized as a sect or a cult, as exploitive or liberating, as feminist or anti-feminist. It is a blend of these, and by exploring my own ambivalence about the organization I hope to highlight the mix. I provide an example of one individual, who is not too different in background from the average 3HO woman, filtering and interpreting the beliefs and practices. In looking at the organization I constantly have been aware of the ways that its structure enhances Yogi Bhanjan's power and influence while maintaining the boundaries of the

organization and its members' loyalties. Sociologists -- or skeptics -- could see almost every teaching in these terms. But I also am aware of the intelligence and determination of many members who desire to create something different and special. I have liked and respected most of the 3HO women I have met and have admired their discipline, their kindness, their hospitality, and their strivings. I am sure that within this structure women have gained in personal insight and self esteem, and have overcome fears and what they call "blocks." All have assured me that regular sadhana leaves them happier, clearer in their thinking, more aware of and able to alter their "environments," and calmer and more alert to life's possibilities. I see no reason to doubt this; in fact my own very limited experience supports it. But I also know ex-3HO women who feel that they were exploited and rendered unnecessarily passive and unhappy during the period of their membership. I am troubled by a hierarchical structure that creates so much dependence on one leader, and feel that many of the burdens of membership fall heavily upon the women members.

CHAPTER II

THE 3HO SYNTHESIS: TANTRA AND SIKHISM

To further understand the nature of 3HO structure and metaphor, it is necessary to know something more about the organization's history and about the Tantric and Sikh traditions. It is particularly useful to know how these traditions have been adapted and employed in the process of organization-building and in efforts to adjust to changing financial and historical circumstances.

WORLD-REJECTION, WORLD-ACCOMMODATION, AND WORLD-AFFIRMATION

Roy Wallis (1984) provides a typology of the new religions that is helpful in this regard. Analyzing their origins, recruitment bases, characteristics, and "developmental patterns," he suggests that there are three types of new religion: world-rejecting, world-affirming and world-accommodating. Members of the world-rejecting groups (the Unification Church and the Children of God are examples) assume that the secular world is corrupt or deeply flawed. Members may or may not believe that they have a mission to reform this world, but they have no doubt that they should hold themselves apart from it until a new order is established. These groups initially drew their recruits from the counterculture, more particularly from among marginal youth who had lost hope that their

alternative values could be enacted in the society at large. Their members originally sought community feeling and outlets for idealism. Such groups, Wallis says, are typically "highly organized and controlled" by authoritarian leaders; often they are founded by charismatic leaders. Self-abnegation is expected; ego is to be effaced for the greater good. 3HO contains many such elements.

World-affirming religions are far less formal and may, in fact, be only "quasi-religious." Their emphasis is instrumental and therapeutic; they claim to offer members the strong sense of self, the attitudes, and the interpersonal skills that are the requisites for success in advanced capitalist societies. These groups have drawn members from the counterculture, but they also have a wider appeal. Many participants are "members of the respected groups and strata in society, affiliated with the major social institutions and rewarded well by them..." (121). But these very people are caught up in the contradictions of contemporary capitalism and are seeking relief from its strains: "consummatory indulgence, self expression and enjoyment may be hard to manage for those who are constrained to work in order to secure the resources to enjoy what they are now encouraged to consume" (120). Members of the world-affirming religions seek relief from repression, guilt, role constraints and the harsher aspects

of the work ethic and are taught in these groups to believe in an inner reservoir of untapped insight, peace, and power which can be channeled for use in everyday matters.

Examples include Transcendental Meditation, EST, and Nichiren Soshu. Many 3HO-sponsored workshops would appear to fall under this heading, as would tenets of the Tantric tradition.

Finally, the ideology of the world-accommodating groups asserts that the world is in many ways a poor place, impersonal and materialistic, but that it is capable of improvement. Their members seek an experiential religion and a new mode of being in the world. These groups "find their support among those who are securely attached to the prevailing social order, although unhappy with the level of impersonality and instrumentalism which pervades it" (122). The neo-Pentecostals are his example. The world-accommodating groups resemble the sociologist's denomination, while the world-rejecting groups are sect-like.

Wallis assumes that a new religion may move towards one pole or another in response to internal or external pressures. The world-rejecting movements, for example, were affected by the recessions of the 1970s. As is typical in a period of economic downturn, there was a dearth of individuals willing to conduct radical cultural experiments and many of the new religions moderated their

stands in an effort to adjust to changed circumstances. A religion may fall near one pole or the other, or may incorporate aspects of each type and so fall in the middle range. Wallis places 3HO in the middle and cites it as an example of a new religion that has moved from a world-rejecting to a world-accommodating stance. I would qualify this interpretation of 3HO. It has moved in a very general sense from the one type to the other, but 3HO has always contained elements of each type. In fact, the tendency to combine these disparate elements, and to use each when useful or appropriate, is one of 3HO's most distinctive traits.

Many of 3HO's more world-affirming beliefs have been taken from the Tantric tradition; the world-accommodating, and, sometimes, world-rejecting traits from Sikhism; and further world-rejecting traits from Hinduism. But each of these traditions encompasses a variety of stances toward the world and 3HO members have drawn widely from them.

The Tantric and Kundalini traditions foster both self-empowerment and mystical experience. In their emphasis on personal power they are in harmony with the messages of empowerment that were so pervasive in the 1960s, and this was clearly one of the attractions of 3HO in its early years. Their acceptance of mysticism was congruent with counterculture values also, as was Tantric insistence upon the essential unity of life. The Tantric approach to

empowerment had the further appeal that it could be interpreted to promise worldly success as well as a spiritual awakening. For those who never wanted to "drop out" and for those who wanted to opt back in, Tantra and Kundalini offered a brand of spirituality that did not require the student to renounce the larger society. It also favored an introspective and psychological bent, thus countenancing feminine styles of self-analysis and self-revelation, as well as being in tune with counterculture acceptance of the inward gaze.

While Tantric traditions spoke to the individual leaders often employed fundamentalist Sikhism, and various borrowings from Hinduism, to reify group boundaries and to intensify members' sense of group unity and heighten members' perception of their separation from the surrounding culture. These traditions justified arranged marriages, vegetarianism, sexual and other forms of abstinence, distinctive dress, and a highly disciplined lifestyle. They provided a perspective from which to criticize American society as decadent and overly individualistic. Thus they justified a sect-like, world-rejecting stance.

But Sikhism is also a pragmatic tradition, a world-accommodating one that has favored the "householder" role and a strong work ethic. It also, therefore, could be employed to justify participation in the broader society,

as long as this participation was on the appropriate terms. Members could maintain their sense of specialness and apartness and their critique of American culture, as well as their preference for unusual dress and Eastern traditions, and do this without forfeiting all the benefits of American middle-class life.

THE FORMATION OF 3HO

In 1968 Yogi BhaJan, who had previously been employed as a customs inspector in India, arrived in Toronto. According to the biographical sketch provided by a long-time associate he had expected to teach at the university there, but the position did not materialize. As she told the story to a class at the Khalsa Women's Training Camp in 1983, he then began an unsettled period of teaching yoga classes when he could find the opportunity. After some time he decided to visit friends in Los Angeles and finally to remain there. He began to frequent the East-West Cultural Center, where she met him. She describes her first reaction as ambivalence; on the one hand she "felt sorry for" the naive and "picturesque" Indian, on the other she distrusted him as a powerful personality who might "take over" the center. (Personal Tape, Khalsa Women's Training Camp, 1983). He taught yoga classes at the YMCA and moved about from home to home as hospitality was offered until this woman and a few other students finally

decided to contribute rent money so that he could settle in an apartment. He started teaching yoga at the East-West Cultural Center where, much to the chagrin of its director, hippies began to arrive in increasing numbers. Yogi Bhanjan took an interest in them and decided to teach them Kundalini yoga. He assured his students that this was the fastest way to spiritual understanding and that practitioners could "get higher" on the yoga than they could on drugs. He began to train yoga teachers and, in 1969, incorporated the Healthy-Happy-Holy-Organization.

There are other versions of these events, however. As a critic, Trilochan Singh, describes the same period:

It was Dr. Amarjit Singh Marwah, [sic] whose well known hospitality to all known and unknown Sikhs visiting Los Angeles tempted him to be first his guest and then be a pest for him. Dr. Marwah kept him in his house giving him free board and lodging, and then recommended him to Dr. Judith M. Tyberg, Founder-President of East-West Cultural Center....She generously permitted Yogi to teach Yoga classes for which she paid him. When...I went to deliver a lecture in the East-West Cultural Center, Dr. Judith M. Tyberg, who is a Ph.D. in Sanskrit from Benares University and a very noble, devout, deeply religious scholar, took me aside after the lecture and told me the whole story of Yogi Bhanjan's unmentionable misdoings in the East-West Cultural Center...for which she has ample evidence. (Trilochan Singh 1977, 96)

It seems, in fact, that Yogi Bhanjan caused more than mere annoyance at the East-West Cultural Center. Several parents threatened to take legal action against the Center and to have it closed if Bhanjan continued to associate with their daughters. He was asked to leave.

Soon 3HO North was established in San Francisco, and in the summer of 1969 Yogi Bhanan and several of his students attended a Summer Solstice ceremony in Santa Fe, New Mexico where Yogi Bhanan taught some classes. There he encountered a man by the name of Dawson who was eager to start a commune. As an academic observer recounts the story and describes an early 3HO ashram:

Dawson...purchased twelve acres a few miles south of town with the intention of starting a commune. Exactly what kind of commune was unclear....Having no particular idea of what was coming, Dawson, nonetheless, prepared himself by fasting for four days and then attended the solstice affair, where various spiritual teachers were scheduled to appear....When Dawson first saw Yogi Bhanan, he later told me, he knew immediately that this was the man....

...Soon after meeting the yogi, Dawson offered his twelve acres to his new guru as an ashram site and immediately underwent an intensive two-week training session preparing him to lead it. Under the direction of Dawson, an able young man in his late twenties with a charisma of his own, Maharaj became the third key link in the yogi's new chain of communities in the United States.

...Entering the ashram was easy, requiring only a \$2-a-day fee as a share of the general expenses. But as many prospects found out, to stay required firm acceptance of the ashram life, a regimen which began at 3 A.M. each morning and continued with strict organization throughout most of the day....

One strange thing, at least to me, was the extent of the yogi's influence over the members, who ranged in age from fifteen to twenty-five. Most were college dropouts. In talks with various members I was told that the yogi knew everything that was happening, that he could read a person at a glance, and that he had "engaged" several of his disciples to other followers...I was also told that the yogi had taken forty thousand people off drugs (in what would have then been one and a half years.) To the membership at large, both Yogi Bhanan and Dawson were considered egoless, "pure channels of God's will." The ashramers therefore

accepted their directives without question.
(Gardner 1978, 123-128)

Dawson did not continue for long in his role as ashram director, and the ashram was disbanded in 1971 to be replaced by a new ashram in Espanola and a new leader who had been dispatched by Yogi Bhanjan. Teachers were sent to other locations to establish ashrams, and by December of 1972 there were 94 official ashrams and numerous small teaching centers so that "3HO was represented in thirty-five states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and about half a dozen foreign countries" (Bailey 1974, 81).

World-rejecting movements typically create barriers between the group and the larger society. They disparage that society, demand humility and obedience from members, and institute authoritarian leadership. They require self-abnegation. All of these characteristics appeared early in 3HO history, and most strengthened the position of the leadership. Yogi Bhanjan was a charismatic leader with a devoted following, and his followers attributed extraordinary powers to him. He taught members that their experimentation with drugs, their sexual freedom, their wandering and "uncommitted" lifestyles, their unkempt appearance, and their preference for "letting it all hang out" were the product of a degenerate culture and inappropriate for people on a spiritual path. Such practices were to be replaced by dietary restrictions, celibacy outside of marriage, and restraint within it,

obedience to a spiritual teacher, and lady-like modest behavior. Bhajan and his followers criticized the world outside of 3HO, and this criticism often included parents and other relatives. Bhajan roundly criticized American culture, and members depicted everyday life as mechanical and heartless. Thus when Arthur Parsons visited the 3HO ashram in Montague, Massachusetts in 1972, he found that the students there

incessantly referred to the "machine-like" nature of all phases of life. It helped explain the most routine actions while evoking a sense of homelessness in the world and alienation from the sacred foundations of life. (1974, 222-235)

Bhajan also told members that past cultural programming, parental and personal mistakes, and the inevitable trials of childhood and adolescence had scarred them, leaving in their wake a multitude of neuroses, fears and anxieties. Yoga, meditation, and ashram living would "cleanse" the subconscious of these burdens, but this would take time. Members had been damaged by the outside world and would need time and guidance if they were to heal. In many cases this corresponded with individual's feels that they had "messed up" their lives.¹³

Thus counterculture criticisms of American culture were reasserted in this new, spiritual, setting, and combined with a highly disciplined lifestyle. Many of these

¹³ This summary of Bhajan's early teachings is based on interviews, camp notes, the 3HO Foundation publication, Beads of Truth, and a variety of handouts.

criticisms served to reinforce the boundary between 3HO and the larger society. Some undermined members' faith in their own judgements and emotions since these were said to be generated by neuroses and to be the product of maya. This in turn rendered some members quite dependent on the leadership and the organization.

But if the 3HO member was encouraged to view the outside world as corrupt and mechanical, was expected to submit to an unaccustomed discipline, and to regard her own affective and cognitive processes with some distrust, she was also promised mental clarity, emotional control, and personal power. She could expect to purge the subconscious and experience peace and joy as she progressed along the spiritual path. World-affirming concepts balanced world-rejecting messages, and, as stated, many of these were drawn from the Tantric tradition.

Tantra and Kundalini

The yoga systems on which 3HO was originally based, Tantra and Kundalini, are designed to awaken spiritual forces said to lie unrecognized and unawakened within every individual. They are considered to be among the more esoteric yogas; Hatha yoga is more commonly taught in the United States. The origins of Tantric thought are not known; most of the texts are anonymous and the teachings may well date back to the Vedic period (although the formal

literature dates only to early Christian times). According to Mookerjee, Tantric thought builds upon a concept that is central in the early Upanishads: that there are only two principles at work in the universe -- consciousness and inert nature. He hypothesizes that this idea evolved and blended with early Indian goddess worship. In time it took the form of a belief that reality is truly one but is best depicted as duality because the ultimate unity is difficult to conceptualize:

All manifestation, according to tantra, is based upon a fundamental dualism, a male principle known as Parusha (Cosmic Consciousness) and a female principle known as Prakriti (Cosmic Force of Nature). Parusha is identified as Cosmic Consciousness, whose nature is static and which is the transcendental plane where there is but one undifferentiated unity. Siva, Prakriti, Nature, is synonymous with Sakti (female energy)...Sakti is endowed with all aspects of life, creative to dissolutive, sensual to sublime, benign to horrific. Sakti's universal power is the prime mover and mother-womb of the recurring cycle of the universe.... (Mookerjee 1977,16)

In Tantric thought Sakti can take the form of creation, destruction, or maintenance. Her function, as another authority puts it, is to "veil, limit or finitise pure infinite formless Consciousness so as to produce form" (Woodroffe 1929, 10). In so doing Sakti can create the illusion (Maya) that all objects are separate, bounded items when in fact they are all part of the One. In a nice passage Woodroffe catches the rather tortuous Tantric thinking on this process:

Shiva, the Supreme Consciousness, as Shakti, presents Itself as object to Itself as subject, the latter at first experiencing the former as part of the Self, and then through the operation of Maya Shakti as different from the Self. This is the final stage in which every Self...is mutually exclusive of every other. (9)

Tantric techniques are aimed at reversing this seeming separation of self and other, consciousness and form; they are aimed at enabling the individual to pierce maya and experience unity. In order to do so, Tantra teaches, the individual must realize that inner and outer are one, that the body is a microcosm of the universe, and that the primal energy and static consciousness are lying within, waiting to be awakened. Essential here is the concept of Kundalini energy, sometimes said to be an internal manifestation of Sakti residing at the base of the spine in its latent form. Thus Kundalini yoga, the essential JHO practice, is an aspect of Tantra. It is intended to awaken the energy at the base of the spine and unite it with pure consciousness. The practitioner learns to raise this energy up through a series of bodily centers, or chakras, which are said to control the senses, the soul, and the spirit. Finally the individual is said to achieve union with the highest universal energies.

Yogi Bhajan gives this phenomenon a unique physiological interpretation:

All you have to do is uncoil that energy and make a functional connection with your pineal gland. Once that master gland, the seat of the soul, has started

secreting, it will give you the power to reach your self-realization in relationship to the total universal awareness. (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 11)

He also refers to women as Saktis, as embodiments of this universal energy.

In the literature there are dramatic accounts of the kundalini's rising, although it is agreed that this can be either a sudden and extraordinary event, or the long-term result of patient and persistent effort. The energy, it is said, is potentially dangerous if it rises in a nervous system that is untuned and unprepared for it, and there are disciplines intended to ensure proper preparation. If the Kundalini is carefully raised, the individual is slowly or rapidly enlightened. The newly empowered individual is said to be better able to alter the world while being less and less affected by its dangers and by worldly motives. The individual comes to live what Paramahansa Yogananda, whose Autobiography of a Yogi is much read in 3HO, calls a "two-fold existence: Conscientiously performing their work in the world, they are yet immersed in an inward beatitude" (169). As a realized person, the yogi should be able, in Yogi Bhajan's words, to "control her environments," or, in Yogananda's words: "The deeper the Self-realization of a man, the more he influences the whole universe by his subtle spiritual vibrations, and the less he himself is affected by the phenomenal flux" (1946, 193).

The message of control and empowerment is clearly world-affirming; the idea of the two-fold existence perhaps more world-accommodating. Both are present in 3HO. Yogi Bhanjan is always telling his students that they should become "less reactive" -- more in control of everyday situations -- and he often refers to 3HO as a "technology" for better coping and saner living. He also tells them that they have a right to experience joy, ease, and success, and that, with the proper "technology," these are available to them. He also encourages "the two-fold existence," and draws extensively on Sikhism for guidance on how to live in the world while not being of it.

Wallis suggests that:

The world-affirming movement is a modern version of the almost ubiquitous phenomenon of magic; the invocation, or manipulation, of occult forces or powers for personal ends. The ends may have changed somewhat from physical health, fertility and freedom from witchcraft, to psychological well-being, enhanced self-confidence...but the enterprise is essentially the same. (122)

Although Wallis may over-emphasize the magical element in world-affirmation, it certainly is present in 3HO, and was from its inception. The yoga, for example, is said to strengthen an electromagnetic aura that surrounds the body so that the individual is both less vulnerable to others' "vibrations" and able to change vibrations worldwide. Parsons found that the Boston members believed if they persevered in the practice of Kundalini Yoga then they could transform daily life. They

actively desired to improve their mundane roles through the possession of God-consciousness...they hoped to return to the world with a more dominating stature. The students did not merely resent their control by karmic destiny: they sought to gain control of karma itself. (1974, 229)

Personal empowerment and self-actualization always have been 3HO goals.

THE EARLY YEARS

Increasingly, Yogi Bhanjan drew upon his Sikh background, along with aspects of Hinduism, for some of the more conservative, disciplined, and pragmatic aspects of his teachings. Soon after his arrival in Los Angeles he began attending a Sikh study circle and three or four of his American students started to accompany him. The first American woman to become a Sikh did so in 1970. She was unusual, however, and few 3HO members pursued this interest until 1972/73 when Yogi Bhanjan began to encourage it. Shakti Parwha maintains that Yogi Bhanjan studied his followers "very thoroughly and very intently" for the first three years in order to ascertain their needs before he began to elaborate his tailor-made synthesis of Tantric and Sikh traditions. (telephone interview, 1986)

As Bruce LaBrack describes Yogi Bhanjan's development, "his teachings evolved into a hard-line, Khalsa-oriented Sikhism with residual, but strong, emphasis on yoga" (1974, 7). Bhanjan began to preach a fundamentalist Sikhism of a type that gained currency in the days of the Anti-British

movements and the partition of India.¹⁴ His teachings are distinctive, however, in that "grafted on to the historically traditional Sikh practices are some which are associated more with the Hindu Renaissance, such as vegetarianism and a tendency to puritanism; or with the Hindu social system, such as submitting to 'arranged marriages' with other 3-HO members and a definite division of secular statuses and roles along sex lines" (3-8).

This vigorous Sikhism was passed down to the 3HO leadership and membership at large, and Sikh prayers were added to the morning yoga meditation. Ashrams obtained copies of the Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, and 3HO members began to learn to sing and play the Sikh kirtan (hymns from the scriptures) and recite the banis (prayers). Many members left at this point, preferring not to be associated with a formal religion, and many others hung back, not certain what stand to take.

By the time Raleigh E. Bailey visited three Eastern ashrams in 1972 (Brooklyn, New York; Montague, Massachusetts; and Hartford, Connecticut) morning sadhana combined Kundalini yoga and Sikhism. He found that members of the Brooklyn ashram regularly attended the Indian Sikh

¹⁴ It emphasizes the Khalsa, or brotherhood of Sikhs, that was instituted by Guru Gobind Singh and a "revival of the Sikh sant-sepahi (saint-soldier) ethos," which at that time served to "create a separate political and religious identity which would be effective against Hindus, [and] the British, and which would be useful in later dealings with the Central Government of an Independent India." (3)

Gurdwara in Queens, were taking Punjabi lessons, and all had taken vows. In general, he found that "The Sikh Dharma initiation rite is not necessarily expected of those in 3HO though in my experience with selected ashrams, most residents had been initiated" (1974, 112). Shakti Parwha informed Bailey that as of December 1972 sixty-two ministers had been ordained from within 3HO, including the first women ministers in the history of Sikhism.

Yogi Bhajan claims to have been ordained at Amritsar as "Minister of the Sikh Dharma for the Western Hemisphere." He clearly was honored in November of 1974 and there are photographs of the event (Shakti Parwha Kaur Khalsa 1979, 54). The proper interpretation of the title granted him is disputed, however. Two suits now pending (*Felt v. Harbhajan* 1986; *Khalsa v. Harbhajan* 1986) claim that he was given a purely honorary title ("Siri Singh Sahib"), not the title of "Minister of the Sikh Dharma for the Western Hemisphere" and that "indeed there is no body within the Sikh religion which has the power to make such an appointment, nor is there any such office within the Sikh religion." (*Khalsa v. Harbhajan*, 27a) This controversy is complicated by the divisions that now exist within the Indian Sikh community.

Yogi Bhajan was evidently friendly with a Sikh leader, Gurucharan Singh Taura (a member of the Indian Parliament), who may well have arranged for the honorary title, and he

has had other friends among Sikh leaders. SHO activities have been featured in the journals of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee'¹⁵ (Singh 1977, 125), which indicates that there is, or has been, a link between Bhajan and Indian Sikh leaders.

Trilochan Singh confirms an honorary title of "Singh Sahib Harbhajan Singh Yogi," (Singh 1977, 130) but he disputes the validity of the title and the right to bestow it. He is also caustic in his dismissal of the leaders with whom Yogi Bhajan has been associated and clearly has political and religious differences with them.¹⁶

¹⁵ This committee manages all Indian Sikh shrines, and has played a major role in defining Sikh beliefs and practices.

¹⁶ Nonetheless, his comments on the validity of the title are worth citing. On Yogi Bhajan's claim to be the "Sri Singh Sahib," spiritual leader of the Sikhs of the Western Hemisphere, authorized to appoint ministers and conduct Baptisms and marriages he writes:

There is no such Ecclesiastical title as Sri Singh Sahib and others created by Yogi Bhajan, such as Mukhia Singh Sahib...[there is the title of Singh Sahib limited to a very few holders]. Only such a theologian or a learned man can be installed Singh Sahib who can interpret [major Sikh religious works] and they have to deliver sermons on the basis of the interpretations of these works every day. Yogi Bhajan cannot read correctly or interpret any thirty pages of these voluminous works...he has installed more Singh Sahibs among his followers than have been created in 200 years of the history of Amritsar...Every Sikh who lives the fully disciplined life of a baptized Sikh and says his prayers daily is entitled...[to join in the conduct of]...baptism, marriage ceremony or any other ceremony [but] no single person could be authorized. (111-112)

Trilochan Singh, in fact, has written an entire book of criticisms. He is offended by the incorporation of Tantra and the sexual emphasis in Bhajan's approach to it, and by Bhajan's claim to be the Mahan Tantric.¹⁷ He finds Bhajan's physical interpretation of Tantric Yoga (its effects are explained as functions of the pineal and pituitary glands) absurd. He is bothered by Bhajan's tendency to re-interpret Sikh terms to suggest that only he truly understands them. Most of all he is troubled by what he terms "Yogi Bhajan's Ego Maniac Utterances" (1977, 79) and by his theology.

Whatever the quality of his credentials, Bhajan intentionally combined an individualistic and empowering tradition (Tantra) with a more disciplined, group-oriented, and pious tradition (Sikhism). He told his followers that ashram living and Sikh dharma were intended to correct the "expanded ego" that could emerge with the practice of kundalini yoga. They were intended to add an element of humility and to enable the student to transcend egotism and "burn off" karma. Ashram life was portrayed as a "fishbowl

¹⁷ Bhajan claims to have studied under Sant Hazara Singh, who passed the title to Lama Lilan Po, who passed it to Yogi Bhajan. Trilochan Singh comments:

As Hazara Singh died decades ago, the time gap had to be filled by a fictitious Mahan Tantric from Tibet [sic] Lama Lilan Po. But Yogi Bhajan does not state whether it was before or after the Chinese occupation. Did Lilan Po come to Los Angeles or he flew [sic] to Tibet with the special permission of the authorities. (1977, 108)

existence" or as life in a "pressure cooker," and members were told that by curtailing choice, practicing obedience, and living closely with others they would rapidly be forced to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, their defense mechanisms, and their repetitive cognitive and emotional patterns so that these could be more expeditiously altered or eliminated. The goal was to transcend emotions and "lower consciousness" modes of thinking and acting; members were to transcend material attachments, fears, desires to please others, "lust," self-aggrandizement and the like:

...3HO is a way of life in which individual freedom is voluntarily curtailed to a certain extent to achieve certain mental attitudes. One of the mental attitudes, which is the attitude of higher consciousness, comes out of discipline....In a process of discipline, commitment is the anchor, it is the guideline: commitment in marriage, commitment in dharma, commitment in social life, commitment in the surroundings (Notes 1979, 51).

A 3-HO Kundalini Yoga Ashram and Sikh Dharma Training Center has two basic forces in operation: the techniques of Kundalini yoga and the lifestyle of the Sikh Dharma. The yoga techniques stimulate the basic evolutionary force in the psyche. Each person feels the expansion of his own energy or shakti. As his energy increases he can see its effects in the ability to influence people, channelize the will, and be sensitive to subtle energies. It is possible that the experience of expansion can lead to a great spiritual ego which is less curable than cancer! The Sikh humility and respect for the one Creator blocks that. The House of Guru Ram Das puts the ideals of self-sacrifice, service, and humility into daily practice. It is important for a practitioner of a powerful discipline not to become too self-involved. If all the energy developed and released in sadhana were focused through our own ego structure, we could

become imbalanced and narcissistic. (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 18)

One of the results of this effort at synthesis is a variety of internal contradictions and mixed messages, which leave members and leaders considerable freedom of interpretation. These contradictions also have a significant impact on 3HO concepts of selfhood and on members' identity processes as the self comes to incorporate 3HO structure and metaphors. To further understand this combination of traditions it is necessary to know more of Sikhism.

Sikhism

Sikhism grew out of a mystical tradition, which has come to be called the sant tradition (McLeod 1976). This tradition originated in Northern India in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. Its representatives worshipped a God that was one and formless, the source of all that exists, and criticized Hindu polytheism as well as the caste system and the elaborate practices and beliefs of the sects that multiplied at this time. Creation was one, they maintained, not to be divided into castes and sects and a multitude of gods and goddesses.

Sikhs trace their origins to Guru Nanak (1469-1539), a seeker who issued from an orthodox Hindu family. His search for truth brought him into contact with diverse groups and beliefs, but he was dissatisfied with all until he found revelation in a personal experience of God. His

teachings are in the sant tradition and one of his hymns, Jap-Ji, which is recited every morning by devout Sikhs, summarizes many of these teachings. It opens:

There is one God
 Eternal Truth is his name,
 Creator of all things and the all-pervading
 spirit
 Fearless and without hatred,
 Timeless and formless.
 Beyond birth and death,
 Self-enlightened.
 By the grace of the Guru he is known.
 (Cole and Sambhi 1978, 69)

This formless God was to be realized through meditation on his name and nature. Nanak advocated daily meditation in the "ambrosial" hours before dawn. The goal was an experience of God, recognition of dependence on God as the source of all things, and liberation from haumai (a term that is rendered as "separation" in 3HO):

Haumai is a difficult idea to render into English. Perhaps self-reliance is as satisfactory a term as any because though haumai results in pride this is not necessarily an immoral state. Self-reliance is often praised as a great human virtue, but for Guru Nanak it is a condition which blinds man to his dependence upon God... (Cole & Sambhi 1978, 77).

People, says Nanak, flounder in duality by accepting the material world on its own terms and thinking they are bounded individuals rather than extensions of God. They must experience unity and God-centeredness in order to achieve liberation from this illusion and from the round of death and rebirth. They achieve liberation through meditation in the company of other good and devoted people.

Nanak opposed the caste system, and established free kitchens in which people of all castes could eat together (a practice that has since become institutionalized as langar). He favored the householder role and opposed renunciation of the world and, in fact, established a community of householders and worshippers at Kartarpur. He encouraged discipline but was distrustful of Hindu ritualism and asceticism. Each individual was to "gently" discipline and develop the self, and "ascetic austerity, penances, celibacy, and the like, had no place in Nanak's religion" (Kushwant Singh 1963, 1:46).

Nanak chose a devoted follower, Guru Angad (1504-1552) to succeed him, and he in turn was followed by a series of other gurus, through the tenth and last, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1798). Their writings constitute the sacred scriptures of Sikhism.

Gobind Singh is known as the originator of the Khalsa, or brotherhood, of Sikhs, which he is said to have initiated in 1699. The Khalsa has a distinctly martial tradition. Members seek to become "soldier-saints," at once pious followers of the guru and fearless wearers of the sword. According to tradition, Gobind Singh initiated the first five members of the Khalsa by having them drink amrit -- sweetened water stirred with a two-edged sword (a

ceremony which is still practiced) and he instituted the "5 K's."¹⁸

Guru Gobind Singh's reign is considered a turning point for another reason as well. His sons having predeceased him and the Khalsa having been established, he is said to have declared the succession of gurus ended. Henceforth, the spirit and wisdom of the gurus would reside in the scriptures and in the Sikh congregations. Today the doctrine of the scriptural guru holds sway; the Granth Sahib is the guru and it is believed that anyone who is in trouble or simply seeking guidance need only open the Granth at random and receive comfort and advice.¹⁹

¹⁸ McLeod (1976) has suggested that the popular histories have telescoped and simplified the actual events of the 17th and 18th centuries. As McLeod describes this period, it was a time of considerable alteration in the Sikh constituency. The first Sikh leaders were all Khatris (an urban mercantile caste), as were most original followers of the tradition, but by the 17th and 18th centuries they were being joined by more and more Jats (a Punjabi agricultural community). Today the Jats constitute the majority of the Sikh population. (Yogi Bhajan is a Jat.) They brought with them a long martial tradition and are thought to have descended from an unstratified pastoral people whose egalitarianism would have fitted nicely with the social principles of the earlier Sikhs. McLeod believes that the Jats brought their arms and their martial traditions into the Sikh sect, altering its character and perhaps giving the Moghul emperors good reason to worry.

¹⁹ Again McLeod doubts the literal history. He suggests that the "doctrine of the corporate and spiritual guru" came to provide a symbol of unity at a time when this was sorely needed. It also established the integrity of the multiple bands of Sikhs that sought to survive during a chaotic period of Afghan invasions and clashes with Moghul rulers since it held that the guru was present wherever a congregation met or the Khalsa gathered. Sikhism was at once one and many (1976, 45).

Today Nanak's teachings are still central, although enhanced by those of the other gurus. Sikhism encourages a life in the world in conjunction with collective worship and private, mystical experience. It is, as one commentator describes it, a religion of "equipoise" (Gill 1975). The good Sikh is expected to achieve a balance between God-consciousness and practical affairs. He or she should be capable of mysticism but "not believe in its extreme form which is found in Hinduism" (17).

In his survey of Sikh culture, Gill suggests that the tradition provided a "four-fold" goal for its followers:

- (a) To possess a healthy body;
- (b) To possess a healthy mind;
- (c) To get proper metaphysical knowledge; and
- (d) To live a life of spirit (1975, 18).

This is obviously quite similar to the 3HO aim of a "healthy, happy, holy" individual.

Gill makes one other point which seems to capture much of the flavor of Sikh philosophy when he observes that, "For a Sikh the world is not an illusion as assumed by Vedanta. It is very much there although it is phenomenal and it keeps changing every moment" (17).

The world is to be enjoyed, as long as one does not become enmeshed in a materialistic point of view. Sikhism is, in Wallis' terms, a world-accommodating religion, although this seems rather a pallid term for so vigorous a tradition, and for such a dynamic balance. It is a flexible tradition as well, and able to absorb diverse

elements. With its emphasis on balance, Sikhism is in many ways a well-chosen vehicle through which to synthesize Eastern and Western and esoteric and practical traditions.

Yogi Bhanan claims that Sikhism is consistent with the Tantric Tradition. Certainly there are many elements in common. Both emphasize the unity of existence and both are experiential. Tantric practitioners make the experience of transcendent unity the linchpin of their system. Bharati emphasizes this point: "...it seems to me that one philosophical doctrine inherent in esoteric Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism...the identity of the phenomenal and the absolute world -- was singled out by all tantric teachers as the nucleus around which all their speculation was to revolve" (1965, 18). Both traditions emphasize meditation as the route to the experience of God. Each requires careful balancing of different principles, and neither advocates withdrawal from the world or extreme forms of asceticism; in both cases the aim is to be in the world but not of it. Kundalini, says Woodroffe, is distinctive in offering its practitioners "both enjoyment (Bhukti) in the world and liberation (Mukti) from all worlds" (1929, 645).

There are significant differences, however, and many of Yogi Bhanan's critics have been quick to point them out. The differences are accentuated by Bhanan's reinterpretations of both traditions, and his many idiosyncratic and magical additions. Thus, Trilochan Singh argues that:

When Tantric Yoga theorists of Yogi Bhajan seek to identify the Raj Yoga of Pantanjali with the philosophy and mystical doctrines of Guru Nanak, they forget that there is a world of difference between the two, in their conceptions of God, in their techniques of meditation, and in the steps of the mystical journey to the supreme state....Pantanjali...does not believe in the absolute and supreme God, the worship and achievement of which forms the prime foundations of Sikh faith and practice....(1977, 10).

The Tantric Yogin is a more pantheistic, even individualistic concept. Tantra is concerned with the self, while the Sikh God is transcendent. In Cole and Sambhi's words:

Ultimately although man discovers that God is within him he recognizes that it is more correct to regard himself as existing within God. There is no place for pantheism in Sikh thought. (1978, 74)

There is a clear inconsistency here, and it runs through 3HO structure and beliefs, and colors members' modes of accounting for their behavior and constructing self-concepts. It is a point where world-rejection and world-affirmation simply do not coalesce.

Early Vows

Those 3HO members who elected to take the Sikh vows in the first years admit that they often did so with only a very general sense of what was involved. A woman who took her vows in 1971 remembers:

Sikhism then, our knowledge of it, wasn't what our knowledge of it is now....The teacher who administered my Sikh vows was saying that this was a commitment to be a seeker of truth. It was very vague. You were making a commitment to pursue a spiritual lifestyle.

When I made it, I was making a commitment to my consciousness, to my soul, that I was going to pursue a life that had strivings in that direction...the specifics weren't there...Now when I see people making commitments I think, "Oh, do they know what they're doing," because it's much more meaningful to me now. (AP7, 5, 1985)

Similarly, a member describes taking her vows to become a minister with no preparation:

He was making our house an ashram, and that summer when we went to solstice...they were getting ready to have a ministers' ceremony and the head of the East Coast came up to me and said, "Get in line." And I said, "What line?" And he said, "This line, you all are going to be made ministers in five minutes." (AP6, 6, 1985)

More people took vows in the years of 1974, 75 and 76, and often with greater knowledge of what was involved, although most would say there is a gulf between the words and the experience, and that they were far from anticipating the rigors of life on a spiritual path.

There are two sets of vows, besides those for ministers, that members may take. There are the "Sikh Dharma vows" that require that one get up every morning for sadhana; look to the Guru Granth Sahib everyday; earn a living, "righteously" and share the earnings with others; be faithful in marriage; adopt a vegetarian diet and consume no intoxicants.²⁰ As a further step one can take the Amrit vows which make one a member of the Sikh Khalsa.

²⁰ These vows are a 3HO innovation and would not necessarily be recognized by Indian Sikh authorities.

In this case one vows to wear the "five K's," and to recite certain banis every day:

...the Amrit vows and the ministry vows I feel are a much deeper commitment to Sikh Dharma...I felt a real difference when I took Amrit; my link between me and the guru was very powerful and I feel that just somehow there's a tie that happened and I feel I can always call on that feeling...I don't do all the things that are in the vows all the way, one hundred per cent, but I strive. I always know that they're there; they're tools that I use if I need them. You know, like reading the banis -- I have a tape of them in my car and I listen to them alot and I relate to Gurbani alot, and I relate to the guru alot....(AP2b, 6, 1985)

Several of the Washington members took Amrit at the Golden Temple in Amritsar and remember this as a very special event. As one who took it very seriously remembers:

I felt that I would never leave the path. Taking Amrit to me meant that you were a Sikh to the end, that you would live as a Sikh, die as a Sikh, and you would sacrifice your life if need be before you would cut your hair or anything like that.²¹ (AP12b, 1, 1985)

THE LATER YEARS

In the mid-1970's many of the new religious movements ceased to expand. The heyday of the counterculture was

²¹ Singh is again scathing. He claims that Amrit was improperly administered by Sant Versa Singh in Delhi:

Sant Versa Singh's practice of giving Amrit (which he gave to Yogi Bhajan and 84 Americans) with a Kirpan is the most Un-Sikhlike practice I have ever seen. (1977, 98)

He is not complimentary about the tone and method of its administration at Amritsar either (1977, 103). His comments are based on his analysis of a 3HO film of the events.

past and the tumult associated with the war in Vietnam had subsided. Recession limited social experimentation. As the situation was described in a recent article:

The loss in enrollment combined with a recessive national economy placed the new religions in a position that required the development of creative and practical techniques for group survival. Consequently, funding methods were needed that did not depend on ever-increasing numbers. Ideological changes were also needed that gave meaning to their statuses as small fringe religions. The move by 3HO and Vajradhatu during the mid-seventies to placing a greater emphasis on material wealth was not difficult nor contrary to any of their religious principles. It was a practical and effective response for survival through a changing social and economic structure. (Khalsa 1986, 244)

With Yogi Bhajan's encouragement, 3HO counselors offered courses in "prosperity consciousness" -- a New Age concept adapted to 3HO needs. Entrepreneurship, further education, and professional attainments were more actively encouraged. Small and family businesses were favored since they provided flexibility, sociability, shared values, and a way to avoid the discrimination that was often the consequence of wearing 3HO bana. Khalsa's list of small Sikh-initiated businesses functioning today suggests the flavor of the early entrepreneurship since many of these contemporary businesses began at that time:

3HO Foundation members are found nationwide in many professional and technical fields. Some have started manufacturing businesses such as health food products, furniture, and massage tools; others have become very successful in sales and distribution of products such as insurance, health food, shoes, and school supplies; and 3HO Foundation restaurants can be found in many cities in the country. Small businesses have been started in areas such as construction, janitorial service, landscaping, painting, auto mechanics, T.V.

repair, security, and small business computers....
(236)

Worldly success was considered desirable as long as it was the result of honest work, did not involve too great an attachment to the fruits of Sikh labor, and led to the sharing of wealth with the Dharma and the needy. 3HO members are encouraged to tithe ten percent of their income to International Headquarters and from there funds are dispersed to 3HO-sponsored activities. There are also local membership fees, and individuals make donations for extra projects such as establishing a yoga center or a school. Members emphasize the return on giving. Khalsa found that "Ten-fold return was talked about as a universal law, and a number of 3HO members could give examples of receiving ten times the amount of what they had recently given" (239).

Khalsa sees the 3HO emphasis on worldly success as one aspect of an overall effort to create "an image of legitimacy" and to institutionalize the organization as an established church in the face of declining membership, economic recession, and media hostility to "cults." As he points out, Bromley and Shupe (1980) recognize the same trends in the Unification Church and in ISKCON. Wallis agrees:

The disappearance of the constituency for many of the youthful world-rejecting movements has been reflected in two ways. First, there has been a tendency for them to stagnate numerically...in general it appears that, after considerable expansion in the

late 1960s and early 1970s, the world-rejecting movements more recently tended to remain static or even to decline. Second, the disappearance of their constituency has produced pressure upon these movements to adapt in the face of their changed circumstances. In order to locate a new constituency, the movements have often felt a need to change their style and their methods of proselytisation in a manner which would draw them closer to the world-accommodating area of the conceptual space. Even initially extreme world-rejecting movements, such as Krishna Consciousness and the Children of God, have modified their public presentation in ways which gain them greater access to less marginal sectors of society. (1984, 87-88)

He notes a similar phenomenon in the middle ground religions:

...the strategically placed movements of the middle ground which embodied sufficient world-rejecting features to be acceptable to counter-cultural refugees, but sufficient world-accommodating features to be a pathway home, have either largely disappeared, or transformed themselves in still more conventional directions. (1984, 89)

Certainly 3HO has moved in conventional directions.

Many members are successful in business and the professions, although this varies from ashram to ashram, and many of the family businesses have been less than successful. Fewer members live communally. Members of the Washington ashram, for example, now live in large, comfortable suburban homes and in many cases pursue independent careers. Originally, they mostly lived communally and worked together. In Washington there are many 3HO children, and as they grow older their parents face all of the responsibilities of the householder role. The result is that they find themselves pushed further toward the middle ground, and they talk about balancing

their material and spiritual lives. The balance that they are attempting to create may be severely tested as they approach the ages of maximum occupational demand and, most likely, of maximum ego strength and self-confidence. The opposing tugs of world-affirmation and world-rejection, of commitment and individuation, obedience and self-assertion, of rational planning and intuitive expression, are likely to be powerfully felt as members and their children mature. These stresses are reflected in the fact that two respected leaders have recently left 3HO, and many of their admirers left with them. The organization is no longer growing and in fact appears to be declining. Furthermore, Yogi BhaJan is said to be in ill-health and faces legal proceedings.

Expansion of journal entries, June 27 and 28, 1983.

I decided to attend two weeks of the Khalsa Women's Training Camp session in 1983 on the advice of a Sikh friend. She provided me with some basic, if scanty, information about the camp, essentially telling me that this was an experience that I needed if I was to understand what it means to be a 3HO woman. She told me only that the camp was located in Espanola, New Mexico, under some lovely cottonwood trees, and my attendance would involve taking courses, attending sadhana, and setting aside time for my own spiritual development. This was shortly before the camp was due to begin in June, and I made a snap decision to go based on my considerable faith in her judgement and my own intense desire to see the Southwest, an area I had never visited and always wanted to see. Having little to go on I developed my own fantasy picture of what the camp would be like. It would be surrounded by open spaces and mountains. I would find a peaceful retreat where I could learn more about Sikh beliefs, make some friends, attend sadhana and classes and still have time to take long, solitary walks in the hills.

On the plane to Albuquerque, however, I began to realize that my image might be a bit romantic. There was a turbaned 3HO woman on the plane, so I introduced myself and learned that she also was travelling to the camp. When I asked for more information about it and about hiking

possibilities in the area, she told me that the camp was quite crowded and that it wasn't possible to go off hiking alone because the residents of Espanola were not very well-disposed towards the Sikhs. In fact, she said, campers had been harassed by men from Espanola who would occasionally drive by the camp at night and drunkenly shout at the residents. Because of these incidents the women in the camp were asked always to go places in pairs and excursions were discouraged. I began to fear that camp would be an experience of confinement and regimentation, and saw my visions of a quiet retreat rapidly fading.

I also began to fear that I might be the only woman not dressed in bana and started to brace myself for the possibility of feeling very much the outsider. The closer we came to the end of the flight the tenser I grew. The 3HO woman had seemed irritable, discouraging and unfriendly, and I worried that I would meet much more of the same. My family's worries about cults and brainwashing were somewhere in the back of my mind. My accustomed identities seemed very fragile, my personhood thin.

When we arrived at the airport, the 3HO passenger hurriedly disappeared in search of the person who was to meet her and drive her to the camp. She left without offering any information, much less a ride, which did not raise my expectations. I had registered and paid for transportation from Santa Fe to the camp, so I went on to

Santa Fe. There I waited at the pickup point and made several phone calls to the camp, always receiving reassurance that a van would arrive. It didn't and it finally became clear that signals were crossed and I would have to stay overnight in Santa Fe. One final telephone call to the camp produced the name of a cheap hotel in town. I was annoyed but also relieved to continue my ordinary life for another day and very pleased to have an opportunity to explore Santa Fe. I met some other would-be campers waiting for the van the next day. They included one other non-Sikh and some friendly women in bana. We had lunch together and the other non-Sikh and I naturally gravitated toward each other, so the transition was smoothed.

The camp that I saw that day was indeed crowded; nearly three hundred women had set up their tents, often only two to three feet apart. The camp resembled a busy commercial campground with many individual tents and a few permanent structures. There was a small concrete building housing the camp office; another referred to as "the carport", but used for classes; one housing showers and a long trench for washing; and, in the center of the camp, a large gold-and-white-striped canvas canopy known to all the "the big top." Tents were arranged by region and old pros knew where to find the high ground and shaded areas in their regions, while others worried about flooding and endured very hot

quarters during the day. The front entrance of the camp opened onto a rural road, and across that road were miles of rolling brown hills spotted with clumps and patches of desert green. Several seemingly vicious dogs lived with their owners along this road and any 3HO expedition undertaken on foot required some bravery in the face of their snapping and snarling. On another side the camp was bounded by private houses, all fenced in. Just above the campsite was the Espanola ashram, a collection of trailers and adobe houses. Further beyond was Yogi Bhañan's ranch, where those who signed up early enough for swimming lessons could cool off in his pool. Several miles from this site, in the hills, was the more primitive "Solstice site" where Winter Solstice gatherings are held and where the children's summer camp was located.

I checked in and registered for classes, and my new friend helped me erect my tent. We were processed as in any camp or conference. We were surprised to discover, however, that no meals would be served until lunch the following day. I went to bed tired and rather hungry and wondering if I could wake for sadhana at 4:00 a.m.

CHAPTER III

GENDER: THE KHALSA WOMEN'S TRAINING CAMP

This meditation is designed to promote and develop the inner grace, inner coziness, inner strength and outward radiance of each woman. The meditation helps a person to positively channel their emotions, strengthen their weaknesses, develop mental clarity and to improve their physical and mental health. The meditation as described below is designed EXCLUSIVELY for women.

Lie down on the back, fully relaxing your face and body. Inhale deeply, hold the breath in and repeat silently ten times, "I am Grace of God." Exhale all the air out, hold the breath out and repeat silently ten times, "I am Grace of God." Continue breathing and repeating the mantra in this manner for a total of five inhalations and five exhalations. This will be a total of one hundred times that the mantra is repeated....

Grace of God Meditation

...The purposeful project of every man is to make a woman ungraceful so that he can control her. Man by nature knows that woman is more intelligent than he....Because that is know subconsciously, the reaction of that subconscious polarity is to put her down. So men will always like to charm a woman to lower values, much lower values than the woman can even handle.
(Notes 1979, 2.)

INTRODUCTION

A number of 3HO members were active in the Women's Movement prior to their 3HO involvement, and, given the time of 3HO's inception, the movement's influence was inevitably felt during 3HO's formative years. Women's issues were unavoidable and Yogi Bhaajan addressed them. He taught the "Grace of God Meditation" that opens this chapter, developed gender-based ideology, and encouraged

the formation in 1971 of the "Grace of God Movement of the Women of America." The latter was, as one informant phrased it, "more a concept than an organized movement." Participants taught their yoga students the Grace of God mantra and other special meditations and exercises for women. They also designed literature and special courses for women, all aimed at enhancing self-esteem and based on the conviction that women are embodiments of the universal Shakti energy. The movement also sponsored a candlelight procession in 1971 "past the topless and bottomless nightclubs of San Francisco," and other such protests were also sponsored in other cities (Shanti Kaur Khalsa 1979, 43).

As Shanti Shanti Kaur, who was a leader of the Grace of God movement, describes the purpose of the mantra, and by extension the movement:

The Grace of God mantra gives each woman the technology to look deep within her innermost being to heal herself, to regain the positive image of her infinite potential and to restore her rightful place in society. By practicing this meditation a woman's manner of communication, her behavior, her thoughts, her personality and her projection are aligned more and more in harmony with the infinite beauty that this mantra unveils for her. The fears, limitations and the debilitating concepts that an exploitive society has placed on her can then be lifted. (Khalsa 1979, 42).

This quotation sums up many of the 3HO teachings on women: that American women have been exploited and robbed of their ability to recognize their own nature and divinity; that American women lack self-esteem; that

because they have not recognized their own divinity, they often act and speak in "ungraceful" ways; that women need a "technology" to help them overcome past programming and align outward demeanor with internal grace.

There are obvious parallels with the early Women's Movement, particularly in the emphasis on the historical exploitation of women and on women's need to experience their own power and direct their own lives. Yogi Bajan also told 3HO women that they can reform the world and that they are morally superior to men, and these are also elements in some strands of feminist thinking. 3HO women believe that they can intuitively can know their own needs and proper niches, if only they are given the confidence, the leisure, and the meditation time to uncover these. From early on Yogi Bajan insisted that they deserve respect as women and mothers and time away from their responsibilities in order to relax and rejuvenate. All of these teachings parallel feminist premises.

There is another side to 3HO assumptions about gender, however. As with so many 3HO teachings, these are double-edged and may be used both to encourage and to chastise, and in both world-affirming and world-rejecting contexts. 3HO gender ideology is built around dualities and oppositions.

Thus, women are said to be vessels of spiritual power, but much emphasis is placed on the social and cultural

conditions that have obscured this spirituality. The spiritual essence lies buried under a burden of insecurity, distrust and culturally-induced "misbehavior." Western culture, American society, men, and even members' own families have reduced woman "from a divine mother to a whore" (Notes 1979, 119). The self must therefore be changed. It is to be purged of its burdens and its tendencies toward "dramas and traumas," toward competition and identification with men, toward dishonesty, self-abuse, and promiscuity. Yogi Bhanjan's lectures are laden with criticisms of Western women and strictures about what they may and may not do. Often the emphasis seems to be on women's failings rather than on their potential, on rules for thought and behavior rather than on feminine self-definition.

The reasons for these mixed messages are multiple, and they reflect the differing influences and motives to which Yogi Bhanjan and his followers are and have been prey. There is accommodation to the women's movement. There is probably Yogi Bhanjan's genuine distress at the low self-esteem evidenced by some counterculture women, and his distaste for the American media's use of women and sexuality for advertising purposes. He was raised on more traditional gender roles and appears to have been repelled by what may have seemed to him to be the excesses of sexual freedom, anger and independence unleashed by the

counterculture and by the Women's Movement. As a leader seeking to establish his authority and to heighten organizational identity and cohesion, it may also have been practical for him to fashion world-rejecting criticisms of members' families and culture in order to stimulate loyalty and to break members' external bonds, although this would not have been a one-way process since many members entered 3HO as critical sons and daughters and as cultural rebels. Similarly, an emphasis on members' previous programming and character weaknesses has reinforced his authority and members' willingness to seek his guidance. An emphasis on women's essentially spiritual, gentle, and non-competitive nature further discourages criticism and rebellion. Conviction, background, historical circumstances, pragmatism, and personal needs appear to meet in his teachings.

The Khalsa Women's Training Camp grew out of such mixed motives and ideologies, and, not surprisingly, there are contradictions and dualities in its expressed goals and in historical accounts of its origins. One account, for example, holds that it was the dream and project of a 3HO woman, another that it was created at Yogi Bhanjan's instigation. It has its world-rejecting and world-affirming aspects, although as a retreat it is essentially world-rejecting. The first formal session was preceded by an impromptu camp which was held following a summer

solstice celebration in 1975. By all accounts the camp schedule was very rigorous and physically demanding in the early summers. Today accommodations are more comfortable and the schedule is less demanding. Yogi BhaJan lectures daily, and an impressive variety of courses and exercise activities are offered.

This chapter includes an analysis of the beliefs about gender that are elaborated in the camp setting, as well as a description of camp life. The dualistic nature of the gender beliefs is emphasized, and they are tied to the cultural tensions discussed in the first chapter. I suggest that they may heighten or create conflicts within the individual. The chapter is based on participant observation at the 1983 camp session and on interviews conducted then, as well as on content analysis of Yogi BhaJan's camp lectures for 1976, 1979, 1981 and 1983.²² These methods are backed by historical interviews conducted with long-time 3HO members who have been actively involved in the camp.

²² The lectures are printed every year and available for sale, and I randomly chose 3 years preceding my attendance for content analysis. Another background source for BhaJan's teachings on gender is his Relax and Rejoice: A Marriage Manual (1982).

THE KHALSA WOMEN'S TRAINING CAMPPurpose of the Camp

Given its impromptu beginnings and rather inconsistent ideological sources, it is not surprising that several, not entirely consistent purposes and effects are attributed to the camp.

As stated, it was originally said to be a place where women were challenged and toughened. It was to be a setting where they could transcend their cultural and psychological limitations. There they could prepare for the social upheaval and "insanity" that Yogi Bhajan predicted for the future. They would become "like steel" so they could withstand this pressure and help to save and reform an unhealthy society:

I am very merciless because I believe if I am merciful, time will be very merciless to you. It is much better that I train you to face that time. We are on the edge of everything and will continue to have this situation. I am trying to give everybody a chance in that whatever little area of weakness there is, it will be eliminated. You must eliminate your weaknesses. That is the training of this camp. We must qualify ourselves because the time which we are going to face is going to challenge us and our values....We want to give humanity a group of people who are people of love and dignity, and divinity unto Infinity....We want to build a fundamental righteousness and we know that woman is the guardian of righteousness. That is why we have this course for women only....(Notes 1976, 195-96).

The camp was to be a place where one confronted and changed the self, an expectation that continues into the present.

While in attendance participants are expected to separate themselves from their everyday concerns, and the lectures encourage self-questioning and cast a problematic shadow on whole areas of life. Everyday life is bracketed and participants' lifestyles, marriages, and patterns of thinking are held up for examination and criticism. Participants are encouraged to uncover their own "neuroses" and the unmet needs of the "hidden child" within, to look inward while accepting the discipline and the confines of camp life. If they feel the urge to leave and escape its rigors, they are encouraged to resist the temptation. It is assumed that whatever is achieved here will apply outside of this situation; the camp is treated as a metaphor for the larger world as well as a metaphor for the inner self. Camp participants are told that the character traits they reveal and the defense mechanisms they employ at camp are basic to their personalities. The "dramas" enacted here are played elsewhere and the virtues learned here can be applied in any other situation.

At the same time, campers are told that the camp represents an opportunity to relax and unwind. Here they are not subject to domestic and occupational obligations and are free to see to their own needs:

You come here to learn, you come here to get rid of obligations, get rid of emotions, get rid of all that and be here relaxed to improve your own consciousness. (Notes 1981, 123).

Rest and self-realization are indeed motives for attendance, and many of the women talk about the pleasure of camp life. The courses offered today cover a wide range of interests, well beyond the spiritual, and there are opportunities for swimming, horse-back riding and touring.

Since the camp presented as both a rest and a challenge, a retreat and a microcosm of life, both leadership and participants have considerable latitude in their interpretations of the experience. They are free to develop explanations for their reactions and behavior based on either model. They construct their own interpretations of lectures and camp routines. But it is difficult, certainly, to entirely avoid self-examination and, particularly for those who are seeking to change and improve the self, some resocialization effects. Separated from their families and accustomed identities it becomes easier for participants to question the quality of their everyday lives and their primary ties. Ordinary modes of organizing life and protecting the self lose some of their necessary and taken-for-granted quality. In the rather child-like role of summer camper, a participant finds that childhood conflicts, memories and dependency can be reactivated.

As the everyday, situated self recedes and is held up to examination, the participant may perceive more clearly the distance between real and ideal selves. Emotional and

rational, situated and transcendent selves may be clearly separated and contrasted, public and private selves pulled apart. Many of the lectures are built around such oppositions. The cultural tensions described in chapter one are intensified and highlighted.

Camp Routine: Personal Observations, 1983

The early days of the camp session were fairly disorganized as friends and family helped with the settling-in process and children, who had not yet left for their own campsite, got underfoot. There were registration procedures and many rather irritable P.A. announcements urging people to remove their cars from the camping area and to please pay their registration fees.

Girls 7 to 14 years old had their own separate unit (jatha) within the camp, and there was a special area for the mothers of small babies, but all of the other children attended a separate, primitive camp site (where summer solstice celebrations are held) and did not see their mothers during the session. There were several explanations offered for this practice. Yogi Bhanjan teaches that American children are over-protected and badly in need of opportunities to meet and overcome challenges on their own. He argues that they should be exposed to a variety of people and situations so that they will be socially skilled and flexible as adults. He also advocates

"distance therapy" during late childhood -- separations that lead children to feel love and longing for parents, rather than resentment. He also realizes that the mothers need relief from childcare and time for personal growth and rejuvenation. All of these ideas are congruent with the counterculture preference for communal modes of child-rearing, and are thus in keeping with many of the values that participants brought to 3HO. Nonetheless, mothers worry a good bit about their children and eagerly await reports on their health and adjustment.

On the day that a rented bus took the girls off to their camp site, harried mothers finished packing an entire summer's supply of clean clothes, and the girls ran about in their warm-ups and blue dresses, their hair in little lace-covered buns. One of the mothers asked me to walk her daughter to the bus while she finished packing for her and a bright and thoughtful child took my hand and chattered away as we walked. When I asked her about the camp she looked thoughtful and said that five weeks would pass quickly, then stopped, thought further and finished, "but not at children's camp." The girls on the bus were mostly cheerful; there were few tears and much chatter. Much is expected of 3HO children, but within a known and caring community.

After the first hectic days the camp settled into a routine, although there were always comings and going since

campers often attend for only a portion of the summer. The day began slightly before 4:00 a.m. when the members of the group on wake-up duty spread out through the tents singing and strumming guitars in order to wake the sleeping campers. Soon there was the sound of tents being unzipped and feet padding along dirt paths on the way to the shower rooms. From the showers the campers proceeded to the "big top" for morning sadhana which lasted from approximately 4-6:30 a.m.; it began in the dark and ended with the dawn. Responsibility for planning the yoga portion of the sadhana and conducting the entire ritual rotated among the jathas.

Sounds from just outside the tent intermingle with my dreams and slowly take on definition: lovely soprano voices singing "wake up, wake up" and then fading a bit as they move on; tent zippers, rustling sleeping bags. Otherwise it is very still and quite dark. I go through the usual debate with myself and decide that I'd like to go to sadhana this morning and quickly pull on some clothes before I can change my mind. As I walk to the shower room I pass several women dressed in long white terrycloth bathrobes, faces pinched and puffy. No one speaks.

The same quiet holds in the shower room, with some very distinctive exceptions. Several women are taking the prescribed cold showers before sadhana and there is an occasional sharp intake of breath, or, rarely, the exclamation, "Wahe Guru" from behind the shower curtains. A long stone trough extends along one end of the building and several women are leaning over it as they brush their teeth, loudly gagging and spitting. My first reaction is real annoyance, that this is certainly not graceful, and too much to face so early in the morning. Later, in a class, I learn that this is part of the wake up routine advocated by Yogi Bhajan and that the noisy toothbrushers are

supposedly eliminating the bacteria accumulated overnight.

Having compromised by throwing some cold water on my face and brushing my teeth in my usual way I shuffle back to my tent to retrieve a mat to sit on and, since it is still quite cold at this hour, my sleeping bag to use as a blanket. Then I walk along the sandy path to the big top and, peering in the dark, find a place to settle among the anonymous shapes. A yoga set is in progress and I will my dazed body to act, registering the sighs, the controlled breathing, the sliding of sleeping bags as barely visible people exercise, and over these sounds the instructions of the leader for the day. Some women are working very hard, others more slowly; here and there someone is peacefully asleep. The pace picks up until we are doing leg lifts and the breathing is loud and labored and the leader promises "only one minute more." Then it is time to begin the meditation period and people carefully wrap themselves in blankets and sleeping bags and shawls. Many of the women in camp have Oriental or Mexican blankets, often in white with gold or royal blue embroidery, and they look almost papal in their blankets and turbans when seen up close. Those who are further away are simply shapes in the predawn light, archetypal, very still and self-contained. I drift in a warm stream of peace and contentment as I meditate and the magpie begins its morning song.
(Author's Journal 1983)

After sadhana and a brief break, exercise sessions began with a choice of jogging, walking, or "yogaerobics." The yogaerobics consisted of Kundalini yoga set to music. In place of the pop music played in health spas were the more peaceful styles favored in 3HO, so one could find white-clad Sikhs doing jumping jacks to the "Hallelujah Chorus" and leg lifts to a song entitled "You've got to serve somebody."

At eight a.m. breakfast was served to campers who arrived carrying bowls, plates, and mats and arranged

themselves in several long parallel lines under a canopy. Because service is highly valued in 3HO, a jatha was always charged with serving meals to everybody, rather than providing a buffet or self-service arrangement. Servers walked up and down the lines with offerings of cereal and fruit and milk and yogurt and bread and "yogi tea," with seconds for everybody and special portions for nursing and pregnant mothers.

Classes were offered from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. and again from 10:30 - 12:00. The variety of topics was impressive. Courses under the heading of "dharmic education" included "Beginning Gurmukhi" (the language of the Guru Grant Sahib), "Conversational Punjabi," "The Life and Writings of Guru Gobind Singh," "Intermediate Gurbani Kirtan" (instruction in playing hymns on the harmonium), and "Study of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib." Arts classes included calligraphy, folk dance, classical dance of India, drawing and photography. "Health and Healing" classes included ayurvedic medicine, homeopathy, CPR, and the use of a new line of natural beauty products recently introduced by 3HO. Under the heading of "Humanology" were such courses as "Yoga and the Spiritual Woman" ("a six-week course outlining specific aspects of the Siri Singh Sahib's teachings for women..."), "Marriage and Family Counseling" (taught by Yogi Bhajan's wife, "Bibiji" Inderjit Kaur), and "How to Serve the Siri Singh Sahib" ("the etiquette and the

details of how to serve the Siri Singh Sahib and his guests"). Other classes were in budgeting, "Prosperity Consciousness," public speaking, badminton and horseback riding. New participants were often troubled to discover a course in "Personal Protection" (featuring "defensive pistol shooting") or to see the occasional line of women enrolled in a course in close-order drill. Given the Sikh military tradition, the incorporation of military drill is perhaps not so surprising. While Yogi Bhajan is known to have emphasized the defensive nature of weapons use, arguing that members of a minority religious group, and women, should be able to defend themselves, SHO did go through a period of survivalism. Bhajan has told his adherents that, in the "hard times" he predicts for the future, it may be necessary for them to take refuge at the nearby solstice site.

Morning classes were followed by lunch and another class period from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. From 3:00 to 4:30 was "siesta time," an opportunity to rest, write home, attend to course homework, or iron clothes in preparation for the afternoon lecture. The time between 4:30 and approximately 6:00 p.m. was set aside for meditation and Yogi Bhajan's daily lecture. Lectures varied in length and might begin anywhere between 4:30 and 5:30. Yogi Bhajan addressed the entire assembled camp from a dais under the canopy. He was supplied with oriental rugs and cushions, a fan, and a

drink, and sat cross-legged under a picture of one of the Sikh gurus. He often wore very colorful outfits -- an orange turban and a multi-colored shirt for example -- and provided a contrast to the camp members dressed all in white.

The lecture format clearly reinforced his leadership position. He arrived in an expensive car accompanied by high-ranking 3HO officials and members of the 3HO security force. Members of the audience stood until he was seated on the stage and all were attentive, many taking notes or recording the lectures as though this were a college course. Before a lecture began the audience was led in chants to "set the vibrations" for him. Much was made of his electromagnetic field and his sensitivity; thus all wore white because this color is said not to disturb it. He became very angry one day when the PA system would not work and later justified his anger by saying that the malfunction disturbed this field. His followers believe that it is healing just to be near him and to be in his vibrational field and exposed to the sounds of his voice, so there is value simply in being present at the lectures.

Time after the lecture and dinner was free, unless one had chores to do or a meeting to attend, and bedtime was early, although there was a certain amount of coming and going and whispering fairly late into the night. Weekends were also free, with optional planned trips to places such

as Taos or a local lake or a pottery exhibit in Santa Fe, and on Fridays there were jatha meetings rather than classes and a special bus into Espanola for laundry and banking.

Accounting

Norms and ideals that are introduced by the leader and other significant figures are subject to individual interpretation and adaptation. Each individual brings her own perspective, priorities and needs to the camp. Some participants say that they attend primarily for a break from routine and an opportunity to see friends from other parts of the country. Others say they come to gain particular skills -- to learn the language of the Sikh scriptures or alternative medical techniques, for example. Still others are actively "working on" themselves, seeking personal growth and self change. Some expect emotional release and healing to occur in Yogi BhaJan's presence. The women bring varying degrees of dedication, insight, interest, need and suggestibility to bear on Yogi BhaJan's teachings. Some regard his lectures as the centerpiece of the camp experience, while others do not. Many are quite concerned with gender issues, but these are peripheral for others.

Many say that Yogi BhaJan seems to read their minds and describe their circumstances, and often they decipher a

personal message in a general lecture. In fact, his hearers often assimilate only those teachings that they find personally relevant and neglect the others. A few cheerfully admit to not understanding many of the things Bhajan says, but assume that the content of the lectures is less important than being in Yogi Bhajan's healing and transforming presence. Participants assume that the camp experience will have long-term and often unexpected effects and that they should -- so far as they can -- hand themselves over to these. Together they try to interpret the meaning of lectures, of Yogi Bhajan's behavior, of his response to their questions and their own responses to the highly-charged camp atmosphere.

As a participant I was soon engaged in the same activities. I observed my own responses, registered for the classes I found appealing, spent a considerable amount of time discussing Yogi Bhajan's behavior and attitudes with my new friends, and struggled to find an acceptable adaptation to camp life -- particularly to the absence of privacy and control over my movements.

I was fascinated by Yogi Bhajan's personality and tried to come to an acceptable account of his motivation in conducting the camp, propounding his gender ideology, and conveying contradictory moods and messages. I responded as observer, feminist, and individual. I was often angered, sometimes amused or moved. I was particularly troubled

when he shouted at people and made examples of them, or seemed to meander through a lecture without purpose or direction. Trust was the underlying issue: was this a case of women being exploited for one man's ends? In Yogi Bhaajan's own words:

Trust is the most fundamental thing that a woman needs all around her in her life. She should be trustworthy and trustable. She must show trustful loyalty, projection, participation and manners. Trust is the key to life. If you blow the trust, you blow the life. (Notes 1981, 45).

His emphasis is on the woman proving herself trustworthy; mine was on the man.

I was also stunned by the almost total absence of critical analysis. Nothing Yogi Bhaajan said was judged by ordinary standards of logic or evidence. As a spiritual teacher it was assumed that he had to have a purpose to everything he said, and he could only speak truth. Thus inconsistencies, temper tantrums, or exaggerations must be purposeful and informed. The only woman who publicly criticized any of his positions was scorned.

The following description of camp life as I experienced it looks more closely at my accounting processes and it should convey something of the tone and routine of the days and provide a context for the teachings on gender. I focus on several scenes and events that were central in my efforts to make sense of the experience, scenes that illuminate significant aspects of the 3HO gender beliefs and lifestyle.

Confinement, Anger and Distrust

My early impression, just as I began to fear on the plane, was of confinement. The orientation pamphlet confirmed restrictions on movement:

Every woman at KWTC should strive to maintain a strong and graceful vibration at all times when leaving camp. Please sign out at the gate so that in the event of an emergency we will be able to contact you....Never, never go anywhere alone. This is for your safety, respect, and the security of the entire camp.... (Khalsa Women's Training Camp 1983, flyer)

My first assigned chore ("kharma yoga") was security duty, which required that two of us divide the night into shifts and stay awake in case of any unusual outside activity, in which event we were to call the ashram security force. This, combined with the immobility imposed by being without any form of transportation contributed to a feeling of being almost imprisoned and even sometimes of being surrounded by a hostile world. In this state I was inclined to be critical. In fact, I felt not only confined but angry. Many small things bothered me: that my ride from Santa Fe to the camp materialized 24 hours late, that Sikh modesty seemed to require the wearing of slacks rather than shorts in 100° weather, that I was not only expected to pay to attend the camp but was also expected to do "karma yoga," that the prices in the health food store (the only accessible store unless one had a car) were excessive, and that Yogi Bhanjan arrived late for lectures in expensive cars. More seriously, I was angry at what seemed to be

obvious exaggerations in his lectures and at the way the women dressed like brides and allowed a man to tell them how to go about being a woman. I also felt that Yogi Bhajan was using the women to establish his leadership position and impose his belief system, having decided that the women were the more malleable 3HO members. My notes convey my annoyance:

We wait for the lecture. Yogi Bhajan is late and we are being asked to fill the time with chanting. Some people are chanting, swaying with their eyes closed, but many others are quietly chatting, writing letters or meditating. I am hot and tired and rapidly getting annoyed. My back hurts from all the unsupported sitting we do here. The wood chips that cover the ground under the "big top" are rough and keep sticking to me. I have already finished most of the water in the bottle that I, like everyone else, carry everywhere because the constant dry heat produces a constant dry thirst. I resent being kept sitting here in the heat while Yogi Bhajan presumably reposes in comfort in his ranch house. I am convinced that this is an intentional delay, an instructional technique, and I resent it. What kinds of needs does this man have that he must be surrounded by women dressed like brides? How can he call himself their teacher and treat them so shabbily, leaving them to camp in this crowded space, paying for the privilege of waiting, being insulted, and doing camp chores?

I am aware that being kept waiting like this may be a method of breaking down the ego, and I know that I could study my own anger and realize what an egotistic thing it is to resent this brief wait with so much venom. And I am quite willing to admit that this must be an indication that I take myself and my time too seriously and, further, that I have become accustomed to constant activity and may need to slow down. But. Why doesn't he, as a spiritual leader, model kindness and consideration rather than exhibiting this kind of high-handedness? How can someone who honestly believes that women in the U.S. have been abused and ignored justify asking them to iron their clothes, bedeck themselves, and wait for him like this?

I am having what Yogi Bhanjan would call a tantrum (although it is a silent one, and perhaps silent tantrums don't count). He is very critical of American women for being so inclined to blow up and to carry on. "Have we no grace?" he asks, and probably with some reason. But what I want to know, what keeps troubling me, is the question, "Is it possible for a woman to be graceful without being taken advantage of?" (Author's Journal, July 1983)

I was also troubled by what appeared to be instances of class bias and limitations placed on 3HO women's aspirations. The insistence that women should avoid "insecure" and "ungraceful" situations often seemed to be based on class loyalties. Thus at one of the meetings of the 1983 "Yoga and Spiritual Woman" course, the teacher said that women should avoid jobs that expose them to "penetrating stress," particularly jobs that make heavy physical demands or might make them feel that their womanhood was not respected. The teacher made it clear that many blue collar occupations were not suitable and spoke almost disdainfully of women who are employed in construction work. Some class members (many of whom were new to 3HO) argued that a woman on her own, possibly with children to support, was certainly justified in seeking a union job. The teacher's position was that a woman "shouldn't have to." A husband should protect her from this necessity or she should have the protection of a group like 3HO rather than struggling alone in an "ungraceful" environment. Discussion soon floundered in "should be's" and "really is's." After class, one participant confided

that her father was a construction worker and had raised his daughters with love and gentleness and that she had been bothered by the implied stereotype of manual workers.

I often felt that women's self-confidence was being undermined by all of the criticisms leveled at the women listeners, and by what appeared to be Yogi Bhañan's capacity to locate and exploit individuals' weak points. A non-Sikh friend, for example, visited one of the alternative medical practitioners about a case of eczema. Later, she received a call from Yogi Bhañan, a special and most unusual event according to long-time camp participants. He asked about her rash and jumped from that to asking, "What's the problem -- what's worrying you?" Evidently the rash was being treated as a symptom of a larger problem. The woman responded in kind, blurting out that she was in a type of relationship that he had described unfavorably in the previous day's lecture. He told her not to worry, that it would be all right, but that he also thought she was "freaking out in ladies' camp." She asked what she should do, and he said "Remove yourself from the problem."

She was unsure of how to interpret that statement and discussed it with Sikh friends, who told her to meditate on it and its meaning would become clear. She said that she "felt her heart chakra opening" while she spoke with him,

that she felt she was the object of his love and concern, and that she returned to her tent and cried and cried.

When she spoke about it to me and to another woman we both told her that, whatever else might be true, she certainly did not appear to be "freaking out." In fact she was cheerful, lively, and poised. I suspected that ordinary, if troubling, issues in that relationship were being assigned more significance than they deserved, and that she was proving highly suggestible, accepting the notion that she was rather unstable and in need of help when she really just needed some time to mull over things. She was allowing herself to be convinced that Yogi BhaJan understood her mind and her emotions better than she.

Attractions and Understanding

In spite of my anger and my distrust of Yogi BhaJan and some of his teachings, I did find elements of camp life attractive, even compelling. Morning sadhana and gurdwara was often beautiful, with many lovely voices chanting in the pre-dawn quiet. Lectures sometimes touched a sensitive nerve or stimulated insights. Daily yoga classes were a high point because of the physical challenge involved and the good humor with which they were conducted. Group chores -- such as preparing paratha for 300 people, or serving them a meal -- were surprisingly enjoyable. I attended an excellent series of classes on counseling

techniques. I began to understand the purposes of the camp.

One of the first steps toward this understanding was a conversation with a young Buddhist woman who had met Yogi Bhanjan the previous Spring, when he asked her to teach her specialty at the camp. She was not happy at the camp and had just told him that she wanted to leave before the end of the summer. His response was to tell her that she always tried to solve her problems by running from them and that she should stay and break that pattern. She had reluctantly decided that he was right, and in very resigned tones told us that she was going to stay and that she had cancelled the arrangements she had made to leave. She had been crying. It slowly became clear that Yogi Bhanjan wanted attendees to interpret the camp as a mirror for the self, to view it as a place where one confronted bad habits and cleared them away. In fact, I later discovered that Yogi Bhanjan made this point explicitly:

This camp represents nothing but the behavior in which you relate to your consciousness, and we are asking you to learn how to survive. It is part of the training that we have arranged security so that you can become self-disciplined, self-responsible and self-conscious. (Notes 1981, 122).

In some lectures Yogi Bhanjan criticizes campers for leaving the camp, saying that staying within its confines is an achievement in itself, an exercise in self-

discipline. He refers to the camp as a "pressure cooker" and to growth as the product of life's pressures:

The pressure of your identity, pressure to maintain identity...is tremendous. In the animal kingdom you save your identity from this pressure by fighting. And in the human kingdom you save yourself from this pressure in one of two ways: either by deteriorating or by growing. There's no possibility that you can be just you....A person who is pressurized and he takes the pressure to crystallize himself or herself, grows -- grows in self-faith, grows in self-confidence, grows in self-endurance, grows in self-grace, grows in self-knowledge. (Notes 1979, 225).

As in many of the Eastern esoteric systems, freedom is equated with the capacity to neutralize pain and fear, and pressure is applied in order to force and hasten that process.

It took me some time to understand this purpose of the camp, to realize that it was intended to destroy ego and enhance will and loyalty to the organization. So many of the women kept talking about camp as a "wonderful experience" and repeating how special it was to have such a gathering just for women that it was difficult to realize that it was not necessarily meant to be enjoyed in the conventional sense of the word. Many women clearly did have fun but for many others the camp was a painful matter of self confrontation or struggles to obey Yogi Bhaajan's instructions.

Breaking Through: Yoga classes

If the camp facilitated confrontation with the self's limitations, it also provided ritual experiences of breaking through these limitations, or of purging and healing them. Early in the camp session Yogi Bhajan decided to offer a daily yoga class. These classes were approached in a cheerful and enthusiastic spirit far different from the more subdued atmosphere of the afternoon lectures. Participants arrived early to claim a good location and came casually dressed for a good workout. There was always a buzzing and tangible excitement; no matter how physically painful the class might prove, it was considered a treat.

Yogi Bhajan also approached the class with enthusiasm and seemed to enjoy himself throughout. He often teased participants, accusing them, for example, of becoming fat and lazy, or he would pretend that an exercise had only been in progress for a few seconds when in fact long, exhausting minutes had passed. On one occasion he told all of his older students that they were hopeless and asked the young girls' jatha to come up on stage and show their mothers how to do it right. Participants would sometimes moan and groan and there was much laughter. But when it was time to work, everyone did. The yoga classes provided a unified and exhilarating group experience, a shared experience of "breaking through" physical and psychological

limitations. They also allowed Yogi Bhanjan to present himself in his friendlier and more approachable persona, although this was mixed with criticisms of the audience. An account of one yoga class should convey the mood and style.

On some days the yoga sets began immediately with no preface or discussion but on this particular day Yogi Bhanjan was feeling talkative. He skipped from subject to subject: the reasons for doing the Kundalini "breath-of-fire," the diet he was on, the dangers of a high blood-sugar content, the new line of beauty products some 3HO members are marketing, the dangers of using commercial deodorants, hydrotherapy. Then suddenly the tone shifted to a sermonizing and critical one:

Nobody can relate to your shit. You create it; you suffer with it. And you have to clean it. If you think somebody from outside will come and take care of you and clean after you, you are very sickly sick and you better wake up....I run around America, Europe, all Western countries. There is only one simple problem: you feel good when somebody cleans after you, and this is against nature. (Personal tape, 1983)

Audience members were told to clean up their emotional messes and to stop letting the past rule the present:

...you say, "My mother did it. My father did it. My uncle did it. I got laid....I have a sick brother. I have a sick uncle." Fine. You have everything super sick. You are a Jewish princess. Totally raped. You ruled over men. You did everything nasty. You stole, you shoplifted, you cheated, you lied. Great. Stop it now. Now you are you. Now you control the environments; environments do not control you....

His mood had shifted from casual and gossipy to critical and demanding and then, suddenly, it shifted again and became more upbeat, and he immediately began the yoga sets:

Do breath of fire. It is totally working on your magnetic psyche....It can hurt a lot. Do it honestly. Do it properly. Keep going. Hands out like wings getting the wind...head will hurt, lot of pains, migraine headache, everything can happen. Not like this (playful voice as he imitates somebody; laughter). That's ridiculous. I am sick of your aspirin and your migraine headaches and all that. I am giving you something which will correct the electromagnetic frequency of the head in which both hemispheres work.

Tough fingers. Tough fingers: like claws....Hurry up. Hurry up. You are missing the train. Just get through this exercise. Come on. Come on. You are invincible woman -- what's wrong? GO GO GO GO GO GO. Experience a natural organic high. Good. That's good....Breathe, breathe the breath-of-fire. Still you have to go for three more minutes. (Moans and "ohs" of disbelief.) Come on, come on; make up your mind. Now it is mind against body....Get wild; get wild: get the anger out now. (Someone roars -- laughter) Get the anger out (laughter). You can really be lionesses -- last 3 minutes. Come on, come on, come on....Now finish it. Good....Now or never....Last minute. Roar to do it. (Roars, cacophony)...Inhale deep. Now hold it. Very difficult to hold the breath; I understand. Exhale (loud). Inhale again. Hold it. Tighten it. I know you want to breathe fast, you're tired and everything.....Exhale. Inhale again. Come with me; I will take you where there's nothing but health, beauty, joy and happiness. It is the domain of the wisdom of God. Come. Come. Come. Relax (loud, exhausted exhales). OK. Good. See how happy we are done. (Personal tape, 1983)

The class dramatizes Yogi Bhajan's style of presentation. There are frequent shifts of tone and tempo; he alternates between chatter and instruction, friendly and critical tones. He teases, he encourages; he is both

sympathetic and demanding. There are clear sexual overtones in the structure of the event and in his language, and he shifts in tone from friend, to critic, to teacher, to father, to lover.

The class also dramatizes the 3HO approach to self-change and transcendence. Members may be "very sickly sick" but it is assumed that the self can be "totally changed" given the right techniques, and that this is desirable. Participants are pressed to persevere beyond their mental and physical limitations and to do so as members of an organized and struggling group. They are asked to move from the (generally undesirable) past and the mundane into the future and another realm of being. They do it with considerable zest and humor, but obediently, and often painfully, as students.

Leisure

Not that there is no time-out for fun and entertainment in the process of self-change. In fact, one of my most vivid memories of the camp is of one of the leisure activities. At one of the yoga classes Yogi Bhajan suddenly decided to take us to a movie. His choice was "War Games," which I assume was chosen because he was trying to encourage anti-nuclear activism in the 3HO community. (He was not having much success. A meeting called on the subject brought only 2 participants, beside

myself.) That evening about 50 of us gathered at the camp entrance and piled into the camp van and several personal cars. After we got into the van there was a pause while everyone chanted; when asked the purpose of the chant the Sikhs replied that it was a chant Yogi Bhajan had given them to "change the space-time continuum" and thus protect against possible auto accidents.

The organizer told us that she had called the theater earlier in hopes of reserving seats but was told that this could not be done and that the tone was none too enthusiastic. So, she said, with eyes flashing, clearly enjoying herself as she planned to storm the theater, "I need someone to buy fifty tickets, someone to hand them out, someone to order the popcorn, and two ladies to hurry in and save seats." There was clearly a holiday mood and pleasure in being a majority where one is normally at a disadvantage, even something like the feeling of attending a well-organized demonstration where there is little risk but one knows there may be some hecklers and troublemakers in the area.

In fact, all went very smoothly at the theater. Tickets were purchased. The two young people working at the concession stand were delighted with an order for fifty popcorns and laughed as they produced them. One of the seat reservers managed to get hold of a roll of toilet paper and draped it around a block of seats, thereby

reserving them in style. Yogi Bhajan, some Indian Sikh friends, and a member of the Sikh security force sat in the back row. He talked with his friends, but few of our party went back to talk with him. One of the older Sikh women moved from row to row, greeting people and joking to turbaned friends, "Would you mind removing your hat, please?", "Could you tell me why you're all dressed in white, please; are you a nun?"

YOGI BHAJAN'S LECTURES: CONTENT ANALYSIS

Lecture Themes

The lectures had a ritualistic and dramatic quality which heightened their effect and underlined their message. The lecture was the centerpiece of each day, a time apart. Everyone in the camp dressed specially for it, often putting on her best white dress and chuni. It was a period of relative formality, immobility, silence and passivity in the midst of a very active day.

The following analysis draws on Yogi Bhajan's lectures at the 1983 camp session and on the lectures transcribed in the 1976, 1979 and 1981 Notes. The teachings regarding gender as they are presented in the lectures cluster around several themes: (1) "Security," grace and service; (2) "Projection"; (3) Control over one's "environments"; (4) Discipline; and (5) Relationships between men and women. Often these terms are defined by their opposites, and in

the process both world-affirming and world-rejecting messages are conveyed. Thus security and grace are contrasted with "neurotic," exploitive, unpleasant, and even degrading behavior or self-presentation. Service is contrasted to egotism. Exerting the will and practicing self-discipline and neutrality is contrasted to behaving in culturally-programmed, dependent and overly emotional ("emotional-commotional") ways. Controlling one's "environment" is contrasted with being "reactive."

These opposing concepts can be used either to encourage and exalt, or to deride and exhort. If the women are told that they are the highest of beings, they are also criticized for their willingness to ignore and deny their spiritual identities. A woman is said to have the capacity to be "...very, very compassionate, absolutely sober and very firm...her stamina is sixteen times greater than the man's, she is thirty-two times more firm in her ideas, and sixty-four times more intuitive...." (Notes 1979, 157). But often, Bhajan says, she is "rude, crude and insecure." She is capable of poise, strength and self-fulfillment. She could be a graceful woman, "congenial, social, and domestic," but too often she is self-abusive, "whining," and competitive. Natal families and cultural programming are blamed for the undesirable traits: "Women in America are the byproduct of unfriendly environments and women in

America are produced like a crop -- insecure and to be exploited." (Notes 1981, 15).

Security, grace and service

One of the stated goals of 3HO is to replace the trials and sufferings that are attributed to members' early lives with a new sense of security and with the comforts of domesticity and a "cozy home." The American environment, says Yogi Bhanjan, creates the one condition that women cannot transcend: "In the total life of a woman there is one word; if that does not exist, you exist. You will only fight, you will only destroy yourself, you will only destroy the relationship when you are insecure." (Notes 1981, 24). Culturally induced insecurity is said to be at the root of most of the problems that women face.

Security is a term that is more often employed than defined in the lectures, but it is possible to gain a general sense of its meanings and uses. It implies self-esteem based on a woman's knowledge of her own divinity and spiritual powers, and on her awareness that she is different in nature from men and hence does not need to compete with or imitate them. In more practical terms it means that a woman is assured of support if she has children, and need only take jobs in which she receives a reasonable level of respect from male co-workers. It excludes exposure to destructive levels of competition,

insensitivity, stress, or physical strain or to too much "ungraceful" language. It implies that she should not be "narrowed" by over-investment in occupational norms and competition or by masculine single-mindedness since she is said to have a broader spectrum of awareness and higher sources of self-definition. The term also implies trusting, caring, and respectful sexual relationships:

You must not exploit, or live on any kind of exploitation, and you must not live on any situation where you have to attempt to attain security. You must not enter into any kind of physical, mental, social or domestic relationship until you have security and a guarantee that in every facet of your life, your reproductive faculty and your delicacy is protected. (Notes 1976, 42).

Women are said to become insecure when they are not raised in caring, "cozy" homes, when they are forced to, or choose to, compete with men, or when they take the surface of things for their reality and become enmeshed in maya. Then a woman becomes unpleasant and neurotic: "...woman is not neurotic. The only way to make her behave neurotically is to make her insecure." (Notes 1979, 157). Then she may become competitive, nagging, confrontational and self-destructive:

The worst projection in life occurs when you reject yourself and project that rejection. You totally deny yourself, your own grace, and then you project the garbage which is a non-reality. Why do you do it? Because you did not get the proper family love and security. (Notes 1981, 44).

Insecurity leads a woman into "dramas and traumas" and can

also blur appropriate gender roles, and this in turn will lead to even greater insecurity:

Whenever you use male language or male technique you are absolutely a failure as a woman. Absolutely. You have no grounds, you won't make it. You may succeed for a while, but you will be nowhere. What has gone wrong in America is that the American woman has become a male. She has been asked to use the technology of the male, and she uses it very overwhelmingly....Pusher, rapper, trapper; all these are men's qualities, they are not your features.

Such traits must be countered by the qualities of the graceful woman:

You are supposed to be simple, graceful, mellow, sweet, charming, firm, truthful, straightforward and serviceful.... (Notes 1979, 157).

Grace implies honesty, commitment, and service:

Grace means when you worship a man of truth or a situation of truth. Any identity, space and time where truth is served is called grace. (Notes 1981, 97).

Grace also embraces serenity, poise, emotional control, and "equilibrium." The graceful woman does not fight, shout or allow herself to become entangled in emotional quagmires. She is calm and dignified and certain of her own worth.

A woman is said to have several routes to liberation: she can become a woman of God, she can serve a man of God, she can give birth to a man of God, or she can marry and serve a godly husband. A man, on the other hand, has only the one route to follow: he must become a man of God. A wife is expected to bolster her husbands' ego and anticipate his needs. She should serve, but with dignity,

realizing that she is serving the guru in her mate, not his every whim. A wife should uplift a husband and create a secure and loving home. Similarly, a follower should support and aid a spiritual leader, surrounding him with peace, comfort and respect.

Bhajan teaches that grace and security are, ultimately, spiritual goods. A cozy home, children, or professional training may provide an environment in which spiritual growth can occur, but

Your security lies in your spiritual realm, in your spiritual consciousness "I am, I am, I am the Grace of God." A woman's solution comes from within.
(Notes 1981, 24).

A woman is always a woman and a spiritual being first, and only secondarily the occupant of specific roles. If a woman can tap the guru within then she can be complete in herself. Men must center their lives around women; only a woman can "complete her own circle." To do so, however, she must learn the "technology" that allows her to remain centered, to "know who she is," to act upon her insights, and to imprint her spiritual nature on her surroundings. To do so she must perform a regular sadhana, meditate, improve her skills at communication and self-presentation, enhance her will and her ability to assess situations neutrally, and serve her family and her spiritual teacher.

However spiritual the sources of grace, and however much women are affirmed or idealized in the lectures, grace is a very practical virtue from a male leader's point of

view. Graceful women are likely to serve rather than challenge a leader, and they are not likely to rebel against the group's norms. In fact, grace and security are not only held up as ideals, they are also sanctioned by thinly-veiled threats:

Ladies who are very good at laying tantrums, and obnoxious in their behaviors and have unpredictable public and social behavior get cysts in their fallopian tubes and ovaries. (Notes 1976, 39).

Your behavior as a woman has to be congenial, social, and domestic....Anytime you are crude, rude or insecure, you affect your reproductive organs and you totally imbalance the secretion of the glandular system, especially estrogen....when her reproductive organs are put to a tremendous strain, because she has to struggle for survival, defend herself at every moment, as a child she has to lie to save herself from spanking, she is not given a chance to rise or be promoted in life, she will develop abnormal condition in her reproductive organs. A woman requires a graceful protected atmosphere in which to mature. (Notes 1976, 40).

When a man leans on you and you don't give him support, you can go to hell, he doesn't care. That is when you tell him to find it from somebody else; it is you who teach the man to cheat, it is you who teach the man to lie, it is you who sends the man to another woman.... (Notes 1979, 217).

Projection

This term refers to the individual's self-presentation and covers behavior, clothing, associates, and choice of words and tone. Projection is a technique for changing the self since Yogi Bhanjan teaches that by projecting an ideal self one can become that self:

It is very wonderful to let you understand that you are what you project. You are not what you are. You are what you project.... (Notes 1981, 36).

His less philosophical maxim, "Fake it, you'll make it," is much quoted and sums up much of the pragmatic 3HO emphasis on style and communication.

Clothing, or bana, becomes a way of presenting the self as modest, pure and spiritual. Bana can refer in the broadest sense to an individual's uniform or style of clothing, but in 3HO it is generally used to refer to the groups' style of clothing: all white, with turban and chudidars (legging-like piece of clothing worn under a shirt or dress). The white clothing is intended to remind the individual throughout the day that she is committed to purity and to the inner guru, and to tell members of the public that this is somebody who will help in times of distress.

There are a variety of folk beliefs associated with the turban and the wearing of bana. Yogi Bhanjan teaches that the turban protects the pineal gland, which in turn affects access to the higher self. Many members told me that they felt more "centered" when wearing a turban. One woman, for example, described her first experience with it as making her feel almost immediately "less scattered, more meditative and calm." She began by wearing it only one day a week, and then slowly built up to wearing it regularly. Later she progressed to wearing the chuni which, she said,

made her feel more "feminine, graceful and protected." This informant, and several others, mentioned a growing "sensitivity" to moods and atmospheres as they became involved in yoga and meditation which they felt could be somewhat counteracted by wearing bana. One informant mentioned that she can no longer wear dark clothing without losing her sense of expansion and clarity.

Similarly, language is considered a significant tool for changing the self, expressing its divinity, and bringing out the best in others. Yogi Bhajan is the author of a dissertation entitled Communication: Liberation or Condemnation. The central thesis is that Eastern perspectives on communication can be usefully combined with Western research, and that communication style is a basic source of both misery and uplift:

The power of the word is indeed the power of the divine. By lack of understanding the essence of interpersonal communication, we humans do abuse ourselves, others, and God. We were not created to suffer in this world. Our suffering is self-imposed through our own ignorance and self-abusing language. Yet, what is the purpose of life if it is not to praise the Creator through His creatures in creation....(Harbhajan Singh Khalsa 1980, 67).

Communication, he argues, should always be carefully considered and should serve positive purposes: imparting information, raising consciousness, spreading happiness and love; "we must be able to see how our words affect the whole of creation." (29). 3HO women are exhorted to practice "comparative, comprehensive communication" as a

way to project and spread their spirituality and as a way to protect themselves from "ungraceful" encounters and situations. Women are told that they should not speak on the spur of the moment, or in anger; they should not "whine" and complain. Speech should be calm and thoughtful and should never be intended "to force a person to agree, accept or reject what you're saying" (Author's course notes, "Spiritual Woman" course at 1983 camp session). It should always be directed towards the best in each of the communicators. All communications, in short, should be considered, considerate, adapted to the hearer and the circumstances, and should remind the hearer of higher things. Further, a woman should avoid ungraceful communications from others.

Some basic rules set out at women's camp are:

1. entertain no rude words;
2. entertain no words which do not have as their objective to sponsor you as a woman;
3. answer no coarse communicative dialogue;
4. avoid gross language; we call it truck drivers' language, it's the privilege of men, not you;
5. communicate with absolute manners;
6. receive communication with absolute manners;
7. use graceful words and graceful tones in you communication; and
8. when the communication is not graceful, leave. (Notes 1979, 19).

Projection has its negative side also. Unsuitable clothing and language and poor choice of associates, occupations and environments project a negative image and may cause trouble and suffering. A woman must constantly strive to convey an image of grace, purity and dignity in

order to protect herself. One of the worst possible results of ungraceful behavior is rape or degradation. Bhajan's lectures and stories frequently focus on the threat of rape and the promiscuity of Americans. Listeners are warned to avoid dangerous situations and follow orders, or they will pay the price, particularly in as materialistic and promiscuous a society as America.

The lectures were peppered with a disturbing number of tales of rape, abuse, and sexual excess:

I was not going to send them into a dangerous situation. They started whining, like hot bitches when people go near their puppies. It is so sickening. How was I going to deal with these people?...Finally I said, "I am not going to allow these girls to go on this trail. Period. I'll cancel it." There was one girl who was crying, "yeeeeeyeh yeh yeh." She looked ferocious. I asked her, "Have you hiked these Pecos trails?" She said, "Yes." I said, "How many times were you raped?" She said, "Twice." (Notes 1979, 121).

I remember that unfortunate day when there was a phone call and I went to the hospital. What happened was that some guys followed her all the way to her apartment. At night they broke into the apartment and physically molested her. It was an unbearable scene. They not only raped her, they injured her also. And then they shaved her hair, they shaved her head. (Notes 1981, 127).

One woman said, "Yogiji, I understand your teaching. I read it. But you know, I have two cars." Now this is how she talked to me, "I have two cars. Normally I drive my Mercedes, but once in a while I like to drive my Jaguar." I said, "This means you want to have a husband and a boyfriend." She said, "You got me right." I said, "Very well. And now where is the problem?" And she said, "My boyfriend's wife has found out about the list, and has made the other wives and girlfriends call me and they all confronted me about the relationships." I asked, "How many were there?" "Eighty-two." (Notes 1979, 32).

These stories may be created for instructional purposes, or it may well be that 3HO women have been attacked and Yogi Bhajan fears for their safety and takes his responsibilities seriously. But some of the stories verge on the ridiculous and it is difficult to read them without questioning his attitude towards sexuality or suspecting that these are intended as scare stories to keep the women in camp and well within 3HO norms.

Controlling One's Environment

One of the goals of projection is increased control over circumstances. Because women have been exploited and have often lived programmed and "reactive" lives, it is necessary that they learn to shape or "mold" their circumstances. Fortunately, this is a woman's special power:

Mental degradation is at the highest point in the American woman today because she has not discovered one thing very essential to her: the power to mold her environment and circumstances. It exists only in woman, not in man, just as she can mold a spermatozoa into a human being. (Notes 1981, 13).

This capacity is said to be tied to a woman's qualities as a mother, to her extraordinary creative and intuitive capacities. In this arena she is said to be far superior to her male counterpart. Rather than responding to others' plans, emotions, and expectations she can create her own reality and direct her own course. Whatever the obstacles, she has the capacity to reshape them to meet her own

requirements: "The basic quality of every woman is that she can change every negative thing around her to be positive." (Notes 1979, 211).

Again, however, the teachings are contradictory. Settings defined as ungraceful are off-limits to women and hence cannot be transformed. The capacity to alter environments seems to be easily lost since a woman is likely to be overwhelmed by insecurity and by male "negativity." This creative capacity is fragile and the implication is that it requires an environment like 3HO in order to survive.

Discipline and Character

Bhajan often describes 3HO much as an anthropologist would describe a revitalization movement. He tends to depict the counterculture as a trial by fire that paved the way for the birth of 3HO and the spiritual salvation of the nation. 3HO members are to strengthen themselves in order to save others from the degradation and deprivation they experienced. They are to prepare for hard times and become beacons of light in a world of darkness. The significance of 3HO and of members' biographies is thus enhanced and dramatized. The following quotation catches the tone:

It is the dawn of the Age of Aquarius; it is a new nation being born. And this nation is not without its sacrifices. Twenty million Americans and Europeans and young people went astray from the bureaucratic path. They paid a tremendous sacrifice in deaths and overdoses that this new

nation might be born. It is not a small situation, don't misunderstand, please....Out of those twenty million people came one thing only, and that's 3HO, which is positive and alive. Out of the Woodstock Nation we became the Steel Nation. (Notes 1979, 167).

He speaks of the "monster neuroses of mentally sick parents" (Notes 1976, 310) and the failings of Western society that must be redeemed and corrected. He teaches that this must begin with the individual efforts of 3HO members. Each member must exercise her will in an effort at self-transformation and character building and "Character is always built on one thing, that weakness must be substituted by strength." (Notes 1976, 196). 3HO members must train themselves so that they can transcend their socialization and help others to find sanity and stability in an unhealthy society. Women, particularly, must strengthen and purify themselves because they are the more exploited, but also the more resourceful and spiritual, sex. They must overcome past exploitation and provide inspiration and strength of purpose for their men. To do this, a woman must learn to direct and control her emotions and her thought processes. This means cultivating the will and pushing herself beyond what she conceives of as her mental and emotional limits.

The mind is said to have three aspects: positive, negative and neutral. The positive mind sees the good things and the potential in life and lifts the individual beyond ego. The negative mind is self-protective and

perceives the world's dangers and the individual's self-interest. The neutral mind is disinterested and draws from both the positive and the negative aspects in order to evaluate situations and seek solutions. Meditation is said to strengthen the neutral mind so that the meditator is less and less at the mercy of her thoughts and fears. She can observe her mind thinking and eliminate its negative thoughts by viewing them with detachment and "slashing through" them with mantra and sound current.

In the camp setting, she must also confront repetitive behavior patterns. All of the usual distractions and escape routes are unavailable so that she must turn inwards and cultivate the neutral mind and the meditative state. She should not take a break because she needs a change of scene or a rest, or leave if she is unhappy or lonely there. She should attempt to go beyond these feelings and find inner resources and a neutral perspective.

Thus, Yogi Bhanjan tells a story about one of his staff members, who was overworked and exhausted and asked for a day off in Los Angeles. He refused her request. Later she came to him to ask why he had done this when she felt she had been sensible and had realized that she needed a break if she was to perform responsibly. He replied that this was the one time he could not allow her a day off:

That day you wanted to obey your mind and not your teacher, and that day I made you obey the teacher and not the mind, that's all. (Notes 1981, 163).

Similarly, one morning at the 1983 camp, when many campers, sore after the previous day's exertions, did not appear for yoga class, Yogi Bhañan sent participants out looking for the laggards. Meanwhile he lectured to the assembled camp, insisting that there is a point in any form of training when it is tempting to simply quit, but that it is particularly at this stage that one must "push through." Americans today, he argued, think that they are incompetent to overcome lethargy and neuroses and long-term problems, and that is a modern form of exploitation; people lose faith in their competence and their power. The yoga class was not going to be allowed to flounder.

Drop the anti of you, not the mission of you. You work. I will not allow you to use your excuses....I am sick of this sick society....You start with a lot of zeal and a lot of ambition, but then you start dropping and your life is nothing but a lot of droppings. (Personal Notes, 1983)

Again, the message has world-affirming and world-rejecting aspects. Personal efficacy is affirmed; the listener is told that she can succeed, both as a spiritual and as a worldly being. This affirmation of individual will, however, is balanced by criticism of members of the audience, their culture, and their families, and by insistence on obedience and submission to the spiritual teacher.

Relations Between the Sexes

All 3HO marriages must be approved by an ashram head or by Yogi Bhajan, and many are arranged by him. Marriage is considered a spiritual union, not to be based on emotion or attraction. Chastity before, and fidelity within, marriage are enjoined, and divorce is discouraged, although it happens.

Women are held primarily responsible for the quality and maintenance of a marriage since they are said to be more compassionate and skilled in human relationships, and more attuned to their emotional currents, than are men. If a marriage flounders it is probably due to the "technology" of the woman. This technology involves yet another form of molding environments: the molding of male character.

According to Yogi Bhajan, men respond to suggestion: "The greatest weapon of a woman is indirect suggestion so gracefully laid down that a man will be attracted to that idea." (Notes 1976, 38). Men must be supported and encouraged, not confronted. Competition with men (or other women) is undesirable: "Women should never compete, instead they should always mold." (Notes 1981, 16).

In fact, women are the source of male energy and potency. Men are drawn to women as sources of energy, and are so "reactive" that they depend on such sources:

You can always find men as good cooks, and men can be better cooks than women. Do you know why? Because he is into anything which can give him energy. Food, ego, direction, territory, anything

which is good or bad, which can give this apparatus energy to live on. Then this slob can move. (Notes 1976, 408).

and

Because the apparatus (man) is still, all she has to do is to give a cue and it starts operating in harmony to her suggestion...Men always react; man is an apparatus. (Notes 1976, 38).

Men's thinking is linear; women's is multi-directional.

Men must concentrate on one thing at a time and have limited capacity for understanding relationships or maintaining fidelity. It is women who must form and correct the male character, and the marriage, but while a woman must provide energy, inspiration, and direction she cannot ask for constant emotional partnership:

Man's nervous system needs to be fed, smoothed, and consoled. The brain structure of a man is not designed to give continuous support. Woman, on the other hand, is complete in this area. (Notes 1976, 17).

A woman should not share her fears and her weaknesses, and certainly not her anger, with a husband:

when you have a weakness, talk to your spiritual teacher, never to your man because you are feeding his negativity. (Notes 1979, 10).

In fact, a woman has cause to be on guard with men, for men react to women either by revering or degrading and manipulating them, and, of course, their fidelity is always in question. Furthermore, a woman's aura is said to take on the imprint of her sexual partners and she can absorb their "negativity." This does not happen to men. It is

therefore risky for a woman to have several partners; virtue is in the woman's interest.

Clearly, relationships between the sexes are chancy, and marriage is work for a woman. Men are not asked to work as hard, but they are told that they should respect women's intuition, sensitivity, and spirituality and that they should work to provide a secure environment for the family. Their role as fathers is emphasized. An individual is said to have four gurus in a lifetime: (1) the mother, who leaves an almost indelible imprint in the first three years of life; (2) the father, whose influence reigns from ages three to seven; (3) relatives, schoolmates and friends, whose influence is primary from seven to puberty; and finally (4) the spiritual teacher. A father's presence and involvement is considered crucial.

As is the case with the other teachings, these can be viewed in several lights. On the one hand, they can undermine trust between the sexes and limit marital expectations. If the partners in a marriage view each other in stereotypical fashion and the wife takes her most pressing concerns to her spiritual teacher rather than to her husband, there are clearly limits to the sharing and understanding they will experience, and the spiritual teacher, as confidante, may stand between the spouses, defining and shaping their marriage. If marriage is a duty and a pleasure, but never truly a refuge, then the partners

remain psychologically available to teacher, organization, and spiritual path.

On the other hand, the partners in a marriage are encouraged to be thoughtful and considerate of one another. Care and stability are encouraged. The teachings take marriage out of the realm of consumer choice and preference and place family and domestic life in a broader spiritual and organizational context. They attribute significance and purpose to an institution that was deeply distrusted by counterculture participants.

Opposition and Dualities

Because they incorporate world-affirming and world-rejecting elements, and because many of the teachings are based on dualistic modes of thought, the lectures contain patterned thematic oppositions. Several of these echo the cultural oppositions discussed in chapter one, oppositions centering on issues of situated vs. transcendent definitions of selfhood, on the split between public and private spheres and rational and intuitive or emotional modes of being, and on opposing tendencies to individuate and to extend the self. In general, the more world-rejecting and organization-favoring poles are preferred, a tendency in keeping with the camp's world-rejecting flavor.

The following chart summarizes some of these dualisms.

NEGATIVE POLEPOSITIVE POLEI. Themes Associated with the Situated SelfThemes Associated with the Transcendant Self

Over-identification with personas and roles. "Flirting mind" that "caters to temporary environments".

Identification with the universal energy, self as shakti. Personal sense of serenity and control.

Insecurity. Being reactive and dependent.

Secure environments. Stable family and community life. Commitment. Molding environments.

Lethargy, learned helplessness, limited visions of one's capacities.

Will, endurance, pushing beyond limitations

II. Themes Associated with the Private Self/sphereThemes Associated with the Public Self/sphere

Low self-esteem, history of "misbehavior" and self-indulgence. Unhealthy family situations.

Graceful self-presentation. Thoughtful and appropriate communication.

Avoidance of ungraceful situations.

III. Themes Associated with the Emotional/Symbolic Modes of Experience and ExpressionRational Modes of Approaching Experience and Expression

Needs of hidden child. Feminine emotionalism; "freaking out."

Neutrality, balance, emotional health, exertion of will.

Relationships based on sexual attraction.

Relationships based on spiritual principles.

Neuroses.

Guidance of spiritual teacher.

IV. Themes Associated with Individuation

Ego, competition

Themes Associated with Self-extension

Sociability, domesticity, service, camp participation, obedience. Development of higher self.

Clearly, Bhajan exhorts his followers to develop a self that is sociable, disciplined and not tied to situated identities. While it is a self formed through mystical and symbolic experiences, it appears to me that it is to be primarily cognitive and willed.

In general, the traits appropriate to camp life and to organizational stability are favored. Traits conducive to service and obedience, group feeling, pleasant interaction, and identification with 3HO and a spiritual path are approved. Past history and emotional discomfort are opposed to a better, 3HO, future. There is one exception to this trend, however. Control over one's environment, and the exercise of will are valued, and these are not necessarily conducive to loyalty and cooperation. Individuation and strength of character are clearly important in 3HO, but it is expected that these traits will be exercised within the larger organizational and ideological framework. They are to be employed against organizationally-defined obstacles and in pursuit of approved goals.

Similarly, the significance of the private sphere and of the emotional and intuitive realms is somewhat greater in 3HO than may appear on the chart, since women's intuition and emotional sensitivity are praised. But, on the whole, emotions are treated in the lectures as a threat to the spiritual life, and the emphasis is on painful emotions in the past. There is no talk of the pleasanter emotions of everyday life, of the satisfactions of the present, or of the joys experienced in the past. The past is painted with a dark brush and the present self is more to be improved than enjoyed. There is no talk of the fascination of the private, symbolic world or of accomplishments in self-analysis. Consciousness will entail joy and liberation in the future, but for the present, self-knowledge is merely a means to an end.

The structured oppositions invite self-doubt, redefinition of the self and even internal conflict as usual modes of doing and feeling are questioned and much of one's past and of one's psychic economy is negatively interpreted. Childhood and past are evoked in order to be questioned, re-experienced and re-interpreted. The self becomes an object to be observed and altered. Current states are contrasted to high ideals and future perfection.

AMBIVALENCE: SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC VS. SPIRITUAL ACCOUNTS

On my last full day in camp, I managed to arrive in time for the final yoga sets and for a lovely gurdwara. I suddenly began to cry, without really knowing why, although I thought about my mother's aging and about the difficulties of picking up my life again, and of relinquishing the peace of early morning chants and serene, womanly faces.

Later in the day, a friend told me that she too had wept her way through the yoga, and the woman in the tent next to mine said that she had cried through sadhana over "heavy things" such as missing her daughter and wanting to do "summer things" with her. Another woman said that she had been crying most of the day. One of the Sikh women told me that this is called cleansing and is part of the camp process: the hurt and anger that are so much a part of women's lives are slowly eliminated in this fashion.

By the conclusion of my stay at the camp ambivalence characterized my responses. I was happy to leave and eager to tour the surrounding area, pleased to plan my activities again. I was relieved to be free of camp routine. But I was sorry to miss further developments and to cut short my own evolving understanding and responses. I was increasingly able to shift from insider to outsider points of view and from sociological to spiritual accounts of the camp.

From my perspective as social scientist much of what happened in the camp could be viewed in the guise of resocialization and resource mobilization. Identities that would bind participants to Yogi Bhajan, to 3HO, and to a spiritual path were fostered. Confinement in the camp and separation from home and family undercut external loyalties and consistent identity formation. The attractions of the outside world were further minimized as worldly statuses were criticized or consigned to positions of secondary importance and participants' pasts were denigrated or defined as periods of suffering, pain, cultural programming or self-indulgence. By insisting on graceful and ladylike behavior, Yogi Bhajan effectively cut off rebellion and feminist ideology and put many lifestyles and occupations out of reach. By stressing participants' "neuroses," "flirting minds" and "obnoxious" behavior he put a cap on self-esteem and autonomy and encouraged dependence on him and his teachings. By requiring service and obedience he received loyalty and devotion. By expecting participants to perform karma yoga he commandeered free labor.

From the insider's point of view, on the other hand, camp attendance represented an opportunity to rest and recharge the self, and to re-establish ties with 3HO friends and acquaintances from other ashrams. It provided structured opportunities to enhance physical well-being, increase knowledge, ply a trade, develop talents and "work

through" personal problems. It was a special women's environment in which women's needs and problems could be addressed.

From a spiritual perspective the teachings and camp life undercut maya, worldly expectations and social identities. Participants were reminded that external rewards and circumstances are ever-changing and undependable. No possession, occupation, or human tie will last, and none will satisfy the higher aspects of the self. The only lasting reality and true security lie in the individual's tie to "God and guru." To cultivate this tie the spiritual woman must relinquish her hold on other attachments and points of view, and it is the duty of the spiritual teacher to foster this process, even if he must be temporarily sharp or unkind. The camp is a "pressure cooker" where such detachment and spiritual growth are accelerated.

As one informant pointed out, Yogi Bhanjan has a saying that summarizes his theory of a spiritual teacher's role: "poke, provoke, confront and elevate." She believes that he applies that maxim at the camp. He begins the summer, she says, "by breaking down defenses. He challenges, says provocative things that unlock fears and open the unconscious." Then, in the final two weeks, "he starts to reintegrate and provides tools to work with the issues he evokes." (TI 3, Dec. 7, 1984.)

Hers is certainly a plausible account. Thus, the Summer of my attendance ended with a bonfire in which the participants "burned their neuroses." These, according to this theory, had been elicited earlier by Bhajan's lectures and more confrontational statements. Then participants had been asked to make lists of and write about these neuroses. Finally, they were to symbollically burn them and hence remove obstacles to further spiritual growth. This theory is also used to explain criticisms of individual members and outbursts of temper; they are seen as necessary efforts to poke and provoke. I am not convinced, however, that this account necessarily explains some of the more meandering lectures or sudden explosions of temper that appear to have neither intention nor premeditation. Nor does it justify some of the unkind attacks on individuals.

I found myself, on the whole, distrustful. As anyone familiar with Eastern modes of teaching might predict, I felt defensive and wanted to maintain my usual modes of perceiving and understanding. I wanted to maintain a detached and skeptical point of view. I wanted to write as a sociologist or as a feminist, and to see the organization as liberal or conservative. But I also wanted to adapt an emic perspective, and by clinging to my skepticism I was working against the spirit of the Eastern systems which encourage their adherents to abandon accustomed categories

and systems of classification. Again predictably, this left me with an uneasy feeling, for how was I to perceive things if not from a rather left-wing, sociological and feminist perspective? These were the rock-bottom sources of my understanding and my identity. Could I "neutralize" these without vitiating my commitments and leaving myself open to misconceptions and resocialization?

I could not entirely deny the attraction of a camp which allowed time to feel, to "purge," and to rethink. I thought it would be pleasant if there were such things as healing "vibrations," and that it would be nice if there were someone who had insights into one's past and character. I felt it would be a challenge to abandon my usual categories and versions of reality, and suspend disbelief for awhile--to trust; to follow intuitions, feelings and wishes; to abandon some of the more wearing aspects of individuation.

I shifted back and forth, but on the whole reaffirmed my academic identity. I tried to fathom Yogi BhaJan's motives. It was my guess that he, too, was torn, and that conflict infected him as well as his followers. I thought that he was probably torn between genuine sympathy and a desire to raise women's self-esteem on the one hand, and a desire to control, limit, and tie them to him on the other. He was poised between "positive" and "negative" minds, and I found I often was too.

Journal, July 9, 1983

Morning

I didn't catch up on my sleep the first night away from the camp. The hotel was noisy, with people coming in drunk at all hours of the night, and then I woke early -- I guess I've become accustomed to it. Unable to get back to sleep, or to break habits, I decided to meditate and chant for awhile -- I was so tired and having such difficulty concentrating I thought it might help. It also felt odd to be alone in a hotel, a stranger, after such intensive interaction. I was rather self-conscious, aware of myself making plans, creating moods, re-creating my independence. The process and effort of being a lone individual stood out in sharp relief -- I watched myself decide what to do next, where to eat, what to eat, what galleries to enter in Santa Fe, what pottery to like. It all seemed at once necessary and contrived, free and lonely. I was tense, too, sometimes anxious, about sightseeing on my own, renting a car, having no one know where I was and what I was doing after so much time spent in group living.

Evening

Drove to San Ildenfenso, Puye Cliffs, Santa Clara pueblo and Chimayo today. Taos tomorrow. San Ildenfenso very quiet but pretty, Puye marvelous, Santa Clara tired

and scraggly, but did get to talk to some of the Naranjo family and to see some of their pottery. Got high on driving a car and covering some territory, after so much confinement. Turned on the radio and caught up on news, found a station with Dick Clark playing oldies and sang along happily at the top of my lungs. But when I drove by Espanola, fragments of the "We are the Khalsa" song went through my mind.

I've eaten vegetarian meals all day, found the hotel noise much harder to deal with than I normally would have. I keep wondering how things are going at the camp. Last night my two camp friends visited and told me that Yogi Bhanjan had cancelled the weekend activities and told the whole camp to work at cleaning up the grounds instead. I wonder how they fared in this heat.

Should write down the stages I went through while I still remember. On arrival: the camp a disappointment -- crowded, unattractive, badly organized. I felt incarcerated and very exposed because I wasn't in bana. I felt considerable annoyance at Yogi Bhanjan for always lecturing, having all these women dressed up like brides sitting before him, charging so much for the movie and transportation. I was afraid that I might never get enough sleep and even worried about doing without my morning coffee. I was irritated at the endless chanting and "tuning in;" it seemed so constant and repetitive. I was

hurt that neither my friend nor almost anybody in bana spoke to me until I began officially doing interviews. I found members' reserve and drawing inward, their quiet voices and often subdued speech almost oppressive. I knew I should respect their need to have time for introspection, or simply to avoid someone like me, but nonetheless I felt quite lonely. Sometimes it seemed that everything around me was subdued, almost as if someone had turned down the volume. This had the effect -- desired perhaps -- of raising the volume of my own internal dialogue and of making me feel as self-conscious and aware of my own anxieties as I was as a teenager. I thought almost constantly about "getting out" and started counting the days that were left.

But I found things to enjoy too. Yogi Bhaajan's yoga classes when he was funny and warm and I was challenged. An occasionally absorbing lecture. Beginning to understand the purpose of the camp: to apply pressure, reveal and dissolve anxieties and neuroses, to attack the ego, to force people to face themselves and honor their commitment to attend, to create an identity apart from ordinary roles. I enjoyed talking to people and had some fun with new acquaintances -- most of whom proved to be new campers like myself. I found I wanted to work on some of my own issues and even visited Bibiji to get her advice. Her advice seemed somewhat automatic -- to meditate on a loving,

accepting figure and to make a list of affirmations about myself and repeat them regularly -- but I was tackling the types of issues that the camp was designed to elicit: needs for belonging and acceptance, and self-esteem issues. I could see the processes working on me and part of me wanted to stay and see that through. I became involved in people's concerns and wanted to know what would happen next to them.

But what a relief not to be so confined, not to go through any more long days, not to feel places are off-limits, to return to life outside the camp and no longer feel that I am estranged from everyday life.

CHAPTER IV

COMING IN: MEMBERS' ACCOUNTS OF AFFILIATION;
PROFILE OF WOMEN IN THE WASHINGTON ASHRAM;
EARLY HISTORY OF THE ASHRAM

Summer camp is a time apart from the usual routines and responsibilities, a time to look inwards, but Sikhism requires that the individual live in the world. Members of 3HO must find a way to balance altered states and common sense, the longings of the soul and the demands of the practical life. Everyday life is lived closer to the middle ground, and its settings are the ashram and the workplace.

This chapter introduces the Washington ashram, provides a capsule history of its origins and a profile of the women who live in the community, and analyzes members' reasons for affiliating with 3HO.

THE WASHINGTON ASHRAM

Because Washington is one of the older and larger 3HO ashrams its history manifests many of the transformations that 3HO has experienced, and because it is large and has drawn members from all over the country it provides a good sample of the membership. The ashram head is a close associate of Yogi Bhanjan and is a national advisor to many of the family businesses so Washington is a crucial center in 3HO affairs. It is noted for being particularly family-

oriented, and its large contingent of children has meant that its adult members have had to work particularly hard at balancing the various aspects of their lives and have had to codify and institutionalize their beliefs and practices so as to best transmit them to the next generation.

Description

Many of its members have lived in the Washington ashram since the early 1970's. They have essentially grown up with one another and with the ashram. Today most of them live in Herndon, Virginia in substantial houses grouped around a cul-de-sac. Typically, the houses are shared by two families; most are owned, a few others are rented from the organization. The houses were originally purchased as a block when they were newly built in 1979-80, and in many cases the parents of 3HO members, relieved to see their children finally settling down, helped with loans and down-payments. There are thirty-two adults in the Herndon community, mostly married couples. Recently twenty-two of the college-age children from around the country have joined the community and are attending local colleges. Several of these are young women. Younger children live with their parents, but most of the children over the age of ten are attending the boarding school in India. The

Sikh Dharma offices where business affairs are handled is in the basement of one of these houses.

These are multi-level brick and wood houses in a rather raw-looking suburb, the newness and flatness somewhat relieved by old trees that were left standing in many of the backyards. During the day the cul-de-sac is quiet but not deserted. There is often someone to be seen, perhaps a mother out for a walk carrying a baby in a "snuggly," a husband coming home for lunch, a couple of turbaned women fitting in time for a bicycle ride through the neighborhood. Children may be playing about, little boys in ordinary American clothing but wearing small turbans -- not high like a man's but flat to the head and knotted in front -- and girls wearing dresses with slacks underneath and small lace headcoverings pinned over hair that is worn in a bun on top of the head.

Within, the houses are mostly tidy and uncluttered. Rugs and sofas are generally in whites and creams, with pillows and vases and plants providing accents of color. Pictures of Sikh saints, usually in bright primary colors, and of Yogi Bhanjan are in every house, but there are no other paintings or photographs hanging on the walls, no wedding or graduation photographs or indications of personal tastes in artists or scenes. Usually there are wooden tables and bookcases and stereos and tape recorders (sometimes with taped chants playing), and often there are

children's toys and furniture. Frequently a visitor is greeted by the spicy smell of yogi tea brewing; this is a coffee alternative made of cinnamon, cardamom, ginger root, cloves and pepper and the scent is homey and suggestive of baking and hospitality. The atmosphere in general is calm and, as Sikhs would say, meditative. It is an unusual blend of the homelike and the impersonal, homes where individual concerns and ego are clearly secondary.

There is a second, smaller, community in Great Falls, Virginia, a somewhat more expensive and rural suburb, where seven Sikh couples and their children live. Most of these houses are approached by a dirt road and are surrounded by woods; the setting is peaceful and private. One house, with extensive grounds, is owned by the head of the ashram and is frequently used for group activities. Recently two single women have moved into a house near these in order to be able to regularly attend sadhana and other activities, but they do not (at least at this point) plan to take Sikh vows or adopt bana. An additional woman member lives some distance away but still within the Great Falls area.

Reston, a nearby planned community, is also a site of Sikh activities, although no one in the group actually resides there. A chiropractor and a homeopathic nurse have offices there, and a major hotel in the town is the usual site for the Tantric yoga classes that Yogi Bhajan offers in the spring and in the fall. 3HO has also just opened a

new center in a small low-rise block of office buildings just outside of town; it is used for yoga and cooking classes and other courses and workshops, and the shoe business is now headquartered there. The organization also rents a house off of Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C. At one time it served as the area headquarters and was the crowded home for most of the early Washington members. Classes are still offered there, and it is a point of contact with people in the city, but now only two couples live in it.

A typical day begins, for those who manage to awake, before dawn. In each community there is a house where sadhana is held and here the early wakers congregate. Mothers of small babies sometimes bring them and nurse them there, but often they are too tired and pressed to attend. It is still dark outside and only a dim lamp lights the room as the men and women begin the yoga sets for the day. A sleepy few curl up on sofas or on the floor, turbaned heads and bare feet protruding from blankets, in another room. As yoga gives way to chanting and then to meditation, the sun rises and the room brightens, and finally prasad is served and people joke and gossip before going back home for breakfast and the usual suburban dispersal to jobs and chores, although a proportion of the residents who work at 3HO-related jobs are spared the daily commute.

As the workday begins, a teacher showers and goes over her class plans before departing for her Montessori classroom. An office manager begins the long commute to her employer's small business. A nurse stops to chat and make sure all is well with a new mother and her baby before leaving for her office where she works as a nurse practitioner. While these women leave their communities, others settle down to work closer to home. The Sikh Dharma treasurer pushes telephone buttons at a pace that might rival Lyndon Johnson in his White House days as she approves expenditures, arranges transportation, makes orders and exchanges small talk in a non-stop stream of activity. Nearby, another woman sits down and faces her telephone with determination as she prepares to make her calls for the latest family business, "Oriental Beauty Secrets". She calls past customers and names suggested by friends, offering free facials and free delivery of products, maintaining an enthusiastic and positive manner (and mind-set) as she tries to make a go of her new multi-level business, all the while keeping an eye on her children as they play in the living room. An artist listens to taped chants as she settles down to painting sacred pictures which she hopes to sell within the 3HO family, an undertaking that makes her anxious since it is new and the income is uncertain. She uses the tapes to calm her anxieties. Another woman, who works evenings, has

slept late and awakened to create her own private sadhana. Now, dressed in shorts and blouse, she is busy with housework and ironing and is thinking about her children in India, imagining what they are doing and thinking right now.

The Founding of the Washington Ashram

Such a diversity of occupations was not characteristic of the ashram in its formative years. The Dupont Circle house was acquired in 1969 by a woman who had come from Los Angeles to establish a Washington base. While in Los Angeles she had heard that another yoga student was to go to Washington in order to establish an ashram. Feeling "compelled to return to the East" she asked Yogi Bhanjan if she could accompany this student. They arrived in Washington in October 1969. At the same time Yogi Bhanjan was on his first tour of the United States, with a stop planned for Washington. Bhanjan had told them that everything would be ready for him in Washington, but in fact the contact they had been given proved to be of no help, and they began their mission with no place to stay. Another of Bhanjan's students arrived, however, and helped them find housing. Undeterred, the woman found a location for Yogi Bhanjan's lecture and twenty people eventually attended it. At this point she was uncertain whether she wanted to continue as a yoga student, but Yogi Bhanjan

convinced her to remain in Washington and follow the discipline and so she took on the task of establishing a Washington ashram. On Moratorium Day she joined the marchers in Washington and at one point, when she was seated near the Lincoln Memorial, began to chant. She found herself surrounded by a group of people and began to talk with them. She told them about Yogi BhaJan and about her task and they told her about the Q Street building. The house was one of several communal residences belonging to a group calling itself the "Washington Free Community." She took over the lease, cleaned it up, painted the walls white, sanded the floors, and renamed it Ahimsa Ashram. Some members of the resident hip community continued to live there throughout the winter of 1969, but in the end only one couple opted to remain longer and, slowly, beginning in the summer of 1970, the original residents were replaced by other spiritually inclined members of Washington's alternative community. Yoga classes were offered and publicized through contacts in Washington's hip community. (TI 4, February 1985.) Classes were followed by a visit from Yogi BhaJan in December, when he taught some Kundalini yoga classes, and shortly thereafter by the arrival of another yoga teacher sent from Los Angeles to become the director of the ashram. He continued in that capacity until 1980. The new director publicized ashram classes in the Dupont Circle and Georgetown areas of

Washington and also taught yoga at a local university, and Yogi Bhajan returned in the spring for another series of classes. Classes grew, and more people moved into the house in order to join in early morning sadhana. The Founder moved on to establish ashrams in other parts of the country.

At this stage few people were interested in the Sikh religion; they came for yoga and meditation and the company of like-minded individuals. The lifestyle was comparatively informal. There was yoga and meditation early in the morning followed by a light breakfast and housework, and then residents left for their daily jobs, which were necessary in order to pay rent for a space in the ashram. In the evening there was another vegetarian meal and a yoga class. The class was open to the public:

There were always tons of people and the members of the house went to it also. After, we had a bunch of cut up fruit or a pot of yogi tea....It was, I think, one thing that really made people feel that they were a part of a community growing. The class ended at about 7:45 but the last person sometimes didn't go home until 9:30. We all used to just hang out and talk or sing. A local band that was really well-known came to a lot of the classes.... (TI, letter to the author, Sept. 25 1985).

Clothing at this point was not standardized. It included long dresses, or Indian bell bottoms or the occasional sari for women. Men wore turbans and street clothes or kurtas and white levis. Later, after a visit to India in 1973, women adopted Punjabi clothing and later yet

learned to sew a traditional form of Sikh clothing for the men.

By 1972 the "Ahimsa Ashram" was quite crowded with thirty to thirty-five people in residence, the women housed upstairs and the men in the basement. What is now a comfortable book-lined office was once a room for six women, each with half a chest of drawers, a small bookcase and one level of a bunk bed. There were jokes about people getting married to escape the crowded conditions. But, although people had few belongings and little space, most remember their early days there nostalgically, remembering camaraderie and pleasure in the new lifestyle. There were, finally, a total of five houses in the Dupont Circle area.

In 1972, the ashram opened a vegetarian restaurant called The Golden Temple, well-located near Dupont Circle on Connecticut Avenue. Several residents had worked in a health food store that has become a Washington institution, the Yes Restaurant and Book Store. The ashram director and his wife had, in fact, worked in a health food restaurant in Los Angeles and with this experience as background helped to plan the menu for the Yes restaurant. After six months of work at Yes they and other ashram residents felt ready to start their own restaurant.

The men of the ashram did all the necessary work to convert a shop into a restaurant and it opened in May. Almost everyone in the Dupont Circle houses worked there,

and often they worked very long hours; many remember working close to sixteen hours a day. Legally, the restaurant was a partnership. It paid for workers' rent and for day-to-day needs, and since most ashram residents did not have children, and in fact were mostly single, this was sufficient for their needs. Many remember the long days fondly:

Oh it was just delightful....Most of the people who moved in at that time were about my age -- we were in our early twenties or very late teens. So we were young and energetic and lively, and we really centered our life around that restaurant. It was the way that we supported ourselves, but it was also our service to the community, and we were all in it together. And we worked very long hours; the work was hard but we made it into fun. You were with your friends all the time. We had a lot of fun. (AP 7, 5, 1985)

Another woman remembers the opportunities to learn job skills and the cohesiveness fostered by shared work:

...I did everything. I was a hostess. I was a waitress. I worked on the cash register. You know, if you were together enough to handle anything you got to do it. If you could only work in the kitchen, you worked in the kitchen....People were juggled depending on what needed to be filled and we worked really long hours....It was great, though...I don't think we always realized it, but it really brought us so close together; it really made us a family. We really went through a lot, really trying times, fun times, all sorts of different kinds of times. (AP 16, 3-4, 1985)

A few people chose not to work full time in the restaurant and pursued separate careers instead, but they were clearly swimming against the tide:

...I remember when I would go down to work [at the restaurant] -- I worked one night a week, or twice a week if there was a problem. They would ask me,

"How can you stand to work out there?" and it was kind of like everybody in the outside world had horns and claws and they were out to get me....And there was a lot of peer pressure, that kind of thing: "Isn't it awful? Don't you miss being with us? We miss having you here." (AP 6, 10, 1985)

THE MEMBERSHIP

Counterculture Background

Most of the women who joined in the early years (1969-1975) describe their younger selves as "hippies" and their current selves as comparatively "straight." Their level of involvement in the counterculture varied considerably. Some travelled extensively, most smoked marijuana at least occasionally, and some experimented with a range of psychedelic drugs. Most were not politically involved, although they were critical of particular social institutions and of American involvement in Vietnam. A thoughtful search for alternatives was clearly as important to them as was experimentation with drugs or involvement in the Rock scene. As one woman put it, describing herself and her high school friends, "We were definitely hippies, but we were definitely smart hippies. We knew where it was at...read all the books." Another referred to herself as "a productive hippy" since she was working as a nurse while she investigated alternative medicine and alternative lifestyles and regularly attended rock concerts:

...I was twenty-three and I think I considered myself kind of a hippy....I thought of myself as someone who was looking for something better. I

was reading books about communes and I had already experienced health improvements from being a vegetarian....I don't feel that I was that deep into it, you know. I didn't get into Jerry Rubin, stuff like that, talking about how the economic system is so terrible, and this and that is so terrible, and the government. (AP 17b, 3, 1985)

Their counterculture backgrounds are typical of members of the Eastern religions. Tipton, for example, found that the membership in San Francisco Zen Centers swelled with "the ranks of hip youth," with attendance doubling in 1966 (1982, 96). Judah (1974) found that most Hare Krishna devotees had been associated with the counterculture. Some experimentation with drugs is also common. Harrison Pope is convinced that "Eastern disciplines absorbed the largest single group of former drug users" (1974, 27), and several authors have commented on the importance of psychedelic drugs in the experience of those who practice the alternative religions (e.g. Robbins and Anthony 1981, 191-213; Downton 1979; Volinn 1985). In fact, only a minority of the Washington women cited a psychedelic experience, or a drug-induced restructuring of their cognitive worlds, when asked how they came to join 3HO. For that minority of six, however, these experiences were pivotal. Others would assign some, but not central, significance to their experimentation with drugs.

Counterculture experience was important as an expression of identity and of disagreement with parental and cultural norms. It provided exposure to alternative

lifestyles and values and to the idioms of spiritual seeking. Over two-thirds of the Washington women interviewed described themselves as having been involved, to some degree, in the counterculture. The significance they now attach to this involvement varies considerably, however, from one woman to the next. Some now view it as a necessary step -- sometimes pleasurable, sometimes not -- en route to a spiritual path. Many now regard it as an excessive and often self-indulgent response to real social or familial problems. Some found it a painful experience; others took a less serious and more playful approach to it. Several commented that the hippies that they once were would regard the suburban Sikhs that they now are as "very straight."

Demographic Profile

American members of the Eastern religions tend to come from middle-class families, to be young, disproportionately Jewish, (see Richardson 1986), to have some college education, and to come from intact families.²³ Many of the Eastern groups are, or were originally, communal or semi-

²³ A study of participants in the new religions in Montreal also finds that they are likely to have experimented with psychedelic drugs and to have practiced magical or "divinitization practices" such as consulting the I Ching, a palm-reader or an astrologer (Bird and Reimer 1982). I do not know if this is true of 3HO members, but such practices have long been interwoven with 3HO beliefs.

communal, and many of these traits are also applicable to communards. Zablocki finds that

...commune members tend to be younger than the national average; that married people, Protestants, and blacks, are underrepresented; that college graduates and Jews are overrepresented; and that commune members tend to come from intact families to a higher degree than the nation as a whole. (1980, 84)

He notes, however, that Eastern communal groups differ from the rest of his sample in having a lower percentage of college degrees and in having the highest number of members working in service and blue collar occupations.

The women in the 3HO ashram generally fit this profile. Their parents are predominantly middle-class and disproportionately Jewish and Catholic, with 27% coming from Jewish and 33% from Catholic backgrounds. Most of the women have had some college education, approximately 40% having completed two years of college and 26% having completed four years. There are, in addition, two nursing degrees and two graduate degrees. Most of their families remained intact through the women's youth, with a 12% divorce rate. Most of the women are now in their early to mid thirties, and the average woman joined the organization in her early twenties.

As was also the case with youth in the New Left, ashram residents' parents are heavily represented in the professions and the knowledge sector. They differ, however, in also being well represented in business. Their

fathers are clustered in the professions that are not well insulated from the marketplace -- optician, chemist, pharmacist -- and in sales positions and administrative positions in business. They are also heavily represented in the military and in government employment. Mothers were either housewives or worked in the service fields: teaching, education and secretarial positions.

Altogether, out of twenty-four households of origin, there were 5 individuals employed in health-related fields, 6 in government and the military, 3 in education, 3 in sales, 3 in high-level supervisory business positions, 2 at lower administrative levels and 2 who were simply described as "in business." There were also 6 housewives, 2 lawyers and 2 scientists. The post-industrial economy is obviously well represented, as well as occupations that blend both individualism and service. The combination of business and service representation may reflect the range of values orientations to which Yogi BhaJan and 3HO have been able to appeal.

Westby (1976) suggests that counterculture participants' backgrounds may have differed from New Left activists' in that they may have been drawn from the newer and less established positions within the knowledge sector and, further, that the parents of the politicals may have experienced greater "independence from immediate involvement in the central institutions of industrial

capitalism, the state and the corporations." (1976, 85)
This small sample does not entirely support that
convention, although the number of parents in business is
interesting, as is the tendency to issue from professions
that are often practiced in corporate settings.

REASONS FOR JOINING

Sense-Making

Ashram residents are happy to recount their 3HO
histories and to recall the early years of their
involvement. Several common themes emerge in their
accounts, but it must be added that it can be difficult to
reconstruct the feelings and motivations of the past. In
the 3HO case, some of the women are talking about events
that occurred ten to fifteen years previously. Inevitably,
memories fade. Past issues and conflicts are forgotten and
new ones are attached to the old memories. The past is
subject to reassessment in the light of terms and concepts
currently employed in 3HO. Even the motives of women who
have only recently become affiliated with the organization
can be opaque. New members are subject to a variety of new
stimuli and are actively engaged in trying to find a niche
within a new social network and in trying to order new
sensations and ideas. In order to do this, they may try on
different explanations, shifting from one interpretation to
another as they engage in sense-making. They will try to

reconcile current experiences and beliefs with past activities and attitudes. They will not accept the entire belief system at one time -- only those aspects that they find most sympathetic. They will sift and choose within limits, attempting to take on significant portions of the accepted beliefs and terms.

It takes time to integrate past with present and to establish a set of beliefs that provides not only cognitive comfort but an acceptable level of social acceptance and interaction, one that allows for sufficient self-esteem and opens avenues for future growth. Members' accounts of their early contacts with 3HO are thus embedded in an on-going effort at making sense of their experience, and will presumably change as they age and their organization changes. Nonetheless, there are several distinctive types of explanation, as well as some generally shared accounts.

The shared accounts focus on the role of Kundalini yoga as a crucial experience. This is a basic premise of 3HO life, and even the occasional woman who admits to not much liking yoga assigns it considerable significance in her biography. Yoga and meditation are viewed as the grounding for a clearer sense of self and as the starting point in a new way of life:

Boy, I remember my first couple of yoga classes, being really awed that by doing a couple of hours of yoga and meditation my whole sense of reality was altered. Things that had seemed important seemed very lightweight. My sense of confidence was enhanced. My sense of my own depth was much

more clear. I mean changes began right away, and they continue. (AP 1b, 3, 1985)

In the early years they also offered an alternative to chemically-induced highs:

I had some friends who were doing yoga and I went with them to yoga class, and at the end of that class I felt so good. I felt all the goodness and all the beautiful experiences of drugs were available through this technique. (AP 8, 10, 1985)

...as soon as I took my first yoga class I guess you could say I joined. I mean I got completely off on the experience and started attending classes every night, and even before I moved into the ashram I was doing my sadhana and eating vegetarian meals and stopped taking drugs. (AP 12a, 2, 1985)

Many state that yoga classes and solstice celebrations induced a crystallized awareness of self -- moments of clarity and joy when depressions, preoccupations, and habitual affect were altered. Others emphasize an intuition that yoga and meditation could provide a "technology" for gaining greater control over their thoughts, emotions, and patterns of behavior.

Expressive and Pragmatic Reasons for Affiliation

The more variable elements in members' accounts emerge in their descriptions of their emotional states and cognitive processes at the time of encountering 3HO. Members' accounts of how and why they joined 3HO can be arranged on a continuum. At one end are accounts that emphasize alienation from society and its conventions. Members presenting these accounts stress a youthful feeling

that their lives were circumscribed and mundane and a parallel yearning for beauty, honesty, and transcendence. They emphasize the experiential: drug experiences, the effects of mediation, and their emotions and intuitions. Often they describe identity confusion or uncertainty, and affiliation with 3HO is tied to identity transformation. At the other end of the continuum are accounts emphasizing practical reasons for becoming involved with 3HO, such as career considerations or financial problems, or a perception that the organization would affirm both identity and ethical beliefs. There is less emphasis on pain and discontent, more on positive benefits or practical considerations.

Tipton (1982, 6-24) makes a distinction that is useful in this context when he contrasts the "expressive" ethic of the counterculture to the more conventional and rational "utilitarian" modes of evaluating action. He is describing ethical systems, while I am using his distinctions more broadly to cover approaches to decision-making and modes of accounting, but they do illuminate the different ends of the 3HO spectrum of accounts.

According to Tipton, the individual who employs the expressive style values ecstatic experience, whether derived from drugs, music or meditation, and assumes that knowledge is finally experiential and intuitive. The utilitarian, on the other hand, favors the use of technical

reason to know and to manipulate the world, depending upon such strategies as standardization, sequencing, establishing jurisdiction, and instituting routine procedures. The utilitarian assumes that there is no intuitive certainty since he embraces relativism and accepts the existence of discrepant and incompatible life worlds.

The expressive individual favors a holistic approach to the world and to the self. All parts are seen as interrelated. The desire is to unify the self and foster congruence so that the same values apply to the self and to all others. Relationships, ideally, are not fragmented or role-bound. By contrast, the utilitarian perspective emphasizes "analytic discrimination," separating roles and different aspects of the production process and presenting the individual with discontinuous social settings and partial relationships.

The expressive mode favors an accepting stance towards the world. It does not assume that the world is there to be changed or improved, nor that people are to be used or altered. Nature and human nature should instead be appreciated and nurtured, and the achievement ethic is distrusted because it seems to require a rejection of them as they are. The utilitarian finds this difficult to understand. He or she adopts the stance of "problem-

solving activism," and expects and values constant increases in knowledge and production.

The responses at one end of the 3HO continuum correspond roughly to Tipton's expressive style, those at the other end to the utilitarian, although, given counterculture backgrounds and the nature of the 3HO belief system, none are wholeheartedly utilitarian. Thus, at one end, there are accounts emphasizing ecstatic and intuitive experience, the appeal of meditation and the "highs" it produces, and an intense desire to end the opposition of self and society. At the other are accounts emphasizing the individual's problem-solving approach to her own needs, the role of practical reasoning in her decision to affiliate, and a step-by-step approach to membership. Career goals, individualism, and the appeal of yoga as a "technology" are more frequently mentioned.

I have divided the members' accounts into three groupings: Those of (1) intense seekers and intuitive joiners, (2) pragmatic seekers, and (3) convenience joiners. Arranged as a continuum they fall like this:

Intense
Seekers/
Intuitive
Joiners

Pragmatic
Seekers

Convenience
Joiners

expressive accounts:

emphasize longing,
discomfort,
alienation from
convention and
superficiality of
social surroundings,
experiential elements
of 3HO life, personal
biography

utilitarian accounts:

emphasize practical
considerations,
personal volition
and planning, roles
and careers

The more expressive accounts predominate, but there is a spread. The expressive accounts are, in Wallis' terms, the more world-rejecting, the utilitarian more accommodating or affirming.

Intense Seekers and Intuitive Joiners

For the intense seekers, affiliation was preceded by a period of deep longing and much discomfort. They experienced themselves as different from their families and their peers, as more intense, thoughtful and needy. Their accounts suggest an emergent self which was set against the social structure as experienced at home, at school, and through the media. There was awareness of an often painful or confusing identity that could not be poured into available social roles and secular terms, of an emergent self that should not have to participate in the antics of self presentation and did not want to accept the routine as

the inevitable. There was a hunger for transcendence or for a structure for the emergent self -- for a way of defining it, a path for it to pursue, even for knowledge of the terms that a dialectic between this self and the social world might entail. Several of these women were looking for a new start. The following quotations are typical:

I've always had something really pure inside of me and I always was looking for beauty, beauty in life, and truth....I was trying to find another way. (AP 9, 1, 1985)

I was very different from other people in my family, and I was just different; I felt very different. And I had a tremendous longing and a tremendous emptiness that other people around me didn't feel the need to fill. (AP 12b, 4, 1985)

I'm not normal in anything that I do...the way I see things and speak about them makes me stand out, and when I'm feeling strong and God-filled I don't mind that. I'm also very strong in negativity, which is one reason I think that I needed such a rigorous path, because my mental negative mind was just devastating. (AP 8, 15-16, 1985)

I was so ardently longing for something, and I'd already tried all sorts of things to satisfy the longing and they hadn't worked. You know, I'd tried diving into certain political activities and relationships and this and that...I can translate it in various forms throughout my life as always playing hard, working hard, trying hard -- hard, hard, hard. Always wanting to get the most out of things, always concerned that I'd be missing out on something -- that kind of personality. Then it manifested in my teens in a more existential way as trying to find the meaning of life and find the path that would make life meaningful and rich to me. (AP 1d, 1986)

Similar, but more experimental and more free-spirited, is a sub-group that I will call "intuitives." They too may have looked for something, but they seem to have taken almost as much pleasure in the search as in the finding.

When they settled upon 3HO it was often because the community and the yoga "felt right." They emphasize their attraction to the people in the ashram and the sense of community and the good feelings associated with yoga and meditation. The emphasis is on the positive things they found, even on the surprise of this, rather than on their previous longing:

...I was basically looking for a community of people who I could share ideals with and live with in a way that was more meaningful to me...I wasn't looking for this necessarily --I was pretty open to whatever came my way...I went to everything. There was a branch of the university that was an open study program; they had a lot of classes in alternative lifestyle things...I was real happy and I'd been happy. I always felt like my growing up years were happy. I was well-liked and I just didn't have any trouble fitting in wherever I was...I don't exactly know...the whole Hippy movement started and it seemed like those people had something that I didn't have. That was the first time I ever thought of myself as missing out on something, that there was something more...so then I started reading...it was a consciousness, and an understanding of what God meant. (AP 7, 2-3, 1985)

Pragmatic Seekers

Another group consists of pragmatic seekers. They approached 3HO, or other Eastern disciplines, more slowly, proceeding stage by stage and becoming in this process further estranged from the "straight" world. Many members of this group felt that the lifestyles they encountered at college or at work were too impersonal and unhealthy, and the people too callous or self-indulgent. Several had done

some spiritual shopping and had explored various forms of diet, yoga and alternative beliefs, progressing further into alternative interests. They assessed 3HO in fairly practical terms, asking how it could further their personal and career goals. The following are typical comments from this group:

I didn't know that there were [alternative] things to be interested in....I used to go upstate a lot with my parents and we'd always see these people driving around with deer on their hoods....I just thought about it a lot and eventually turned vegetarian....I went to college....There was a lot of hanging out in bars. I just didn't like what people were into and so I found the ashram -- people doing yoga, and I was already vegetarian.
(AP 16, 1, 1985)

...I started reading these health books...at the same time I started, you know, thinking about what I was doing in the hospital. I didn't like it anymore: giving out pills, giving shots, having people have surgery. I had no control over it, what was going to be done, but I would talk to people about their diet. A hospital was really not an ideal place, in my opinion, for nurses because you really had no time to talk to the patients....So anyway, I took my summer vacation and went to the homeopathic school...it was a two-week course for doctors and nurses....At the time I rode a motorcycle...and I was going to camp out there, and when I got there there were two Sikhs taking the course....And before this I had also been reading books a little bit on communes and things like that, like Twin Oaks was one, so I was thinking about things like that....So I saw the two Sikhs and went up and said "hello" and they said they were camping out and were going to do yoga every morning. And I said, "Well, I do yoga." I had just learned from a book and I would watch on TV...so I camped out with them and did what they did.... (AP 17a, 8, 1985)

Convenience Joiners/New Recruits

Finally, there is a group of convenience joiners and of those recently recruited by Yogi Bajan. They emphasize practical considerations such as needing a place to live, taking advantage of business opportunities, or joining because a spouse joined. Those influenced by Yogi Bajan often seem to have been chosen for the practical contributions they could make to ashram life. Recently he seems to have concentrated on attracting businesswomen. Convenience joiners in many cases have had contact with the counterculture or with esoteric disciplines, but probably would not have joined 3HO if it weren't for practical considerations or for Yogi Bajan's special efforts to recruit them. The following are comments from this group:

I was not looking for anything....I would have been a yuppy. I was into [my husband] being a professional and working in this company that was based in London so we got to go to London for conferences and stuff, and the kids going to private schools. You know, we had two cars. I was on my way to being part of the bourgeoisie. But I also was aware of the fact that something was amiss, and what was amiss was my husband. There was something that wasn't clicking right with him...and when I saw that [3HO] was working...he felt so strongly about it and since I didn't feel strongly about it one way or another, why not. (AP 6b, 9, 1985)

...I decided to get my own place and rent, and I tried a few places out, and for the money that I could spend they weren't that great...I started thinking, "Well, it looks like I should move in with somebody." And I looked into a few places but there were no friends or people that were vegetarian...and I already knew people in the ashram and I felt very comfortable with them.... (AP 10, 3, 1985)

He kept saying, "Trust me and trust yourself."...And he asked me to work with him: "I'll make you a good businesswoman. I want to be proud of you. I want strong women and graceful women."...So I just said "OK." I agreed to it. It's pretty hard to disagree with the Siri Singh Sahib. (AP 11, 8, 1985)

This is, of course, a condensation and abbreviation of members' experience and interpretations. To really understand the quality and the nuances of their experience it is necessary to hear the womens' own words. The following accounts, arranged from the more expressive to the more utilitarian, provide a closer approximation to actual experience as it is now interpreted.

MEMBER'S ACCOUNTS

A. was quoted earlier as saying that she has always searched for beauty, and her delight in color and balance is evident in her home. Her living room has the usual off-white sofa and carpeting, but her imprint is everywhere, in touches of lavender, pink and purple, in flower arrangements and cushions. The room is beauty and peace, and she belongs within it, a calm, pretty, soft-spoken and gentle woman, but a person with presence and will. Her youthful alienation from her upper-middle class background is evident in her account, as are her intense spiritual experiences, the pain she experienced for being different, her changing sense of identity, and her longing for transcendence. She is young, married with no children, and of Catholic background.

I feel, like I said, that all my childhood, all my adolescence, I'd been looking for this beauty in life, and very early I was very disappointed by what I would see in society...a lot of lies and cheating and hypocrisy and all that. So very early I had that pure side in me and I wanted to cultivate that pure side. It's almost like I couldn't believe in that society....I even didn't want to become like what I would see....But I was also very unhappy because I suffered very much for it, from feeling different and not finding what I was looking for, not being able to totally mingle with society. I've always been a kind person but I was also a fighter....I was ready to really go all the way to find what I was looking for, to fight against all the conventions so that I could really find the truth. (AP 9, 4, 1985)

She had hippy friends, and some of them shared the counterculture fascination with the East. At twenty she had the opportunity to travel:

I was very attracted to the Orient. I felt that, and I've always wanted to travel anyway because I felt that the more I would see of the world the more I would expand, the more I would understand about things, to become universal. So one day I was finally able to go to India....The first place I arrived in India was Amritsar and I'd never heard of the Sikhs. I just knew they wore a turban, but I didn't know anything about the religion and I had never heard about the Golden Temple. But the first place I went in Amritsar was the Golden Temple, and it was very beautiful. So I stayed there about a week to ten days and every day I would go there and I would do what the Indians did. I would follow and do the same thing: wash your feet, wash your hands, drink some of the holy water and go to the Siri Guru Granth Sahib...so I would do all those things and after ten days I just was like in a special state, space, where I felt very good and it was very beautiful....I found myself praying there and I was very surprised...it was when I became aware of my faith.... (2)

I became aware that there was a God, and I believed in God, and God was actually running everything, and the best thing was to have faith and to relax. So that was the beginning. But then after that I kept going through changes and I kept traveling in India for four

months and it was not particularly religious, I just went on with my normal life and after four months when I came back to Bombay it's like I became spiritual...it was like very spiritual experiences when you're totally imbued with God and you're totally in love with God, and then I knew that what I wanted in life was to lead a spiritual way of life and be with spiritual people. Then I went back...and I went through a hard winter because nobody could really understand me anymore and I couldn't be with my own friends because I was in a very different frame of mind. So it was hard...I was very lonely and I didn't have a specific path either. The only thing I had to relate to God was just my prayers and the infinite. I was reaching to the infinite and I had a beautiful picture of a mosque in Afghanistan, and that was the only thing I had. So after several months of real hardship one day I was walking in the street in Paris and then again I prayed to God very hard, with all my heart, and I asked God to help me because I was afraid to become crazy or something. I was just afraid of this hardship of life and I couldn't cope with it anymore. I couldn't relate to everybody else because I was definitely changing. Like people were going to nightclubs or just drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes, what you call normal life. I couldn't relate to that anymore.

OK, so after that prayer I just asked God to give me a guide or guidance, some kind of a sign. So a few minutes later I went in the underground, the subway, and in the middle of the crowd I saw like a light and it was a lady. She was wearing white and she had a turban and she was very radiant, that's why I saw her like a light....It was like I knew right away she was the answer to my prayer. So I went to her and I told her, you know, "since I came back from India I can't live here anymore. In India I had that experience of spirituality, of God, I could feel God very close, and here it's very hard"....She was not surprised. She was very nice, and she told me she was going to a lecture that a swami, a Hindu swami, was giving, so we just went. And this Hindu swami started talking about spiritual paths, God, and all that, and I felt so relieved. I said, "Oh thank you God. I wanted to hear about that for so long."

Then that lady told me I was welcome to come and visit her. And I started visiting her and met her husband, and they were Sikhs....I started doing yoga...We became very good friends and in both of them I saw God, I really saw people of God....And then I started practicing yoga with them, and as soon as I started

this yoga it was amazing, it was like all the tensions were going away. It was like I experienced a new life with them. And then more and more there was nowhere else to be. I just wanted to be with them and in their vibrations, and learning from them because I could see that they knew a lot, they knew something that I needed to learn. So that's how it started. The nicest thing is that I've found my answers, what I'd been looking for when I was so young and I was so disappointed about society and I thought what I had in my head was a dream, this dream of beauty and goodness. It is possible, you know, you have to work on it but it does exist and there are a lot of beautiful souls. I've found my way; I've found my answers. (3-4)

B. is older than the previous speaker. She, too, is the product of an upper-middle class home, and she too found the lifestyle unsatisfying. She was less bothered by hypocrisy, however, than by what she perceived as an absence of warmth and affection and too intense a concentration on success and achievement. She is intense, humorous, attractive, and her approach to life is intuitive and affective. She reads the biographies of mystics, being herself inclined toward mysticism. Motherhood has been one of her greatest satisfactions.

I was brought up probably three-quarters by the maids and I really loved them, and they would leave, and I was just devastated a couple times. One woman had been with me from the time I was three until nine and she used to touch me, which my mother rarely did, except for a kiss in the morning, but no hugs, and when she left I was devastated. I realized that she had been more of a mother to me than my own mother....My parents were very intellectual and they often talked about other people in a kind of gossipy way and very into politics. And I remember at the dining room table I was just not interested, and I would look out the window and I would go off in my own mind, watch the squirrels and things...I always felt that I was supposed to play this game, but I couldn't stand

it. And I tried, I tried playing it for awhile. I got good grades, and student council and the whole thing. I was very obedient, trying to get strokes in the way that was set out for me to do....And I did it up until I was seventeen. I was Dean's List at a small girls' private school, and I had early admissions....and I was head of the school, and I was miserable. I was so unhappy. I remember one night my roommate, who was a total goof-off, was sitting on her bed eating 3 candy bars -- I never ate a candy bar. She had come in one second before the bell stopped ringing. She was laughing...she had been playing around while I had been studying hard, and I looked at her and I just thought, "She's happier than I am." (AP 8, 7, 1985)

When she started college she began to rebel. She began to use marijuana:

I found it fascinating. I didn't use it socially or frivolously; I used it to go into my own head. And I was very interested that there was a whole world in there and that I had more access to it.
(7)

She took a philosophy course, "about love and God," and she was impressed by the professor and the content:

I spent all my time thinking about it. At the end of the year he said to create something, a paper or something, and I went to him and I said, "I'm just not ready, everything's being doubted and I just can't produce anything." And he said, "Do a dance by the ocean," and gave me an A plus in the class. He was the first person I knew that really affirmed me. (8)

She continued to experiment with drugs and met someone who was trying a form of self-exploration called The Process.

Well, I started doing that with him and he was using acid...so I started working with him...I couldn't look at a book -- it was just so distant, everything was happening inside my head -- I couldn't relate to anything else because there was so much going on in there. My family came to visit and tried to bring me back home but there was no way....I'd started on this path and I had to continue. (8)

Eventually she married this man, and together they left the United States, since he opposed the Vietnam War and was enrolled in the Reserves. They continued to use drugs and to explore the landscapes of the mind.

It was like sometimes being in the center of the universe and seeing creation unfold before my eyes, or sometimes it was an expanding-outward universe into totally non-repeating manifestations of color, design, absolutely exquisitely beautiful....It was like going to the source where every idea and every form and shape and color is stored...it was total bliss. I would just sit with my spine absolutely straight, having these visions, feeling just immersed in what years later I would call God -- at the time I would never use the word God because God had been church-oriented, always hypocritical...but we used to call it the "white light"...it was a sense of being cared for and being part of that, and love, absolute love. (10)

Pregnancy and childbirth intensified her awareness of a benign energy and clarified a new, spiritual identity:

I was just beginning to get an awareness that there was something that understood what was going on, and that was the energy that was making this baby grow and was going to carry me through the birth....I realized how absolutely immaculate a baby is, and I realized how every single thing I thought made a difference...I mean every vibration --they're so absorbent. And I just thought, "If I don't clear up this confused mess my child's going to suffer the way I have"...So I became very directed towards finding a spiritual path because I knew that was the way to clear out my head.... (9)

Meanwhile my husband hadn't come to the same conclusion. At this point we started taking trips again, and just at the point where I would go from meditation into prayer and just have a totally direct sense of the infinite, of the divine...then he would rather talk, or eat, or have sex or something, and there was no way. That communication that I was having was more important than anything else. So I started spending more and more time by myself....Before that we had spent two years together nonstop. I mean we

chopped the wood together, we made the food together, we did everything together....It was as though I'd walked through a veil and I kept thinking he would come because we'd been through so much together, but he didn't come. So we came back to this country. At that time the whole hippy thing was happening. We thought that our time as a couple had happened and our time as a threesome had happened. So we came back to this country and got a VW van. I lay in the back reading The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ....We visited a lot of communes -- I was ready to settle in everywhere, but he wasn't, and we ended up buying some land. (9-10)

She attended a yoga class near their property and became convinced "that all the beautiful experiences of drugs were available through this technique." This led to attendance at a 3HO solstice ceremony and the crystallization and confirmation of a new identity. She had long felt somehow inadequate, impure, and unsound, and the infant's innocence and her responsibility as a mother both highlighted this feeling and intensified her sense of alternative, spiritual possibilities.

...by the end of that solstice, at the wedding ceremony, I realized that I was divorced from my husband. I really wept a lot. It was just as though the past had just gone, and the only identity that I could relate to was that I was the daughter of Yogi BhaJan. And I really trusted him. I talked with him during that solstice....And he just talked to me about how if a mother doesn't respect herself she'll destroy her child, no matter how much she thinks she loves him. If she doesn't respect herself and he comes through her, how can he respect himself. First of all he really heard what I was saying and he understood, but he also saw the beauty in me, and nobility that I didn't even know existed, but I knew that he did. And I stood there weeping. From that solstice I couldn't sleep with my husband anymore; I was divorced. He didn't know it, but I was divorced....I had written my parents telling them I wasn't doing drugs

anymore, and they were very happy and wanted me to come visit. So I packed up -- just another black jersey and another pair of blue jeans and my son -- and I went to Washington, thinking it would just be for a weekend for a Tantric course....And I never went back. I stayed in Washington. I asked Yogiji if I should go to India with him -- he was leading a group over to India that winter -- and he said, "why not?" And I couldn't think of why not, so I went and I started living in the ashram. (10-11)

C. also tells of an unhappy childhood, although hers was not of the poor-little-rich-girl variety. Her origins were less affluent, her troubles and her responsibilities greater. She too experienced longing and a desire to find another way of life, and like the two previous speakers, she came to 3HO at a time of identity change, when she was shedding roles and belief systems. Her response to 3HO was instant, intuitive and affective, and like other intuitive joiners she was actively looking for a community and a path that would affirm her emerging sense of self. The appeal of a caring community was central, and there seems to have been less alienation than in the previous cases, and more emphasis on the positive qualities of 3HO than on relief of pain. Today she is energetic, positive and very busy. She teaches massage and yoga and is the mother of two children who attend school in India.

I was the oldest of five. My mother was mentally ill, my father was really weird, so I just wanted to get out as quickly as I could, and I got involved with some very wild people and I started doing drugs when I was very young -- but I never did anything real heavy. I never did heroin or anything. I just did psychedelics and smoking and

stuff, but for me when I did trip it was like I was looking. I always knew there was something that I was looking for, and I remember when I was little I used to pray a lot and I always felt really close to Jesus and Mary and some of the saints, and I used to just pray and pray. (AP 2a, 5, 1985)

She practically raised her younger brothers and sisters single-handedly. Then, in her eagerness to get away from home, she became a singer in a rock band and became involved with the band's drummer, a decision she soon regretted because he proved abusive. She found help through a feminist women's clinic:

I lived in the middle of downtown....We were very poor; we didn't have any money or anything. I used to go up there and talk to the women and they really supported me a lot. They supported me and they told me I could leave him, and they really helped me to figure out how to do it. And I always felt really a lot of comfort talking to women because they really understood what I was going through. (4)

When her son was a year old she left her husband and returned to her parents' home. She had become disillusioned with the women's movement:

I was very involved in the women's movement and I was very disillusioned with it. I felt like everyone, all the women around me, were turning gay. It was like I just couldn't relate to it at all. There's gotta be something else, you know.... (3)

Asked to describe herself as she was then, she replied:

I wasn't very strong and I didn't know who I was because I could be influenced very easily. I was longing to belong and I was tired. I was really looking for something. Like my friend, I met this guy and he was into Zen, and he started trying to take me to the Zen Center, and it wasn't right for me because it was so into the mind -- it wasn't

into the heart. I was really looking for something that related from the heart....

I was raised as a Roman Catholic. I didn't know anything about yoga or Eastern philosophy and a friend invited me to the Kundalini yoga classes. This was in Baltimore. And I went and I couldn't believe it. I mean the people were so beautiful....Something inside me clicked and I started going every night. I remember walking around the ashram that night and my friend was showing me all the different rooms, and not many people were living there. I was in this one room and said, "Oh wow, I'm going to be living in this room," you know....And that was Thanksgiving weekend and by January I had moved into the ashram....And things happened very quickly, but I felt so comfortable with it; it wasn't like I was being forced or anything. It was just something I really wanted to do....I felt like living in the ashram there was so much love there. It was genuine, giving, and that's what really kept me there....Right away it affected my self esteem; plus doing the yoga twice a day I started feeling so much stronger in myself that I just kept growing really quickly. (4-6)

D. was about to move out of the ashram when I interviewed her. She has left 3HO, but she left with considerable affection for the organization. She is in her 30's, has been employed as a teacher and a technical writer, and is a mother. Hers was a progressive affiliation, based on friendships with others who joined and on her sense that an alternative, transcendent identity was affirmed by Kundalini yoga. She falls between the intuitive joiners and the pragmatic seekers. In her final years in 3HO she found herself torn between career and organization, and she was troubled by what she saw as increasing materialism -- something she joined 3HO to

avoid. Her husband left 3HO before she did, and she finally followed suit, moving on to another Eastern group.

I'd long ago rejected the middle class materialistic life [she looks ironically around her comfortable suburban living room], but it creeps up. I knew there was more to life that I wanted....My mother always wanted to buy something for the house. A new chandelier, for awhile that was her big thing...I knew there was something more but I didn't know how to define it....I didn't have any religious understanding whatsoever. (AP 13, 1-3, 1985)

D. attended a state university in the early 1970's where her friends were hippies. Her boyfriend was politically active, and he and his male friends saw themselves as Robin Hood-like Marxists. D. shared their abhorrence of the Vietnam War, and some of their other political positions, but she did not respect their willingness to "rip off the system," and she didn't feel that political ideology could satisfy her longings. In fact, surrounded by political activity, she began to feel all the more lonely and to lose faith in her own instincts. She was not finding a language for her yearnings and her sense of things, and she felt that her friends were more her boyfriends's than her own. What comfort and enlightenment she could find came from her own writing and from drugs. She described one LSD trip as particularly important in her development:

I remember experiencing visually the energies of time and space. But my own being or consciousness, I felt, was boxed in into one small cube of massive energy, as if consciousness itself (though I had no real mental or intellectual understanding of what

consciousness is) was a massive warehouse of boxes of energies and I was enclosed within one of them. It felt very constraining. Time and space were moving forces, pictured somewhat like the color streams of a vivid rainbow, and I wanted so badly to push out of my box onto those etheric streams. (Letter to the author 12/30/85)

At this point, her sophomore year in college, she and her group of friends registered for some alternative courses, for the fun of it and because they represented "easy A's," and she chose a course in log cabin building. But, "I mistakenly put the wrong computer number down and I ended up in this class on Meher Baba." She decided she might as well stay in the class and found that she liked the concepts she learned there. She was introduced to the idea of a higher self, and to teachings that suggested the possibility of making permanent the expansion of consciousness she experienced fleetingly on drugs. At about the same time a 3HO member arrived in town and started teaching yoga classes. She and the man who is now her husband decided to attend them. In fact, they became so enthusiastic that they began doing yoga seven days a week and attending early morning sadhana.

It was very hard. I was in terrible shape and it was terribly painful. But there was something. I began to fall asleep in all my classes. I got kicked out of a bunch of classes. But one day I was walking to school and I realized, "My God I've been singing out loud at the top of my lungs and I didn't realize it. I'm happy." (AP 13, 2, 1985)

She and her friends were sufficiently intrigued and pleased by the effects of the yoga and meditation to join

the teacher in starting an ashram. The teacher, who became the ashram director, however, proved unstable and dictatorial. She and her friends were increasingly determined to follow the new lifestyle and see where it led, and wanted to stay together as a group. They decided to remove themselves from this director's influence and move to the large Washington ashram instead. After thirteen years in 3HO she could say:

Now I have a much stronger sense of who I am. I feel like 3HO has helped me to see who I am, to see who I really am, what I am inside, what I can be...~~not~~ that it makes it any easier to get there, but at least knowing. I can see my successes and my failures, but I have the belief that it is possible to change and to reach your goal. Without that belief in a higher self for me life would be very empty. (AP 13b, 3, 1985)

E. is small, precise, and energetic. She likes to be busy; she's a doer and a worker. She has held a variety of responsible jobs within the ashram but right now she is mostly employed in child-rearing and is nursing a small baby as we talk. She is a compact, competent, positive sort of person. She is also a good example of a pragmatic seeker who knew what she wanted and went looking for it. She appears to have been displeased with college lifestyles but not painfully alienated and sought an alternative lifestyle. She joined 3HO for cognitive as much as for emotional reasons, and immediately settled down to mastering aspects of the lifestyle.

I just sort of didn't like what I was seeing....People weren't honest, they weren't

direct, and they were lower consciousness. Their motives weren't pure. Basically when you met men...their motives were just to get you....People weren't really conscious is basically what I was seeing....but I started becoming a lot more aware, a lot more conscious of my projection and my affect on people...and this group [3HO] had more of the same wavelength...so I found the ashram, people doing yoga, and I was already vegetarian. I really liked the people there....I started going to morning sadhana; ...and then I just decided that I wanted to live like that...I was interested in language and music. Music has always been what I studied. Those two things are a lot integrated into this way of life, so that's why I think I got into it really soon....As soon as I moved here I learned the first week how to read Gurmulkhi and all that. I used to just go in the morning and recite different prayers and I would cover up [the transliteration] and learn to read the real Gurmulkhi. I just find it very uplifting....Before people weren't into uplifting each other, making things better....They were into getting out of what things were -- they knew it wasn't good -- but a lot of people couldn't seem to figure out how to do it without drugs....Taking drugs was like walking through the door without opening it, getting to higher places but not knowing what was going on. (AP 16, 2-3, 1985)

F. is a nurse and was interviewed in her office, which is fitting since her choice of 3HO membership was entwined from the beginning with her career and her determination to pursue alternative medicine. She was previously introduced; she is the motorcyclist who attended a course on alternative healing. She is clearly a pragmatic seeker.

I was a registered nurse...and I started reading alternative health books....and I started changing my lifestyle and going off to the health food store...and all my friends really thought I was really weird. Now when we would go to a bar I'd get an orange juice and a grilled cheese instead of a hamburger and a wine, or whatever we were having at the time -- just because of my health. I was still doing drugs and things like that that were

just the normal cultural thing. I did marijuana mainly and, every so often, hash. I started doing drugs around sixteen or seventeen. (AP 17a, 7, 1985)

So at the same time I started thinking that what I was doing in the hospital, I didn't like it anymore....So I went over to the National Center for Homeopathy office and they told me there was a course in a week. So I bought a book and started reading and went up to the course for three weeks. (8)

As previously mentioned, she met two Sikhs at the course:

And we all took the course together, and they helped me because I didn't know what I was learning -- I was just going to take the course and then assimilate it over the next six months. So it all started at once for me, really, the alternative medicine, which I'm still with, and the Sikhs.

So anyway we became real close friends....And I decided I didn't want to work in the hospital anymore, and so I actually went on unemployment at the time and studied homeopathy. And I started going to yoga classes....And after awhile I asked if I could start living there -- after I decided that this was for me and I liked everything about it. They said, "No, you can't live here. You have to wait a month to be sure and we don't really have room," and stuff like that. So during that time I stopped doing drugs and I stopped having sex with the man I was living with....So anyway, I moved into the ashram. I wasn't working as a nurse. I was just working in the restaurant 'cause I didn't want to work in a hospital anymore and I didn't know anywhere else to work. But I kept in touch with these doctors that I had met and would go to their office and sit-in on their patients every so often. And also we had a whole homeopathic clinic right within the ashram. Someone within the ashram was already doing homeopathy for the people -- whenever anybody would get sick they would go to this person -- and that person was just about to leave for India, so I kind of stepped into his place.

I liked the way they raised their children, and I was already doing yoga and meditation, so it was just more of that same thing. And Yogi Bhajan, the teacher, really had very little to do with my entrance. (9-10)

G. is a comparatively new member and definitely a convenience joiner, albeit one who has had a long-term connection with 3HO and an off-and-on interest in spiritual matters. She is cautious and has taken affiliation one step at a time; she is also quite droll, a pleasure to interview.

Well, I guess it was 1968 while I was in college, I guess I started to become interested in the New Age and expanding my consciousness. You know, I didn't start real young because, being raised a Catholic, I went to parochial school and none of that stuff was touching us. So I was eighteen, even nineteen, before I started doing any drugs. I was a little bit older and more mature when I started doing it so I feel like I made a more mature decision about using them....That's probably why I never did anything on the heavy side like some of my friends...[I was] hippy in the sense that I began to do drugs, and we started talking about "the movement," and we started talking about the Vietnam War, and going to protests and getting involved in changing our consciousness, and sex before marriage. And when I really considered myself really being a hippy in consciousness and everything was when I started to travel. My girlfriend and I, who later went into the ashram, she and I started going travelling and we were still college students just, you know, looking for long-haired guys, smoking marijuana every once in awhile and just having fun....She just called me one summer and said, "let's go." So we did, and packed up all the stuff in our car, had all our money, all our possessions, our tent and the whole bit. (AP 10, 20-21, 1985)

She met people with an interest in things spiritual and she felt more comfortable with such concerns than with political issues:

I'm not a really political person, and when we started moving into more spiritual and esoteric and farmy type things I started getting into that more.
(21)

In her travels she met the friend of a friend who was involved with 3HO, and periodically after this she took yoga lessons and made contact with 3HO (and other yoga groups) as she traveled around the country for the next nine years.

So it's been in and out, but I never had any idea in my mind that I was ever going to commit myself to being a Sikh or being in 3HO. I had no interest whatsoever. Even when I moved in four years ago it was only, sheerly, because of my financial situation....Then, because I wanted to get my spiritual life in shape, I started doing sadhana. I had no intention of being a Sikh. (5)

She moved into the ashram solely because she needed a place to live. An ashram resident found a place for her, which she viewed as a temporary arrangement. She continued to plan further travel and to consider a variety of possible careers, but she received an unexpected response from people in the ashram:

"How long have you been doing this?" And it made me start thinking, you know, and looking at my life, and I felt like, "I'm not so sure I want to go do that again, I've been doing it for so many years. I wanted to be a dancer and I wanted to be a chiropractor and I wanted to be a this and a that and, you know, what am I really looking for?" I found the spiritual part of me and then I started feeling I was at home. So every time I'd say "I'm going to leave" because of this or that, they'd just say to me, "Well the door is open but I mean, you know, where are you going to go, what are you going to do, how about your spiritual life?"

She kept delaying her departures, deciding to stay "for another two months:"

I was finding like really good friendships here and my spiritual self was definitely being enhanced. I was growing incredibly. I mean after two years of

delaying it for two months I found my growth was incredible. And I just thought, "I'm not leaving here until I'm really sure there's something that can do the same or better. I don't want to leave without that." So then after about two years I said to myself, "Alright, if you're going to be here why don't you start doing some work on yourself instead of complaining, "oh, I'd rather do this or I'd rather do that." (6)

And so she stays, although she has not taken any vows.

H. has also not taken any vows, but is living close to the ashram and working for one of the businesses. She has been interested in spiritual matters for a number of years, but has followed a different spiritual teacher, one who teaches raja (mental) yoga. It was because of this teacher's suggestion that she do some physical yoga that she first attended one of Yogi Bhanjan's classes. She is a businesswoman and has traded commodities since she was eighteen. She is single, poised and independent, and as she put it, "I can trade commodities and fly planes and all this kind of stuff, but I'm afraid of the kitchen." She was bored with her job when she first encountered 3HO, and she says that Yogi Bhanjan is correct when he accuses her of a lack of occupational commitment. Hers is clearly a case of recruitment by Yogi Bhanjan.

I'd never seen a yogi in action, and it was pretty amazing with the fruit and the pillows and all the people were touching his feet and everything. It was just amazing to see that, and I'm sure my curiosity was blasting out. So he called me up on stage....I was looking around because I didn't think he was talking to me....So I went up on stage and he asked me all these questions, and he was so charismatic and his energy was just so neat and

warm and wonderful to be around....I got this really high feeling....Being around him I felt like I was drunk or something -- goofy....We had the second part of the Tantra, and then at the end again I was just watching everything...and he yelled over from really far away, "Invite her to the party." (AP 11, 2, 1985)

She attended the party and thus began her association with 3HO. Yogi Bhanjan's interest in her continued and she was courted, and sometimes pressured:

He kept giving me a hard time about not being committed to my job. And he kept giving me this hard time about "You're twenty-five years old and when you're thirty you don't still want to be confused about what you're doing"....He was really being firm with me --he wasn't being Joe Happy. So everyday I would talk to him, and he would say a lot of stuff to me about just being committed to something and working and having a career and what are you going to do with your life....He made me start to cry because he was really giving me a hard time about my job experiences....He really wanted me to stay here. And then I said, "I feel a lot of fear," and he made me do this chant....It sounds sort of funny right now, but he was just putting out a lot of trust, like I should trust in him. He kept saying, "Trust me and trust yourself"...[then he made a business proposition and said] "I'll make you a good businesswoman, and I want to be proud of you. I want strong women and graceful women." So I just said, "OK." I agreed to it. It's pretty hard to disagree with the Siri Singh Sahib. He's quite powerful. (7-8)

Resource mobilization, organization maintenance, identity and the incorporation of alternative ethics

While its original appeal appears to have been primarily to counterculture women who were dissatisfied with their lives or in a process of identity change, 3HO has always appealed to a diversity of motives, values and interests. It rapidly became an ideological umbrella that

could shelter women of mystical or retreating temperament, as well as those who sought rapprochement with rationalized institutions, and those who had never relinquished the achievement ethic. There was little room for the political or feminist activist unless she re-interpreted her beliefs in a more spiritual or psychological form, or for the individual who constantly criticized the organization and its leadership, or, of course, for the individual who wouldn't at least accept the possibility of a higher, spiritual realm, but beyond these limitations, SHO could serve a variety of needs and purposes. It could serve as a refuge, a caring community, a new source of identity, a place to experiment with alterations in consciousness, a place of business and earning, or a way-station. The need to create boundaries and maintain devotion and commitment was balanced by the need to adapt to changing circumstances, to mobilize needed resources, rationalize the organization, and succeed in the marketplace. Expressive values were balanced by some utilitarian traits, and leaders responded to the interests of a diverse membership.

If the fledgling organization was to become an established and growing concern it was useful to recruit members with a variety of resources -- funds, commitment, organizational ability, public relations skills, and the like (Zald and McCarthy 1979) -- and it was politic to

introduce more utilitarian elements to the counterculture base. Although these elements were more rapidly introduced in the late 1970's, Yogi BhaJan has never ignored them. He has always appealed to both utilitarian and countercultural ethics. He has emphasized mystical knowledge, the primacy of experience, the "highs" induced by yoga, and the need to establish congruency between self and environment. But he has always wrapped his package in contemporary, rational, and what he would probably consider Western, trimmings. He claims that the 3HO lifestyle is above all else pragmatic. It works, he says, and it will produce healthy, happy, holy people. He often describes his message not as religion or a philosophy but as a "technology." He values utilitarian skills and success and has encouraged the creation of a highly structured organization.

It would appear that he has tried to recruit and hold members of both utilitarian and countercultural mindsets, and to create an environment in which both can be employed, depending upon circumstance. The ideologies developed by social movements are often ambiguous, and thus flexible (Gerlach and Hine 1970). This leaves room for individual interpretation of various tenets and for their adaption to changing economic and political realities. The incorporation of alternative ethics, and of cultural tensions, can thus be a practical response to the realities of resource mobilization and organizational maintenance.

There are probably a variety of reasons for the membership to embrace so broad an ethos and so ambiguous an ideology. Those women who were in a state of identity confusion or transformation, and those who were alienated from or discontented in their social environment, were impelled by a need to find or affirm alternative identities and values and were often willing to trust, experiment, and suspend disbelief. Those with counterculture backgrounds were in many cases accustomed to assuming new beliefs and lifestyles, even if these had opaque, contradictory or dubious elements; these are facts of life to the cultural pioneer. They were willing to try a variety of prescriptions to see where these would lead. Those who had lost faith in the counterculture or in political solutions, or had never really been comfortable with a political idiom, could try an alternative approach to social and cultural reform (see Kent 1986). Those who joined for more pragmatic reasons could sample 3HO beliefs and practices, sifting and choosing among them. And all members were soon involved in the shared work of creating an alternative reality, and in the everyday business of adapting pragmatically to situations. They were often less concerned with ambiguity, contradictions, or alterations in mind set than with the practicalities of daily life.

Journal, 1985

I often feel uncomfortable as I drive out to Herndon or Great Falls -- sometimes tense; sometimes defensive of my charging energy and comparatively worldly lifestyle; sometimes subdued, my usual thought processes somehow in suspension. I am a bit anxious, and am aware that I am about to cross a boundary. Often there's discomfort, as though it will take real physical energy to cross it, a feeling of recoiling before the alien, or bracing in order to take on my own ambivalence about the lifestyle.

Usually I am open-minded, but on some days I lead with what in 3HO would no doubt be called my negative mind. I go expecting to be annoyed by repeated phrases and ideas; certain of these regularly bother me. One is the assumption that some 3HO members appear to make that only they are "working on themselves," as if most really adult people were not struggling with their character flaws. Another is an implied assumption that most marriages are mired in competition and only they have figured out how to maintain stable family structures (I doubt any of them have been married as long as I have if you get right down to it. And I seem to have done it in spite of myself almost; certainly not by making a big principle of monogamy). Not to mention all the talk of "drugs and alcohol" as though everyone outside of 3HO were on the verge of, if not

already hopelessly trapped in, addiction of one sort or another. Oh, and the blithe assumption that the Women's Movement has turned into nothing more than hopping from bed to bed, or lesbianism, that liberation has only meant being more of a sex object than ever. I'll want to argue (and sometimes will), will want to mention the benefits of feminism, or suggest that their dependency on yoga and meditation can resemble an addiction (though a generally positive one) given their expectation that they may crash if it is removed -- or tell them that I know of plenty of women who are vibrant and constructive and aggressive and uninhibited. And I'll feel like an immature ethnographer for responding so straightforwardly and will correct myself and try to empathize more, and will mostly succeed.

At other times the sense of strangeness will dissipate as the interview progresses, and will be replaced by fascination, empathy, and affection. But there sometimes comes a point at which my mind stops empathizing and absorbing and answering. It seems to suffer from overload and to shut down; there are times when I walk out of an interview or a workshop and can't remember what was said ten minutes previously. Sometimes I wonder if I am not only experiencing an overload but have simply lost my "own" voice and perspective because I have kept silent about so many of my views. I experience a tamping down of identity and then when I climb into the car there's a slow revival

as different personal voices begin to speak up, or at least to whisper.

As the Efficient Ethnographer I want to engage my will and retrieve my memory, analyze what has happened, maybe stop somewhere along the way for a cup of coffee (Sikhs don't drink coffee) and jot down some notes. But then, I'd like to forget it all until it is time to transcribe the tapes, to segregate my everyday life from the experience and the belief system. As a Mass-Mediated Person, I turn the radio to a rock station and sing along at the top of my voice while driving fast along the Dulles Access Road and so replace 3HO programming with media programming -- returning to the rapid rhythms of rock after such quiet, measured voices, speeding up to the culturally-approved pace. My more rationalized self may begin a conversation with a generalized version of the Sikh Other -- arguing points, asserting the values of a secular, academic, career-centered and feminist life.

But the Neutral Mind is at work too. It points out that I am returning to addictions -- coffee and the car radio -- and that I am using these, to some degree, to numb my consciousness and submerge my awareness in the everyday slumber. It notes my eagerness to return to my usual routines and mental frameworks, to my constructed reality. It notes the collision of realities and the constructed nature of the realities on each side of the cultural

divide, and my need to submerge myself in one, or to prove one correct. And notes itself noting, and notes itself noting it's noting...

CHAPTER V

GOING THROUGH CHANGES:
INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND
ADAPTATION TO THE NEW LIFESTYLE

I.

THE EARLY YEARS

INTRODUCTION

As children of middle class suburbia, 3HO members were raised on many of the values of a modern mobile society: individual striving, career advancement, progress, and material well-being. The hip subculture in which many found a temporary niche opposed many of these values while maintaining the underlying emphasis on change and mobility. Social arrangements that might result in stasis or rigidity were rejected. Thus the hip man or woman did not expect human ties to last beyond the point at which they contributed to personal growth. To attempt to tie another individual to oneself, as in marriage, was often a suspect undertaking. Social roles and social conventions were equally suspect. Self-esteem was to be detached from conventional statuses and achievements. To be tied to one persona, to a fixed role set, to a system of material rewards, or to a particular world-view was undesirable. On the other hand, personal growth, travel, a series of relationships, an active sampling of philosophies and cultures, experimentation with drugs and, generally, a wide

tasting of life were valued. The hip culture, at least in its more ideal form, transformed the modern emphasis on socio-economic mobility into a mobility of psyche, identity and culture.

Although many of the men and women who encountered 3HO in the organization's formative years were questioning some of the tenets of counterculture ideology, or felt that they were ready to move on to something new, they brought with them their expectations, or, at least, the rhetoric, of continual change and personal evolution. Their flexibility and willingness to experiment were a valuable organizational resource; few organizations can expect such receptivity in members. Many have now invested years in efforts to alter their cognitive processes and attitudes. They have struggled to absorb another culture and an unfamiliar religion, to adapt new ways of eating, dressing, speaking, working and loving. At the same time, their organization has changed dramatically in emphasis and structure, and, of course, they have contributed to and adjusted to this transformation.

Much of this experience is referred to in 3HO circles as "going through changes." This chapter explores some of these changes. I describe some of the major cognitive and emotional adjustments that 3HO members have faced. I examine ways that members have accounted for these and reconciled them with pre-existing beliefs and with

practical requirements. I also look at the life course in 3HO and at the ways that particular stages have both fostered and reflected the process of institutionalization.

The term, "going through changes," has a variety of connotations. It can refer to modifications in lifestyle such as becoming a vegetarian or overcoming habits such as alcohol use and caffeine consumption. It can refer to the transition from hippy "chick" to 3HO "lady," with all the attendant changes in behavior and attitudes. It is sometimes used in reference to the adjustments required by ashram life: learning to live and work with the various personalities, or learning to better assert one's own needs and beliefs. "The changes" also include experiences of spiritual testing and of "going through" problems rather than escaping or sidestepping them. The term can also refer to maturational stages: getting married, bearing children, changing occupations, or moving to the suburbs. It can cover anything from everyday adjustments to major upheavals, and it often implies changes in levels of sensitivity and awareness. It often implies conscious effort and considerable self-awareness. As one woman defined the concept:

I guess it's evaluating all your actions, like not just doing things unconsciously. Constantly changing. Constantly growing. Constantly evaluating what you're doing to see if it's in a righteous manner or if it's an uplifting action, that kind of thing. Because if you're not going through changes you're either awfully perfect or you're not conscious of how you're acting. It can

be a more specific thing...like you're changing some particular habit pattern. (AP 16, 10, 1985)

INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND THE LIFE COURSE

The Patterning of the Life Course

Although there is considerable variation in individual experiences within 3HO and Sikh Dharma, "the changes" are patterned. One reason for the patterning is the intersection of personal and organizational biographies that has occurred as the organization and its early members have matured together. The outlines of a typical 3HO life course can be discerned in the changes that 3HO women report. The entering individual is attracted by the yoga, meditation, and community feeling that she encounters in an ashram. She begins to spend time in the community, approaching it from her particular position on the continuum. There are glimmers of a new sense of self and of new ways of looking at her past and her future. There may be a sense that sadhana and community life combine to enhance the individual's effectiveness and ability to be the kind of person she most desires to be, that the real self can more closely approximate the ideal. Depending upon such factors as her background, her talents, her proximity to the leadership, and her friendship patterns she explores aspects of the lifestyle that she finds particularly relevant or rewarding. She also begins to reassess her biography in terms of 3HO concepts such as

commitment, grace, consciousness and the neutral mind. She may turn to her ashram director, or his wife, or to Yogi Bhajan for everyday decisions. She probably begins to seriously explore the Sikh religion and eventually will take 3HO vows and Amrit. She will most likely get married, and the marriage may well be arranged for her. She has children whom she hopes to raise as "saints," and "works on" herself in an effort to become what she wishes her children to become. While these children are quite young she concentrates on mothering, although she may also work outside of the home, and she sends the children to the local Khalsa school. When they are older she is encouraged to send them to school in India, and once they have left she picks up the pace of her ashram or outside activities. At any juncture her spiritual teacher may ask her to change her occupation or her place of residence or to marry a particular individual. He may even ask her to have, or not to have, a child. If she is quite serious about this spiritual path she will struggle to obey and to overcome any resistance that her ego may offer. She will have periods of greater and lesser devotion and concentration, but ideally her constant goal will be to intensify her awareness of the guru within and better project its light wherever she is engaged.

So bare an outline cannot communicate the texture of the experience. It can only highlight the emergent

structuring of 3HO lives as they are molded into consistent shapes by a variety of factors. Many of the forces that pattern the life course in the dominant culture also affect 3HO women. Additionally, there are internal forces, such as norms favoring suspension of disbelief, experimentation, commitment to the lifestyle, obedience, conscious self-presentation and positive thinking. There are also shared history, particularly important in the Washington ashram, and the power and rewards vested in a hierarchical organization.

The individual who joins 3HO encounters new beliefs and practices that she must evaluate and assimilate. She must also weave for herself a place in a web of friendships, ashram politics, peer pressures and emergent normative and reward systems. Ashram directors are powerful people, and were even more powerful in the early years. They, and the people close to them, can mobilize ashram talents, offer rewards, render advice that must be seriously considered, and pull a variety of ideological levers. Informants say that there has been a nationwide trend toward more egalitarian ashrams, but a hierarchy remains -- one that mediates the practice and interpretation of Sikhism and that affects the everyday social experience of members.

Because members encounter unfamiliar traditions they often lack the background necessary for interpreting the validity and significance of beliefs and customs. This

leaves them dependent upon the leadership for direction. Leaders are expected to epitomize Sikh ideals and to take the lead in explaining, elaborating, and legitimating group customs. They are imitated and trusted, although some members may question leaders' interpretations or hang back until they arrive at their own understandings. Particularly in the excitement and the experimentation of the formative years many members sought to huddle under the leadership umbrella and bask in the warmth of group acceptance.

Members' counterculture backgrounds had prepared them to keep an open mind when confronted with the new ideas and patterns. In fact, an outsider may be struck by their unwillingness to dismiss any esoteric teaching out of hand, whether it is astrological, Tantric or magical. Members subscribe to the norm that one should at least give a new idea or practice a hearing and a try. This can include a willingness to try to believe a teaching or to behave as if one believes it. Thus a member may cultivate an awareness of subtle changes in energy levels when donning a turban, or work at believing in reincarnation and interpreting her biography as proof of this phenomenon. She may have her doubts but she will try to think of herself as a graceful woman. She may attempt to believe that all experience is an expression of God's will or that Yogi Bhajan is an extraordinary being.

Magical beliefs and Bhajan's emphasis on unconscious processes reinforce this tendency. Yogi Bhajan teaches that the practices of Kundalini yoga, meditation and chanting have an unconscious and inevitable effect. One needn't even understand the words of the chants or notice the daily effects of sadhana in order to enjoy their cumulative benefits. If the individual experiments and notices no immediate results this needn't indicate that a practice is ineffectual. She is told that change will eventually occur and she need only persist, secure in the knowledge -- so appealing to people in the West -- that she is "growing" with the support of a "powerful technology." While she is trying to restructure habits and cognitive patterns, it is acceptable not only to think "as if" something were true, but to act that way. While awaiting more solid results the yoga student is told that she can always "fake it."

Thus there is a predisposition to verify teachings and to find within the self the approved emotions, sensations, attitudes, and motivations; or, failing this, at least to act for awhile as though one were indeed in possession of them. This may extend to a willingness to accept leaders' directives, especially where these are accompanied by personal benefits. Such benefits may take the form of self-esteem, insight, influence, belonging, new skills and knowledge, excitement, or economic advancement. Thus the

value placed on experimentation, tolerance, and change has been a significant factor in members' persistence and, ironically, in the institutionalization and rationalization of their organization.

Persistence and institutionalization are further enhanced by the 3HO emphasis upon "commitment." Yogi Bhajan regularly criticizes the Western character, depicting it as spoiled, fickle, and undisciplined. Westerners, he complains, do not take responsibility for their impact upon the world around them or willingly make and maintain commitments. Instead they dodge their responsibilities by divorcing their mates, leaving jobs when the going gets tough, and despoiling the environment. The 3HO ideal, he says, should be just the opposite. Members should maintain their commitment to Sikhism and their responsibilities to others in the face of all odds. They should grow by "going through" the challenges that this must entail. His may be an astute reading of American culture but it also functions to sanction conformity. The individual who questions practices, confronts the leadership, refuses to wear bana or to remain married to the spouse chosen for her can be portrayed as an individual who is failing in her commitments or as one who is trying to avoid the rigors attached to her chosen spiritual path (as indeed she may be). The norm of commitment can discourage critical thinking about the organization. It

can also encourage extensive sense-making as individuals try to interpret difficulties and resistance in organizationally and religiously acceptable ways. Usually, difficulties are attributed to upbringing, the ego, or the negative mind. There is concern with overcoming personal "blocks."

Thus there are clearly norms and pressures that tend to mold lives to fit the organizational patterns. Often, however, very little pressure is required since members join with enthusiasm - even with euphoria. 3HO originated in an effort to give form to the ineffable, to give shape to what Peter Berger calls the "precarious fabric" of an alternative reality (Berger 1970, 1095). Such an effort can be an adventure and a challenge for the participants. During the best periods, a satisfying sense of warmth and unity sweeps through the group as members are united in affection and a shared mission. Lives flow together and new forms emerge.

Emergent Spirituality: Yoga

Early members felt they joined a way of being and a vision, as much as an organization:

A lot of the things about our lifestyle have sort of evolved. They weren't there when we first joined. We weren't wearing turbans. We barely knew what the do's and don'ts of our lifestyle were. We were just attracted...to me it was more of a vibration. I had an experience during our yoga classes of just great happiness and feeling like there was some part of me that it was tapping

into that I liked, and it felt right, and so I continued. And this is where it has taken us. (AP 7, 5, 1985).

Today, when a woman first affiliates herself with 3HO her horizons are typically limited to the local ashram and her acquaintances there. She has her own spiritual and personal concerns, be they community life, yoga, meditation, or the businesses. Her knowledge of the structure, history, and philosophy of the organization is limited, and there is no immediate commitment to embrace the whole of the lifestyle, just as in the early years there was little sense of structure and guidelines. Members generally can proceed at their own pace, selectively adopting elements of the lifestyle when they are ready, although subtle pressures may be applied:

At first you're interested by the yoga and the power it has and the way it makes you feel, and the Kundalini yoga develops the spiritual side in you. So more and more you become spiritual, and it's not just the physical side of the yoga that attracts you. Then you become very interested in the meditation and the diets and all the different things to cleanse your body, to tune, all the different things that can help you tune your body and mind and soul....And after that you can get into the Gurmulkhi, and prayers...so you discover the power of the Gurmulkhi because it has a certain effect on your brain....You get more and more committed. Sikhism...it's infinite; it's like you get into a side of it but you realize there is much more; there is no end. (AP 9, 7, 1985)

Few interviewees describe a sudden transformation, a handing over of self to guru, such as one sometimes finds in the literature on Eastern religions. A sense of

rightness, of joy and relief at finding a caring community and a setting where spiritual matters take priority is more common, although several cited special times when they were transported by the yoga and meditation:

This one sadhana that we did, we did a two-and-one-half-hour meditation, and every morning when I did it I would feel all tingly afterwards...we would sit outside and we would change the meditation so at the end of the meditation the sun would be coming up over the mountains....I would always feel like I had just plugged into an electric socket.
(AP 15, 5, 1985)

There are also examples of close identification with Yogi Bhajan:

I remember on that trip to India every time I saw yogiji I cried. And it was very cleansing, but I was also very much in pain. Everything from the past was just disintegrating and I didn't know what was in the future. But I still knew it was right and even though it was painful I had to do it for my son...and at one point I said, "What am I going to do with myself?" and he [Yogi Bhajan] said, "I'll stand by you." And every time I became upset I would just meditate on him at my third eyepoint and I would see him and he would be there, and it would just lift, whatever pain was there, every single time. It never once failed. (AP 8, 11, 1985)

Such experiences are difficult to communicate, and members are often reticent when speaking about them with outsiders, so they may be more common than I realize, but the more typical description suggests incremental changes rather than intense emotions or sudden epiphanies. Effort and intentionality are common, and an altered sense of self evolves slowly. As one person described the early attitude: "We didn't feel different. We just felt like

normal people who were trying to do this certain thing." New feelings, attitudes, and beliefs are slowly constructed.

The first changes are often associated with sadhana. This speaker describes a change she became aware of only after the fact:

It's more of a security within the self. I still don't think my self-esteem is as good as it should be, but when you relate to that thing that's higher than you, though within you, you don't have to rely on other people and things like that so you have more security. Before I became a Sikh I was the same person, but I did get down sometimes and I think I was insecure a lot of the time -- men problems and things like that, just of my own doing -- but I didn't feel good unless I had something happening for me....It's like a deep healing that happens when you do the meditations, deep healing of the mind and the soul and the subconscious...it just happened by itself over several years...I don't have that insecure feeling anymore. (AP 17a, 6, 1985)

Most of the women in the ashram would probably describe themselves as more secure and more aware of the beauty within themselves than they were when they began doing yoga and meditation. And they would claim that they experience a special kind of energy:

I felt the Kundalini energy, and physically I felt all this energy that I didn't know I had. And the meditation, the feeling of oneness with other people and the expansion of the self into the higher selves...and the sound current -- I really tuned into that. (AP 5, 3, 1985)

They would also say that they have been learning for years to control that energy, learning to raise it through

the various chakras, or centers, in the body, and becoming more "sensitive" in the process:

when you do meditation you're raising energy from your lower chakras to your higher ones, and when the energy's at your heart center you can relate through your heart center to different people. You can feel what they feel; you're more sensitive that way. If you're in your lower centers you're just more into yourself and what you're feeling. (AP 5, 10, 1985)

For periods of time the individual experiences herself as a receptacle for the Kundalini energy, a point in vast fields of energy, tuned into the universal sound current and into others' feelings. The physical body and the individual mind become pinpoints on a newly drawn map.

As the early members experimented with Kundalini yoga and meditation and learned their first mantras, they were also altering other aspects of their daily lives. From the beginning Yogi Bhanan was critical of much of the hip lifestyle. He assured his followers that drugs were not the best way to get high. He taught that a healthy diet, cleanliness, and regular exercise were prerequisites for a spiritual life. He criticized sexual experimentation, arguing that it was a denial of women's essential nature and her need for security, and that sexual energies should, in any case, be transmuted to a higher, spiritual form. He criticized the expressive style of the counterculture, arguing in favor of self-control, tact, and constant awareness of one's "communications." An ex-customs official with an economics degree, he assured 3HO members

that poverty was not an essential ingredient in the spiritual life and that comfort without material attachment should be the goal.

Institutionalization: Bana

In the early years 3HO members wore a variety of clothing styles, and these varied from ashram to ashram. Early on, Yogi Bhaĵan suggested that white was an ideal choice because the "vibrations" were pure and the distinctive white dress would draw attention to members, and thus to the guidance and service that they could render. So, although clothes were at first drawn from members' hippy wardrobes, more and more members began to dress in white, or at least in light colors. As participants in the counterculture they already had worn some Eastern clothing and they continued to experiment along these lines. In the Washington case, many of the women went shopping in Georgetown one day and decided to buy churidars and short kurtas for the men. Then,

the men started wearing the kurtas with white Levis and for years that was the Ahimsa men's uniform. It kind of just went through the rest of the East Coast ashrams of 3HO and became the East Coast garb. Meanwhile in 1973, after a visit to India, women started to wear the traditional Indian-style Punjabi dress...over the churidars. Finally, as everyone learned to sew this outfit, it became the thing to wear. (Letter to the author, 11, Sept. 25, 1985)

Once such changes were introduced or endorsed, members had (and have) various ways of adapting them to their own

frames of reference. This may be done easily and lightly, an attitude captured in the phrase, "white is fun to wear." Sometimes a woman cheerfully admits her conformity to group norms:

I didn't feel like I had to wear a turban and I didn't feel like I had to wear all white, but because everybody else is doing it that's what you do. But you try to find out the underlying reasons why we cover our heads and why we do this and that, but still it's kind of vague sometimes because...I'm not that sensitive that I can feel energy being lost or something when I don't have my turban on. But I can feel a protective kind of feeling, insulation from outside.... (AP 17b, 1, 1985)

For others, it requires considerable accounting and interpretation:

Everybody started wearing white. It was Yogiji's idea to wear white. It had to do, of course, with the vibrations. I didn't wear white because I had two little kids -- two very active boys -- and I said, "This is ridiculous...I can't wear white with these two little kids." Well, just about then was the first women's camp, well, really a conference....I was willing to try what they were saying...the thing that got me -- you can always get me if you come at me from a scientific standpoint -- was the vibration of the color....When I went to the conference I only took white clothes. I said, "Okay, I'll try wearing only white while I'm there...I felt better in light colors. (AP 6b, 11-12, 1985)

Hers is a typical case of an individual who is not eager to adopt an emerging group norm but who does want the satisfactions of group belonging and of shared beliefs. She holds out for some time until she encounters a reason for conforming that is congruent with her self-image or her belief system. In this case, the woman speaking prided

herself on being an intellectual, and when faced with a "scientific" explanation for the custom she was willing to give it a try. She also acted in accordance with two other 3HO norms: willingness to experiment and readiness to experience heightened sensitivity. Not all 3HO people say they can feel the physical effects of wearing white, but some do, and a belief in such effects and in the desirability of feeling them is widespread. Thus she rationalized her behavior in terms of other values and norms, both 3HO and external, that were available, important to her, and applicable.

Similarly, a member who had wearied of dating and wanted to be spared men's advances, emphasized the modesty aspects of wearing bana:

It's like wherever we go it's to remind us that we are like a servant of God. We are a spiritual person. When you are dressed like that you can't misbehave....I think the spiritual robe is something very nice, something very special....When you dress, when you put it on, it's like you dress for God. You don't dress to be sexy, those kinds of things.... (AP 9, 10, 1985)

When Bailey did the research for his study, turbans were standard apparel on the East Coast but not in the more independent Western ashrams. At first only the men wore them; Yogi BhaJan said that the turban would channel and conserve a man's energy and protect him from stress and confusion. Later women began "tying a turban." 3HO tradition has it that Yogi BhaJan's secretary (Premka)

first tried one on for fun. He saw it, liked it, and praised it, and so other women began to imitate her.

Among those who adopted the custom early on were two Black women:

It was just about the time that everybody was going natural lifestyle. In the Black community Afros were in and I was wearing an Afro, but I was getting tired of the Afro. "Black Krishna" had some discussion with the Siri Singh Sahib about sex and he said that the soul had no sex, and therefore if men wore turbans women should wear turbans too. And she sort of said, "Oh," and she put on a turban....So she and I started wearing turbans and other women started wearing turbans, different styles of turbans at different ashrams. Whoever was the wife of the head of the ashram -- however she tied her turban all the women in the ashram tied it exactly that way. (AP 6b, 12, 1985)

Again, the custom was accommodated to preexisting values, this time to ethnic identity and a preference for a "natural lifestyle." The role of the leadership is also quite clear.

In the next case the norms favoring experimentation and sensitivity are emphasized:

Well, I was still living in Baltimore, and only the men were wearing turbans. Some of the women were wearing scarves, but mostly we all just wore our hair up. And then I heard that Premka, Yogi Bhajan's Secretary, had tied a turban, so I told one of the men, I said, "I'm going to teach a yoga class tonight and I want to wear a turban. Can you lend me some material?" So he lent some material and I tied the thing on my head, and it looked really weird. But I put it on and it felt really good. I taught a yoga class with it and I just couldn't believe how different I felt. I felt real centered and I felt this energy just like all in my top chakras.... (AP 2b, 4, 1985)

While many people on the East Coast thought bana was "fun" or energizing, many people on the West Coast evidently rebelled at the prospect of wearing a turban. Even in the East it can still be a source of discomfort or contention. Members have experienced job discrimination because of it, and it often creates social distance at work and in the community. Children have been teased for wearing their turbans to public schools and 3HO people are subject to ridicule and stray comments:

Getting used to wearing the clothes, letting my hair grow -- we don't shave -- to me that was hard...looking different was hard for me...I talked to people, talked with the head of the ashram....It still bothers me sometimes. I'll be walking down the street and someone will say, "Hey, turban head," or something less reverent than that; but it's not as bad as it used to be. (AP 15, 6, 1985)

And from a woman who has decided to wear bana at home and ordinary clothing to work:

they had open house the week before I started work there....I went in full bana. It was uncomfortable for them. It was a cocktail-brunch kind of thing and they were drinking. They would all be talking, and when they turned around and there's this woman with a turban on her head, they would take step back like, "Oh, excuse me!" (AP 18, 2, 1986)

Her grown children were not very receptive either:

That's the other thing: we don't cut our hair. It's offensive to my kids. It's offensive to other people I know.... When your son takes you to the beach for the day and you've got all this hair...and my daughters too; they're very style conscious at that age....I've wished I could shave for just the summer months. (AP 18, 3, 1986)

When asked why she bothered with bana, given all the complications it added to her life, she replied:

Yogi Bhajan is our teacher...it's the relationship you have with your teacher. You know what they've told you and these are the things that he's put down, and that's it. And the cutting of the hair is one of the 5K's....I've gone out before, had my feelers out there, felt what it's like to dress in street clothes and shave and live like that. It does affect my consciousness. I found myself living on a lower rung, so to speak, spiritually, when I was out there. (AP 18, 4, 1986).

In fact, when she did shave once she "felt like a bald eagle....It's almost like Samson -- it's my strength. It's like taking the fur off an animal."

It is not surprising that she felt like an animal without its fur given the force of habit and the symbolic power of bana and the "Five K's." They express group identity and signify a distinctive lifestyle, a special relationship to the world and its energies, and a bond with other Sikhs that crosses national boundaries. They are believed to protect the individual, to give her a special status, and to spur her on in her endeavor to lead an exemplary life. If they are also sources of discrimination and self-consciousness, then they are all the more emblematic of a lifestyle that demands that one become a "saint-soldier" and overcome a multitude of challenges and obstacles along the way.

There are people, a small minority, who do not wear white or a turban but still participate in sadhana and remain closely associated with 3HO. There are also a few people who separate work and ashram life and wear street clothes to work because of dress codes or the nature of

their employment. The trend, and the pressure, however, is to don bana. Its introduction and spread is representative of the institutionalization process in 3HO, with trials and sampling and an intuitive, experimental approach typical of the early stages, followed by formalization and enforcement in the latter stages. At first there was an element of play in the experimentation with styles and the eagerness to keep up and wear the latest ashram fashions. Then Yogi Bhajan provided a variety of reasons, ranging from the magical to the practical, for the practice. In this he was echoed by the ashram directors and their wives, and they were enthusiastically imitated by some of their followers, while others hung back or resisted. Those who retarded the process were given time to find their own way to conformity, although those who resisted too long or too hard often found that pressure was applied. Some left, and those who remained because they believed in the benefits of the lifestyle and the necessity of obedience on a spiritual path were eager to belong, even to be in the forefront, so they worked at sense-making and interpretation. They fit the new practices into pre-existing attitudes, goals, and stocks of knowledge.

Interpreting the Teachings: Grace

One of Yogi Bhajan's arguments for wearing bana was that it was a modest way of dressing. Women's clothing, he

maintained, should cover the entire body and be designed to enhance the wearer's spirituality and comfort, not her sexual appeal. Women were sacred expressions of Adi Shakti and their clothing should reinforce and protect this reality. Women should not even be unclothed in one another's company. They were to be equally modest in speech; women were not to swear and certainly not to indulge in much discussion of sexual matters or express sexual bravado.

Predictably, the response to this was mixed -- from a hippy point of view such modesty amounted to prudery:

The first yoga class I went to my son wanted to nurse. I didn't think anything of it, but the next day one of the Sikhs said to me, "Sikhs don't take their shirts off." And I thought, "These kids are really uptight -- they should smoke a joint." (AP 8, 10, 1985)

I think one of the stages was when I went to Wisconsin and people there started talking to me about pinning my hair up and wearing a bra and being graceful and that sort of thing: something I couldn't relate to at all....Just be who you are, and if someone doesn't like it, too bad. (AP 16, 3, 1985)

The transition from chick to lady was not always easy. For some the term "graceful woman" suggested an unnatural, overly-delicate, posing kind of femininity, and it took some time and effort to process the term and come to an acceptable understanding of it. As with bana, members did find ways to accommodate the teaching and they continue to do so today. The following is a typical progression:

I guess what I used to think a graceful woman was, before I wanted to be one, was someone who dressed pretty -- I guess sort of vain or something -- and that talked sweetly, and did all the things that I, for some reason, didn't want to do. And then, I guess, as I started feeling more like a graceful woman, my concept of it was basically thinking about your effect on other people....And in order to have a positive effect you had to speak nicely, care about other people and what they're thinking, and even look a certain way in order to feel self-respect and earn the respect of others. (AP 16, 9, 1985)

Some began with an image of graceful femininity as saccharine or contrived and worked their way towards what seemed like a more authentic image. The new version emphasized poise, the capacity to nurture, a positive outlook, control over self and situation, and concern with one's effect on others. A graceful woman became one who

is positive, doesn't get down on people. Things don't bother her real easily...real calm and collected and eager to help either other people's situations or their own situations....realizing that bad things come from God as well as good things come from God....It's someone who's confident about herself and feels good about herself. (AP 14, 11, 1985)

Graceful, I think, is when a woman is aware of her own divinity, aware of who she is, that she is not just a body or just a pretty person, but who is aware of her soul, of her strength, of her righteousness. A woman who loves God, who in her actions, in her words is going to always be aware of her grace...who knows how to talk gracefully...who knows how to be quiet when she has to. Sometimes it's the best thing, instead of getting into an argument, sometimes it's better to stay quiet and meditate on the subject and then come up later with nice words. (AP 9, 18, 1985)

Such calm, silence, restraint, and non-aggressive behavior is often depicted as a means to an end: cooperative,

respectful, and loving relationships. Pragmatism is another widely accepted 3HO value -- if it works, embrace it -- and graceful womanhood is said to make for more effective action and more loving relationships.

As I listened to definitions of graceful womanhood, I noted parallels with feminism: the emphasis on empowerment, on the primacy of relationships, and on the importance of being a woman, rather than an imitation man. I could not help but note that from a feminist perspective, there were also pitfalls in this image of womanhood. First, it is a man's ideal, not a woman's construction, although the women in the organization have certainly interpreted and molded it. Feminists have argued that women have long been alienated from their own core selves by their efforts to live out men's fantasies of who and what they should be, and that women must frame their own biographies and imagine the good life in their own, distinctive, and as yet unspoken, terms. If I raised this objection, 3HO women tended to respond that Yogi BhaJan has transcended gender and speaks not as a man but as an enlightened soul -- and the soul has no sex. Some also say that they have adapted his teachings to their own experience and needs. In courses offered to the public they sometimes choose simply not to mention BhaJan since woman students object to a man's solutions to their problems. They are careful to portray grace not as

submissiveness but as energy properly tuned and projected. It is portrayed, as one woman put it, as "serenity born of strength."

Adopting the New Culture: Arranged Marriages

3HO marriages are, in many cases, arranged by Yogi Bhajan, and all must be approved by him or by an ashram director. The theory is that marriage is a "yoking of souls" and as such should not be based upon infatuation, physical attraction, or neediness, but on the partners' potential for spiritual growth as a pair. Yogi Bhajan is said to be able to judge the rightness of a marriage by viewing the auras of the individuals involved. Sometimes a marital arrangement simply involves Yogi Bhajan giving his stamp of approval to a couple who have already decided they would like to marry. Some couples join as partners; others have met at Dharma-sponsored activities or in their ashrams and have received permission to marry. In other cases ashram directors, or Yogi Bhajan, have felt it "was time" for an individual to marry and have conferred with that person about a possible mate. And sometimes Yogi Bhajan has simply announced that two people are to marry. Since most of the members are now in their mid-thirties there are not many more marriages to be arranged for the parent generation, but the children who are now at school in India will have arranged marriages and some are already engaged.

Arranged marriages are difficult for non-Sikhs to accept. The custom flaunts strong cultural beliefs about individual choice, romantic love, and the sanctity of the private sphere. 3HO members see it differently -- as preferable to what they regard as the indignities and exploitation of the dating game. They say they are restoring marriage and family to the central place that they should hold in any society, and that in 3HO marriage becomes a matter of meditation and spiritual insight rather than of chance competition in the marketplace. Since 3HO marriage customs are so different from the norm, the following marriage histories are quoted at length in order to convey the 3HO sense of the institution and its place in a spiritual life.

I like to say it was arranged by God....We were in L.A. in separate ashrams in the same city. So we would see each other every day, except that we never talked to each other, never really noticed each other. He was playing music every morning at the sadhana...and after one year it came a time when everybody told me, "I think you should get married." At the same time several people came to me and said I should get married, and several people also gave me suggestions...but I was not interested in anybody. Then the Siri Singh Sahib one day told me "We're going to find somebody for you who's really handsome"....and then he said "You're going to be married very soon and everything is going to be all taken care of." And then, as I was leaving, he asked me, "Do you have anybody in mind?" And I said, "no."

And then I went home and I thought "My God, who could that be...." And then I started praying and meditating and reading from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib 'cause I was kind of nervous. And then his question kept coming back in my mind, "Do you have someone in mind?" And when I was reading or

meditating my husband's name came into mind and I thought, "that's odd, because I even don't know him and we never talk to each other." I didn't really notice him, you know. But the name kept coming back again and again. And when I asked myself, "Well does it mean that you might want to marry him?" the voice inside of me said "Why not?"...Usually when I had asked myself this question it was always "No, for sure."...

So I called the secretary of the Siri Singh Sahib. I told her, "Whenever I meditate or read from the Guru this name comes in my mind and I even don't know him." So she said, "OK, I'll come back to you." And then during the day I was thinking, and I actually saw my future husband because I had to go to his ashram and do something and he opened the door. And when I saw him he was really nice to me, and I remember I kind of blushed and I didn't want to stay in his presence. Then I realized I was feeling a little bit shy around him. I thought, "That's funny." And then I kind of thought about it and subconsciously I think I had noticed his kindness. I had seen him very kind to others and I knew he was very devoted, and so I think I had been subconsciously attracted to his soul. You know, it was definitely his soul. So then the secretary calls me back and she says, "Well the Siri Singh Sahib said that he would be perfect for you. He said that he is a great Sikh; he's very devoted and it will be great, a great match...."

And the next day I saw him walking towards me, my future husband, and he talks to me and he says, "Sat Nam, congratulations on your engagement." I said, "Oh, but I'm not engaged." He said, "Last night the Siri Singh Sahib talked to me and he said, "You know this lady? She's ready to be married. What are your plans?" And he said he was really happy about it, actually. And he said, "I think the best way for us to get to know each other would be that we get engaged. What do you think?" I said, "OK." And we started seeing each other once in awhile. We believe in being kind of chaperoned. You know, it's more graceful. So we just were getting along and it was really fun. We were totally different people. It was very amazing. It was nice....Later he told me that he liked me, he had noticed me. What I appreciate is that he never showed it....I've seen too many flirtatious men, you know. It's like as soon as they like you they're going to flirt. I got very,

very tired of that...and he, he just wanted to be one-pointed and just to relate to God and he believed that when it will be time for him to be married God would give him a wife, and that's what happened. So that's what I really respected in him.... (AP 9, 16-18, 1985)

I felt that I wanted everything to be in my highest consciousness -- I didn't want it to be out of desire and all that sort of stuff. I didn't feel capable of making such a big decision, that was going to be lifelong, that wasn't going to be emotional. But I guess, after having been in the ashram already for five years, I had gained a certain amount of faith and commitment so I was ready for my teacher to pick someone for me. Before I couldn't imagine having someone pick someone for you, even though I felt that I couldn't do it either. I thought, "What if he picked someone you can't stand," you know? So anyway, I guess I felt ready for that to happen, and then what I did was, I was talking to him and he asked me who I wanted to marry. So it was like I was ready, so he asked me....So it was kind of like I guess I had gotten to the point where I wasn't making such an emotional decision....You know, I hadn't really thought about it that much, but I knew that who my husband is now was the one person I had thought about who I definitely would want to marry, and it wasn't like we knew each other that well. It was just sort of more on a cosmic level, or vibrational, or something like that. And I knew he felt the same way although we never talked about it. In an ashram it's not like you date or you have relationships before you marry, you know, you just know everybody and you get to know people just by living in the community. (AP 16, 5, 1985)

Finally, from a young woman who grew up in 3HO:

It was arranged -- which I expected....I felt good about it because in our society today, you know, the whole dating thing...you're always thinking about breaking the relationship -- the thought is back there that you're going to break the relationship with someone....It used to be you'd go out and have fun with someone...but now it's a lot more sensual; it's a lot more uncommitted, I think. I have a real confidence in the Siri Singh Sahib -- he's been like a grandfather...because he's got the ability to see people different ways that people

can't see, he can tell who needs what kind of person. I always felt confident and trusted him. As far as school goes, I never really dated anybody because wearing my turban kind of made them all...it puts something in people's heads that you're different. I don't know, there's something about it. I had lots of boy friends -- I always had more boy friends than girl friends -- but they never ever tried anything or even asked me for a date. It was like we just went out to the park or went to a movie or went out to dinner; we did fun things with each other as friends and I felt good about that. I'm really happy with my husband now so I feel grateful that there was a way I could meet my husband that wasn't an insecure kind of way that a lot of kids, I think, go through.

Interviewer: Had you met him before?

Member: No, not until the Siri Singh Sahib told me.

Interviewer: How did he tell you?

Member: I was actually graduating from high school, and I went to say "hello" to him and he said he had found someone for me to marry and I should go meet him and we did Tantric together....

Interviewer: Do you remember when you first met him? Were you scared?

Member: Yeah I was definitely pretty scared....I was kind of in shock. I always expected the Siri Singh Sahib to find someone for me but I never, I just didn't expect it then. Yeah, it was a little strange. But then afterwards he came to my house and he spent some time with us up there and his mother came down....We got married pretty quickly afterwards. I think if I had to do it over again I'd do it the same way...it worked out perfectly for us. It worked out very well. (AP 14, 4-5)

In the first two cases, individual preference clearly played a part in the choice of a partner. In the final case, it did not, although the woman's youth and 3HO childhood probably rendered her more adaptable than the older women. Not all 3HO marriage stories have such happy

endings. These three women were eager to tell their stories because they were pleased with the outcomes. Their cases approach the 3HO ideal; there are other stories of struggle or incompatibility.

Living the Teachings: Service and Marriage

The ideal 3HO marriage is a balance of male and female principles. Women are expected to maintain an atmosphere of peace and serenity in the home. They are to think of themselves as half of a spiritual partnership in which they serve Truth and Guru by serving the husband. In Yogi Bhajan's words:

As we all know, Truth is a very pure and simple matter and in contrast our minds and emotions are very complex....No one can monopolize the truth; you hold a facet of it as does your husband and every other human being alive. Therefore when you are faced with a situation in which you and your husband disagree, and you are expected to give in (remember the three rules of a good wife when faced with a disagreement with her husband, she says only: you're right; I'm sorry; it's the will of God. This was the lesson Guru Ram Das told his daughter before marriage), you must remember that you are not giving in to his ego. You are offering your portion of the truth to the higher part of your marriage, Truth. Truth is greater than your husband, greater than your opinion and greater than the whole world put together. And, when you make an offering to Truth, don't think it will not respond....Your husband is God's representative and spokesman, and the more you have faith that God will prevail through him, the more He will.
(Bhajan, distributed at 1983 camp)

Obviously, this is not the perspective that prevails in secular society, and educated, hip middle-class American women did not take easily to repeatedly saying "You're

right; I'm sorry." In fact, women in the Washington ashram, no doubt influenced by the Women's Movement, got together and agreed that serving a man should mean serving his higher consciousness -- not serving his every whim. They decided to only perform those domestic chores that could be done with love rather than resentment. They still, however, assume heavy burdens and struggle with the teachings on marriage. This is particularly difficult in those arranged marriages in which the partners do not particularly like each other. Nevertheless, however much they may struggle, the women tend to see the relationship between the sexes in a spiritual or psychological, rather than a feminist, light. The following accounts illustrate the terms and the tactics that may be involved in this struggle to relate to the opposite sex in 3HO-approved ways.

...I didn't know what it was to be a woman --I guess is what it was. I thought to be the most I could be was to be what men are doing, and I was trying to match them constantly and not coming off very gracefully and being angry most of the time about it. Then I started getting involved with 3HO. At first I didn't go for 3HO because I felt like, you know, "What's this 'Be a woman' and all -- it looks like their idea of being a woman is be a wife, take care of the kids and stay home. Forget it. No way." But then as time went on, I listened closely to what they were saying and started to realize that to them being a woman is just being a woman. It's being warm, being compassionate, and being very nurturing towards children, nurturing to all human beings...and then I began to realize what it means to be a woman. I still have a long way to go with that but at least I've made the mental connection to being more nurturing. At first I thought they were anti-

Women's Movement, but then, as I said, when I looked more closely I found out it's not like that at all....They're into being women but they believe in equal rights. But they believe that women actually can do more than men -- and I believe it; I agree with that philosophy totally. (AP 10, 17, 1985)

...in a marriage it seems like it's kind of sixty-forty: sixty percent from the women and forty percent from the men -- depending on the man -- 'cause the woman seems to be much stronger, so more is her responsibility. She's more flexible...she's more nurturing, more intelligent. That's just in general; I'm not saying that all women are more intelligent than men....Before I moved into 3HO I was always angry because in the relationships I had had with guys I was constantly striving for fifty-fifty, and I wanted them to be this and I wanted them to be that -- what I thought they should be -- and they were never measuring up, you know. I was always doing more than them and I resented it...I was always the one who was cleaning up the mess of the argument, or keeping the relationship together, pushing for the honesty in the relationship. I mean, they liked it, they wanted to do it too -- I had some really good men -- but I found that I really had to fight in order to keep that relationship growing and keep my own rights in it, and not have it turn into a dry relationship, to keep it a really active relationship, and nurturing, and good. And so I was angry about it all those years. Now that I hear what the Siri Singh Sahib says...it just seems that it's true. I can really feel that inside when he says, "This is how women are. There's no sense in being angry about it, just accept how you are, accept that you can do these things, accept that you can handle more pressures than he can -- especially American men because they've been pressured so much all their lives in America, to be this and that, macho and sexist, job and career." (AP 10, 18-20, 1985)

To serve a man without feeling defrauded and without feeling lesser or not as equal, I guess that's all of it in that one sentence....I keep stressing this service to men and stuff because I've found that when I'm combatting with a man and trying to be his equal and rival that I'm not comfortable. When I'm serving him and seeing his appreciation -- I don't mean I serve him and he beats me; I mean when I serve him and he's

appreciative of it -- it's like I've seen some men when they respect a woman and the woman serves them what the reward is. It's incredible. It's such a beautiful, flowing relationship that I've experienced at moments, like in the ashram, even with my boss, a few moments that I just drop my ego, try to be humble, and just really try to serve him and try to be supportive of him. He really responds and he turns around and turns it back to me.... (AP 10, 26, 1985)

I feel like my karma, my karmic thing, for this lifetime has been working on intimate relationships and working on, like, stuff with my parents, stuff with my husband, and everything else is like really easy for me. And my commitment to my marriage has definitely made me go through a lot of my changes and I'm really glad for it. We've been married twelve years this summer and we're getting much, much closer. It's real beautiful how we can open up to each other, and the fears and all the other stuff just goes away....The marriage means more than just being married to each other. For me it's like a commitment to myself because I feel like if I left the marriage I would be denying all the stuff that I have to work out in this lifetime, 'cause, you know, I would just find it with somebody else and I'd have to work on it all over again. So it just means sticking in there and going through it. (AP 2a, 9-10, 1985)

I think the biggest thing for me was learning to be really supportive and when I would see my husband's faults or see things that really bothered me about him never to bring them up to his face and never make him feel bad, 'cause I just learned that it isn't good for anything. So I really learned how to just be real supportive and to raise his self-esteem by just concentrating on the positive aspects of him, and it took me a long time. You know, the Siri Singh Sahib always would say you should relate to your husband as a god and by doing that you won't feel the negative things; you see them but they don't really matter because you know how great he is....Whenever I would think my husband was the worst creep and he was acting like a total jerk I always would try to remember that. At least if I didn't consciously think of it I would at least not lay my trip on him and I would try and come from a positive place.... (AP 2a, 16, 1985)

Another woman, a previous resident of the Washington ashram, kept turning our interview towards her marriage. It was clear that this was what she wanted to talk about and where she felt she had made considerable progress. She and her husband, she said, had argued constantly until she committed herself to doing whatever was required to make it a happy marriage. She began to have dinner ready for him when he came home, picked up after him, and followed Yogi Bhanjan's advice that a wife give her husband an hour of the day, eating together, talking, sitting silently, whatever he seemed to need. At a ladies camp lecture she listened to him talk about the rare, ideal, man who is truly devoted to the guru and came to the realization that she had such a husband and that this side of him was his essential nature, rather than his personality quirks. And, although she was horrified by the idea at first, she tried Yogi Bhanjan's suggestion that a wife touch her husband's feet daily as a way of bowing to the guru within him. Although both at first felt awkward and embarrassed, she feels that "It uplifts him and lets him leave home knowing he's respected and all is right at home."

Some of the teachings on marriage have a cliched, womens' magazine quality: the woman should bolster the man's ego, accept responsibility for the emotional quality of the couple's lives, make him feel like a king in his castle and overlook all of his faults. Sometimes it sounds

as if some of these women grew weary of trying to maintain "fifty-fifty" relationships and with relief gave up the struggle and settled into conventional, stereotyped sex roles. Many realize that their behavior can be construed in this way -- they might have regarded it in this light themselves at one time -- but emphasize the quality of the relationships they have achieved, their own internal comfort levels, or the "natural" quality of these sex roles. Some also have a very pragmatic, almost tongue-in-cheek, approach to various SHO teachings. They will try them, and will admit to feeling awkward, even comic, while doing so, and will thus frame their own behavior, almost putting it between quotation marks during the trial period. They are often more concerned with results than with content, and always emphasize the positive and look for the desired results.

Many mention relief at discovering that they need no longer compete with men:

....In college I was in a women's consciousness raising group, and I'm glad I was and I still have a lot of feminist beliefs, [but] one thing I grew up thinking of men and women as totally the same and they're really not....I think there are a lot of the same things, but it makes life a lot easier knowing that you don't have to try to be a man. Even though I think people realize that on a conscious level, if you look around you see that women totally do try to, and there are so many strengths that we have that men don't have and to deny those makes life a lot harder. (AP 5, 8, 1985)

It was a relief to learn we are different and don't have to make it. That felt right. (AP 3, 1, 1981)

Women and men are completely different things. You can't compare them. The difference is as innate as the genitals. (AP 1a, 1981)

Their perspective in some ways parallels what Jessie Bernard calls "woman specific" feminism: feminism that emphasizes the unique qualities of women and urges women to define and develop these while holding themselves apart from the "patriarchy." "Reform feminists" tend to distrust this point of view if it is carried very far. They prefer efforts to gain political and economic clout. The difference is similar to differences in the Black community over integration and separatism, and is likely to emerge whenever members of a minority or marginal group begin to occupy positions in the dominant society. Some group members come to fear that the price in loss of solidarity, identity and cultural specificity is too great. The practical consequences of each stance are, of course, debated and are difficult to ascertain. In the 3HO case there appear to be cases where self-esteem, ambition, and independence of thought have been stunted. Equally, some 3HO women have been freed to listen to their own intuitions and to define themselves and their achievements in broader terms than those offered by the essentially masculine language of careers and economic roles. They have used their vision of feminine power to enhance their work and

their relationships. It may be that the ideology itself is neither intrinsically liberating nor constraining. Rather, it may be the way it is used and interpreted that is crucial, and this may have to do with individual self-esteem and resources, a matter that will be further discussed.

Learning to Follow and Obey

Daily Routine

Not only must new members learn to meditate, perform Kundalini exercises, redefine gender, adjust to arranged marriages, and dress and present themselves in new ways, they must also learn what may be the hardest lesson for the American following an Eastern tradition: obedience to a spiritual teacher. In this tradition, it is the teacher's role to introduce the novice to a new reality and, if necessary, to shake the foundations of the old order. The teacher may overturn followers' preconceptions, expectations, and habitual ways of organizing experience and everyday life. Different approaches may be required for different individuals. One individual may require gentle encouragement and persuasion; another must be removed entirely from the predictable routines of home and career. The teacher is supposed to possess sufficient insight to know which technique is appropriate to which individual, and in what dose it should be applied.

In the esoteric Eastern traditions this process has usually involved a one-to-one relationship between student and teacher. Students live for a period of time in an ashram with the teacher, or visit a teacher regularly. Several of the Eastern teachers who have come to America have attempted something on a much larger scale, and this must mean a less individualized form of training. In the 3HO case this mass training has taken varied forms. There are courses, workshops, instruction tapes and manuals, and formulas for handling everyday activities. Additionally, members often consult Yogi Bhanjan or ashram directors when they have problems to solve or decisions to make. They may ask how to resolve marital problems, how to discipline their children, what diet to follow for a particular health problem, or whether to return to school or to pursue a particular career. These questions may be addressed to Yogi Bhanjan in person when he visits an ashram or teaches a local Tantric course, or when members travel to Solstice celebrations or to Ladies Camp. They can also be posed in letters, and there is considerable correspondence between Yogi Bhanjan (or his staff) and 3HO members. Replies and instructions may be quite unexpected, and may require that the follower significantly alter her plans or habits.

In the course of his lectures, workshops and correspondence, Yogi Bhanjan has developed teachings on almost every aspect of life, as well as instructions for

handling most of life's routines. Thus there are instructions for rising in the morning:

Before you wake in the morning your mind always gives you a signal to awake. At that signal, turn on your back with your eyes closed. Make your hands like cups and place them over your eyes. Look into the palms and slowly raise your hands to 1 1/2 feet. Then stretch the legs forward, the arms over your head, and stretch like a cat....Take at least 26 long, deep, complete breaths....Then to build your aura, put your arms at sixty-degree angles from the horizontal with the fingertips on the pads of the hands. Do rapid nostril breathing.... (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 24).

There are diets and yoga sets for a variety of purposes. Steamed white turnips are said to aid the glandular system, and dates the hypothyroid. Steamed beets will cleanse the liver, and turmeric the intestines. Meditation and memory are aided by ingestion of bananas, and creativity by garlic. Green chile...is "the woman's food" as are various fruits, such as peaches, plums, pears, apricots, orange juice, apples and figs. There are yoga sets for "regulating eating habits," for strengthening the aura, for transforming sexual energy into healing energy, for premenstrual tension and for improved concentration. There are even some that are recommended in preparation for intercourse.

3HO members are told to go barefoot in the house so as not to block the natural flow of energy. Before attending sadhana the early riser should take a "cold shower or a cold-warm-cold shower while chanting songs of divine

praise." She should also drink several glasses of water. The ideal color to wear to sadhana is white, and one should bring "a meditation blanket or shawl made of wool, silk, or cotton" and an animal skin or wool blanket "since they are non-static and insulate your psycho-electromagnetic field from the electromagnetic field of the earth." (KRI 1978, 20) Hair should be covered

with a non-static natural cloth like cotton, and keep the hair up. The hair regulates the inflow of sun energy into the body system. To let the solar energy flow without obstruction, let the hair grow to its full natural length and take good care of it....If the hair is down, unkept or uncovered so that it is electrically imbalanced, this natural process of raising the kundalini energy will be impeded. (KRI 1978, 28-29)

No one person follows all of these instructions -- people sift and choose, succeed and fail -- but members do try many of them and this requires a conscious restructuring of daily life. Everyday acts take on new significance, and the realm of the taken-for-granted shrinks. New habits must be cultivated, new knowledge acquired, new associations formed, and somatic awareness heightened.

Advice and Obedience

The member who asks for specific instructions and guidance is expected to follow-through on the advice, and usually does so. Sometimes the response to an inquiry is

compassionate and encouraging, or simply a go-ahead for projects already planned:

I remember one time I wrote a letter to the Siri Singh Sahib. I was just telling him about all these guilt trips I was going through and stuff. And he said, "How do you think you can get to God by feeling guilty about everything?"...It took me awhile after I read that letter to comprehend what he was saying, but it was special for me when I realized I didn't have to feel guilty for every sin in the world, that I didn't even have to feel guilty for my own sins, that I should learn from them and continue on. (AP 15, 4, 1986)

I'm also not one of those people who calls him every other month to ask something....I can count on one hand the times I've asked him a question about something that made a real difference in my life. And I think part of the reason why I haven't...has to do with my feeling that what he wants us to do is to be able to sustain ourselves, to be on our own. Another is I have always felt you don't ask a question if you're not prepared to deal with the answer....I also feel that its important when I ask him a question to do my homework first...for instance, the last question we asked him had to do with our older son who was in school in India, about whether he should stay....I checked around with four or five private schools, with two or three college administrators....When I asked him it was like, "well, I found out this and I found out this, does he come home now....I said, "We feel we should do this but we don't want to make a final decision without checking with you."...He said, "yes." (AP 6, 22-23, 1985)

when I start feeling some really horrible thing is approaching me...or if I've fallen into some muck and mire thing...I will write him a letter, that's a tactic that I use....What I'm asking him to do actually is take that problem before him mentally, and then he knows that his student is in trouble so he may mentally project a shield or a prayer, or whatever.... (AP 18, 6, 1986)

At other times the teacher's advice is painful. It undermines self-images or interrupts plans and careers:

I was really headstrong, and I had a school picked out and everything, and I wrote him a letter and he

never responded. I thought that meant it was all right, and then when I saw him at the Tantric course I mentioned it and he, he just totally flattened me out. He just said, "You, chiropractic school? Forget it!" He said, "You don't need to go to school. You don't need to. You already know all that stuff."...He said, "you need to sing and you need to teach people about the Guru...I really want you to do a lot of Gurbani." That really freaked me out for awhile. But I did exactly what he said and from there my current occupation started and it just blossomed.... (AP 2a, 17-18, 1985)

Another member gave Yogi Bhajan a painting as a present. He was impressed by it, asked who had done it, and said that she should paint for the Dharma and inspire others with her talent. She had been planning to take up massage, but he told her that it would not be graceful if she had any male clients and that in any case she should develop her talent. She, however, was a single parent and concerned about financing the endeavor. "It was an incredible fight with my ego to accept what he said...my ego is jumping up and down." Now she is painting. To deal with the fear and the rebellion she listens to kirtan and repeats mantras. She reminds herself that, hard as it is, it is right, and that Yogi Bhajan is her teacher and their souls have been linked over many lifetimes.

II.

THE LATER YEARS

The workshop topic is "prosperity consciousness," and if turn-out is anything to go by, it is a matter of great interest. It is being held in the ashram director's house and the large living room is full; white-clothed Sikhs cover the sofas and the floor. The women have congregated at one end of the room where they are mostly sitting and lying on the floor, chattering about jobs and children. One woman is nursing a baby.

The workshop leader has a PhD, works fulltime as a Sikh counselor, and does some traveling around the country conducting workshops like this one for different ashrams. He begins by introducing the idea that attitudes towards money are indicative of other, deeper attitudes. "Finances," he suggests, are "far-out," and discussion of money matters is a "way of tapping into deeper thought processes." Feelings about money will highlight the categories set up in the mind from childhood -- or even earlier, in the case of "womb experiences." Family "scripts" will be revealed. Families, for example are likely to establish a "happiness ceiling" and experiences that exceed that ceiling will produce a "yum-out reaction." Things will

seem too good and a family member will sabotage them. So one may need to "reprogram the mind" in order to alter one's financial circumstances.

To begin, we are to express our negative thoughts about money: "I don't have enough." "I don't earn enough." "It comes with greed." "It's too much responsibility." "If I have it others will envy me." Then we are to "get in touch with" our parents' attitudes toward financial affairs and try to understand how their outlook has affected our own. Finally, to counter our negative attitudes and our early programming, we are supplied with a list of "affirmations" to recite to ourselves. Some are modest: "My income now exceeds my expenses." "I enjoy being economically self-sufficient." Others evoke laughter: "If I don't watch out, money will drop into my lap." "People are now rewarding me with money just for being alive." "My personal connection to Infinite Being and Infinite Intelligence is adequate enough to yield a huge personal fortune." "You must," the counselor says "change the thoughts to change the emotions to change the desires to change the actions." (Personal Journal, 1981)

ACCOMMODATION: THE EVOLUTION OF THE LIFESTYLEFinancial Pressures and the Move to the Suburbs

Throughout the early period much energy was devoted to mastering meditation, yoga, Sikhism, vegetarian cooking and the new teachings. Ashram life was absorbing and usually overlapped with employment. In Washington the Golden Temple Restaurant, a partnership of about ten families, was the center of activity. Some other ashram residents worked for the Shakti Shoe Corporation. As previously mentioned, the mid-70's saw a change in the strategies employed by the new religions. In 3HO, entrepreneurship was more systematically encouraged; so was attainment of professional and technical credentials. This is not entirely attributable to the external pressures the organization faced since 3HO also had to respond to changes in members' goals and expectations as the number of family units grew. In the Washington ashram, parents began to talk of wanting more space and privacy and of increasing their earnings. More and more residents decided that they could not afford to continue working at the restaurant. It had paid room and board, and that was sufficient when they were younger, but now more was required. The ashram had grown, in any case, and it was increasingly difficult to live off the restaurant proceeds. Members began to pursue other careers, and as this happened,

we started hiring non-Sikhs and that really changed the vibration in the restaurant. It really did.

And before you knew it there were hardly any Sikhs working there at all....Things became much more individual, but we needed to do that. It was the right step for us. (AP 2b, 10, 1985)

The movement away from communal enterprise was intensified by an internal problem. The ashram director seemed to change right before residents' eyes:

...when you're on a spiritual path everyone goes through their tests and their changes and he obviously was leaving. You could see it. He was doing dishonest things with the businesses. His relationship with his wife was falling apart....It was a very difficult period for the ashram because people felt that he was being dishonest in his business dealings with them, that he wasn't acting righteously at so many levels. And, you know, when you're the director of a community everyone's looking to you to be an example. He had stopped being an example. He had stopped doing his sadhana. He just was developing a lot of bad habits....When he finally left...we found out that our businesses had been pretty tremendously mismanaged. When he left, our Shakti Corporation, which is our shoe business, was in over a million dollars worth of debt. People didn't know it. We had been very naive. And our restaurant also wasn't making it....The restaurant was a partnership....We had a choice: we could file for bankruptcy, which we decided not to do -- we thought that we owed the people that -- ...or slowly but surely pay back what we owed. And at this point we've done it. It's taken five years. (AP 7, 7-8, 1985)

After much discussion most of the Washington residents moved to suburban Virginia and a period of settling-in and regrouping followed. The new director devoted himself to debt repayment and to establishing the group's financial security. People pursued new careers and shouldered mortgages or received some aid from their parents. The ex-Hippies had come full circle:

It was definitely the grace of God that we were able to find housing out here and to move that many people and have us located all next to each other....So now we have a wonderful community. We don't teach as many classes. There is a difference. I think a lot of people are trying to raise their families as consciously as they can and earn their livings to support their families...and now I think people have settled into a comfortable living....There were a couple of years when we were just trying to regroup ourselves....Now it just feels like within the last year or two we're again being able to reach out more, and I guess we're reaching out as more experienced people. We not only have yoga and meditation to teach, but we have things about lifestyle, things about raising children, things about health and nutrition. We have a little more experience to offer and teach. (AP 7, 9, 1985)

Motherhood

As families expanded during the late 70's and early 80's so did the number of teachings surrounding motherhood, pregnancy and child-rearing. Many of these were enunciated by Yogi Bajan. He taught that a mother shapes her child during pregnancy and in the first few years of life. She has the power to "raise a saint" and, indirectly, to alter the society by altering child-rearing patterns. He was taken quite literally and women look for examples of motherly influence, even for prenatal influences:

...It's really interesting to see babies. If their mother did a certain thing, like chanted a lot, when they were pregnant, and they were real positive and all that kind of stuff, versus a mother who had a harder time, was going through a lot of stuff in her life, you definitely notice a relationship between the projections of the mother and the way the baby is when it's born. (AP 14, 11, 1985)

When she has the baby in her womb it's like whatever she does, whatever she thinks, whatever

she says, has repercussions on the baby in her womb. So what he says, and I believe it too, is whatever you do, whatever you say when you're pregnant is very important....It's up to you to attract a fine soul by whatever you do and pray and chant, and then, once it's born, the way you raise him or her, you're going to make the human being....A mother can make a criminal. She can make a saint. It doesn't all come from her but I think she has a lot of influence... and of course the human beings will make the society...that's why it's so important for women to become aware of their spirituality and their inner beauty and their grace. Then we can change the society.... (AP 9, 12, 1985)

The ideal 3HO mother will attempt to become what she would have her children become. She will attempt to provide a "cozy" and secure environment for her children and she will remember that a child is a temporary blessing, not a possession. She will concentrate on "pointing" her children's minds in the direction of God and the Guru..." establishing it in their minds that God is the strong point in their life, having them turn that way instead of just to you, as parents...I feel like children are God's children and not my children." (AP 14, 11, 1985)

Sikhs believe that a baby's soul enters its body near the end of the fourth month of pregnancy. Up until that time the mother should meditate and chant so as to attract a pure soul. She doesn't announce the pregnancy until the end of this period, but then on the "one hundred and twentieth day" she is specially honored:

We usually do it on Sunday and in our gurdwara we sing all the shabds, and all the songs are in honor of the mother, and everybody kind of thinks of the person. And then later on in the day we have kind

of a party where everyone gives her gifts, and it's like the whole ashram is acknowledging and saying, "we support you, and we want you to have a great pregnancy." (AP 2b, 7, 1985)

Most of the Washington babies have been delivered by a medical group that specializes in home births. The mother-to-be may chant or play tapes of chants during labor, and for awhile an ashram resident would play music if that was requested:

...I use a mantra, Wahe Guru; if you use that a lot it really helps....And I also have tapes going the whole time....I used to play music at a lot of people's births. I've kind of stopped doing that now, but I used to just sit there for hours. (AP 16, 9, 1985)

Childbirth can be a spiritual event for a Sikh woman:

....having a baby was a really big experience for me. A lot of the things that Siri Singh Sahib talked about -- Adi Shakti and creative energy -- I really experienced. I found it a very spiritual, ecstatic experience. (AP 5, 7, 1985)

After the birth a woman hires a savadar for forty days, and members will speak of 'doing someone's forty days.' In the early years this task was assigned, but now another ashram woman, preferably someone close to the mother, is paid to do it if the mother can afford this. The savadar cares for the mother, does the housework, and watches older brothers and sisters so that the mother and new baby can establish a bond and the mother can rest properly:

...when I had my first son, a few days after he was born I was scrubbing the floors again. I felt terrible. I was totally tired and I was totally depressed...and then when I had my second son and I was in 3HO...my savadar did the job. She did all the laundry and all the cooking, took care of my

older son. She brought my food to me. She massaged my feet. And I just got to be with my child. I just never will forget it. I was in so much bliss just being with the baby alone.... (AP 2b, 8, 1985)

Once the savadar has left, the mother will face many of the same problems that other suburban mothers face. She will have to balance priorities, arrange babysitting if she works, try to arrange flexible work hours and the like. But she will be less isolated than many other mothers and she will know that in an emergency there is always help available. She will be surrounded by women who share her values and style of childrearing and who will supplement and reinforce her efforts. She will have the option of working for one of the family businesses where she will find more support and flexibility than she is likely to encounter if she works for a large corporation (although it will probably not pay as well). She will also have access to the local Khalsa school when her children are young.

Customs and beliefs surrounding birth and child-rearing not surprisingly reflect Yogi BhaJan's imprint. They are often supportive of the mother's dignity and of family bonds, but they can also function as a means of controlling women members or as a means of establishing organizational loyalty. 3HO women emphasize the positive aspects of the teachings and their opportunity to accomplish much in the role of Sikh mother, but the leadership's power to use that role to sanction women remains. The message sometimes

seems to be that an uncooperative woman's children will suffer. A woman can raise a saint, but she can also be held responsible for a child's failings, even for its physical problems. Yogi Bhajan has assured his followers that a "bitchy," tense, or angry mother can inhibit her daughter's breast development. A woman who suffered a miscarriage at the women's camp was informed by her doctor that some of the more vigorous yoga exercises might have been responsible. In good faith, she repeated this to members of Yogi Bhajan's staff, suggesting an announcement to warn other expectant mothers to avoid some of the exercises. Instead, she was stunned when she was singled out in front of the assembled camp and told that she herself had occasioned the miscarriage by being wrapped up in herself and her ambitions, and hence not really wanting the baby, an accusation that she duly considered and then dismissed.

3HO children are not only the focus of their parents' love, concern and hope; they are a focus of leaders' expectations concerning the future shape and continuity of the organization. There is considerable pressure to send children to school in India, and they may be sent there as young as seven or eight years old. Yogi Bhajan and other 3HO members talk of "sex and drugs" in the public schools and urge individual parents to send their children to the boarding school that Yogi Bhajan's children attended.

There are now close to one hundred and fifty 3HO children there; they are mostly in the lower grades. When asked about their decision to send their children to school in India parents generally mention "sex and drugs," the beginnings of a disrespectful attitude in their children, or their desire to provide an environment where the children are not troubled by social problems beyond their control and understanding. Parents say they want their children to maintain a higher consciousness than is possible in the "sensual," undisciplined, and materialistic American mass culture. Because of the strong belief that children are not property and that parents should respect their independence and their spiritual growth, there is a tendency to regard it as a selfish act to keep children at home when they might thrive in a more wholesome atmosphere in India:

...It really is the best place for them. Drugs and sex are so heavy in school these days that I could just see them deteriorating after all the years that we put into raising them...Maybe to other people it wouldn't seem that apparent, but to me -- I could really see it -- and when they came home from India this winter they were so different. They were radiant. I mean they were so beautiful. I knew that I did the right thing...They are independent beings that grow and have the right to grow in the best environment, and for us to want them to be here just to be with us ultimately is a very selfish reason when you think about it. But it takes a lot to really come to that place...and when they were home it was like, "If you were home all the time I could never do everything that I'm doing."...I feel like it really is the play of God because I feel like I really do have a lot of stuff I'm supposed to do in the outside world. (AP 2a, 21, 1985)

The emphasis on children's independence and on group responsibility rather than on an exclusively nuclear family upbringing has roots in counterculture values, but also serves organizational and individual interests. Boarding school attendance can confirm the youngsters' identification with the organization as a whole, rather than with individual nuclear families. Their understanding of another culture and their attachment to Sikhism is heightened, although they naturally miss their parents. Some have been betrothed or gone to Yogi Bajan and asked for permission to be engaged and so foresee a future in 3HO. Parents are freed to participate actively in institutions outside of the family, knowing that their children are safe and well cared for.

Work Within the Ashram

With many of their children away ashram mothers are freer to develop their careers or to contribute time to the Dharma. The women practice a variety of occupations and also shoulder responsibilities within the ashram. Motherhood is not their only commitment.

Many of the women work in small or multi-level businesses and in service occupations. Among all Washington women I interviewed there are: five trained Montessori teachers, although only one is now teaching; five women working in businesses, and several others

selling a recent 3HO product, Oriental Beauty Secrets, part time; five working within the ashram; three who are doing massage; an accountant who is now staying at home with a small baby; a graphic designer in the process of rethinking her career goals; a technical writer; two women with some computer training; a woman who is caring for others' children; an artist who paints religious themes; an office manager; and five currently unemployed -- this includes the wife of the ashram director, whose unemployment is certainly a relative matter.

Roles within the ashram vary from time and energy-consuming staff jobs to the occasional responsibilities of the minister. Staff workers include a secretary who works for the Director and a Treasurer who wears several hats as Treasurer of Washington 3HO, of Sikh Dharma of Washington and Virginia, and of the local Shakti Corporation. A woman with considerable experience selling commodities has recently been hired to help the ashram director with a new business venture in telex sales. Another young woman does odd jobs around the ashram such as providing secretarial assistance to the director, helping with administrative work involved in the shoe business, and working as a savadar.

Staff work can be quite demanding, although it also allows for comparatively flexible hours, a bonus for mothers:

Being on the ashram staff is a very demanding job...because you're responding to a lot of situations...you're constantly on the job...dealing with people who are having a hard time on either an emotional, or sometimes financial, level; some business things; projects that the Siri Singh Sahib wants done immediately...organize courses and different activities in the ashram.... (AP 12a, 6, 1985)

For the mother of small children or the woman who is not particularly career-oriented, work within the ashram can be quite satisfying:

There are some ladies in our community that are more into developing a career than others, but for me, I see myself as doing things. There are so many things to do in our community that I haven't really looked at going into a full-scale career or anything. I go work at my husband's office and [for the director] working more with him and traveling....I plan to start a family in a few years....I feel like I really do get a wide array of things....I've done a lot of traveling. I've gone a couple of times to India...for my twenty years I feel like I've gotten a lot in. (AP 14, 7-8, 1985)

If flexibility and variety are keynotes for staff and ashram work, they are particularly important for the wife of the ashram director who is expected to be an example to the other women and to support her husband in his work. Because he is a close associate of Yogi Bhaajan's, an entrepreneur, a trouble-shooter for 3HO businesses all over the country and the Dharma's National Affairs Advisor, as well as being the ashram director, the Washington director is a very busy and influential figure and his wife has been expected to free him to perform his many organizational functions:

...in my early days in the ashram...I was much more career-oriented and involved in everything...my husband became the director and that's really when my role changed. My most useful function wasn't being a secretarial type or a doer of things. It was more just taking care of whatever needed to be taken care of so he could do what he had to do...what he wants from me is that he knows that his family is taken care of....I always have to have a certain vibration about me, and be very flexible in whatever happens. He often has to go with no notice anywhere in the world for any amount of time....I have to maintain my positivity and just be real flexible in whatever comes -- and it does. It's a very interesting life. (AP 7, 1, 1985)

Women serve as ministers, and there are several Sikh ministers in the Washington ashram. The role is not rigidly defined and is quite open to interpretation. It can involve counseling and public outreach, and ministers can conduct Sikh religious services. Until recently Yogi Bhajan appointed individuals to fill ministerial positions and then they were trained for the job, the training being mostly in the form of exams and research papers. One minister particularly remembers a paper on comparative religions: "You had to answer twelve questions from the perspectives of four different religions."

In addition to the formal roles there are numerous small tasks to be performed. Someone must plan sadhanas, decorate the gurdwara and cook for Sunday services, provide somebody with a needed ride or emergency babysitting, or clean when Yogi Bhajan visits. There may be special meditations to perform. Yogi Bhajan "may call us up and

say this is a very hard time astrologically for people in 3HO and I want your whole ashram to get together for the next six weeks and do this meditation for an hour ever night." Since women are also expected to maintain a "cozy" home and serve their husbands, life can be quite busy and require careful planning and balancing.

Work Outside the Ashram

For those who work outside of the 3HO fold there are special issues of balance and timing if they are to harmonize their spiritual and secular lives and meet the demands of Dharma, family, and workplace. The early years were generally given over to the Dharma and community life, but for many such single-mindedness is no longer an option. There are mortgages and rents to pay, the costs of children's schooling in India and of trips to visit them there, of house and automobile repairs, of tithes, and of all the usual expenses faced by middle class suburban families. There are also, of course, the tests and satisfactions of creating a niche outside of the immediate 3HO family and the confidence that comes with mastering new skills.

THE DELICATE BALANCE: DHARMA, WORK, AND FAMILYCongruency

Most of the women who work outside of, or on the periphery of, 3HO feel that their work lives are essentially congruent with their Sikhism. This alignment is attributable to their tendency to work in service occupations. Moreover, they look for lines of connection; their sense-making is directed toward establishing consonance. The women doing massage, for example, see it as a form of healing and hence as a kind of ministry. One chants regularly to Guru Ram Dass, the guru of healing, while she works. Another has come to regard the spiritual "work" she does on herself as a way to make herself a channel for God's grace:

If I'm feeling low energy, or depressed, or self-absorbed, I'm going to be thinking about what's bothering me, and I really want to be outside myself enough to help somebody. I'm not going to be tuned-in enough to her body to feel where her stuck places are....If I'm really meditating on energy and just being a channel for energy pouring through me to that person, I'm much more intuitive...emotions get released during massage so I need to really be outside myself to pick up the signals if the person wants to talk.... (AP 8, 3-4, 1985).

Even a woman who is working for a businessman perceives her job as an extension of her spiritual life in that she believes that she has never been truly committed to anything and that by staying in the job she is developing this capacity.

Conflict

But if they look for and seek to establish harmony in the different components of their lives, they do experience some conflicts. Night work precludes attendance at sadhana; even a forty-hour-a-week job can make it difficult:

It's very hard. For years and years I got up every day at four, but those were the times that I wasn't working as hard. My children were younger. I only worked maybe three or four hours a day at the restaurant and I always was able to get to bed at a reasonable time....It's so different now....I really try to keep a perspective and I try to do yoga everyday, even if it's just ten or fifteen minutes....I keep trying to create a balance with all the things in my life. (AP 2b, 12, 1985)

Exposure to secular lifestyles is said to "lower the consciousness." A woman who does not always wear bana and who ventures comparatively far from the ashram and the lifestyle sees this as the major stumbling block she faces. She is bothered by smoking and drug taking and people who gossip cruelly about others. She eats alone at work because conversation "may revolve around sex ninety percent of the time." And for everyone there are the ordinary temptations:

I don't meditate deeply now, but that's my goal. And I don't do my banis now, but that's my goal. You know, balancing the worldly and the spiritual things. I go to the movies instead, and I have to do that too. (AP 17a, 15, 1985)

If I didn't have a spiritual path it would be so easy to get caught up in my emotions...there's all the material things all around that tempt your mind, wanting to have more than you have. And all the men.... (AP 2a, 8, 1985)

There are also the conflicts caused by the working of bureaucracies and the rewards of success. One informant (being helpful and graceful) kindly stayed on the telephone answering my questions for so long that she was late to work and was reprimanded for it. Another reported what was for her a typical ethical quandary. She had just recently had a baby and the company she was working for had been liberal with maternity leaves, something she appreciated, but her baby was frequently ill and company policy allowed for sick days only for employees, not for illness in an employee's family. Most of her fellow workers simply stayed at home and claimed that they were ill when their children were sick, but for the Sikh woman this was a test of conscience. On the one hand she thought the policy unfair and resented having to use her limited vacation time to stay home with a sick baby, and so wanted to dissemble like everyone else. On the other, she had vowed to live righteously and therefore simply should not lie and, additionally, should speak up for her point of view. After going around and around on this issue she decided in favor of honesty. Obviously such a decision can be personally costly, and unpopular with peers if they abide by a set of informal norms that differ from company policy.

As she matured, this same woman began to find more and more pleasure in her work, and as this happened she found

herself torn between the desire for professional acceptance and the requirements of 3HO:

...my career became more important to me, and in the process I have the desire to be accepted. So here I am wearing full bana to work everyday with people who've never seen it before and don't know anything about it --except they think about cults and stuff like that -- and me not wanting to be related to that, just wanting to be treated as a peer and respected for who I am and for what my skills are. So I downplay it, even to the point where I'm ignoring it...not that I want to go around preaching or anything, but in my seeking after respect I have shunted off my spiritual beliefs. I don't feel like I'm doing justice to them... (AP 13b, 1, 1985)

Balancing Work and Family, Spiritual and Community Lives

Not all adjustments are due to outside circumstances. Growing families, individualism, and prosperity have altered patterns of ashram interaction. Family members spend more time together and may find themselves too busy to participate in the communal life. One woman expresses a not uncommon concern: "A lot of times I feel disconnected because I sometimes just see my husband and the people I work with....I work late. And then when I'm not working I'm usually working out, and doing errands." For many the community is still experienced as a major source of support and enjoyment. It is still, as one woman put it, "not like doing life alone." People offer help without being asked. People are in and out of each other's homes. Children can look to multiple role models. In times of trouble the

staff assumes some responsibility. Some people are closely linked to several other members, but in many cases,

...as far as closeness to people, I feel like it's the same as in a lot of places. You kind of get one or two real close friends, and everybody else...I deal with them and I would like to be friends with them but I don't always have time to cultivate it....A lot of times I don't see anybody for awhile. Like people in Herndon I might not see for a week or two. (AP 17a, 3, 1985)

Also, as in many other places, there are, or members think there are, inner and outer circles. There appears to be some division between those who have been in 3HO or lived in the ashram for a long time and those who are relatively new, and there are those who are very active and close to the leadership and those who are more peripheral. There are also those who are very busy outside of the community and those who are more provincial. Recently, at Yogi Bhaajan's direction, women's groups have been instituted to provide support and more opportunities for socializing. Many participants say they have found them helpful, but the first round involved some confrontation and for some it was too uncomfortable or seemed unnecessarily aggressive. One occupant of the "hot seat" summed up her negative reaction: "I felt if the group turns you down, who do I have to go to....I saw people dropping out more and more....I felt it was the power-hungry people in the group just blowing away the weaker ones."

There is an underside to 3HO life as it has developed. It is a hierarchical organization in which power and influence can be abused in the name of religion and transcendence of ego, and in which materialism may threaten other values. Some ex-members who have held leadership positions describe a gulf between the leaders and the rank-and-file members, with the leaders often speaking scornfully or dismissively of ordinary members. Some ashram directors have abused their power, and some long-term members have felt free to sit in judgement on other members. Some members who feel they are not in the inner circles complain of sometimes feeling like outsiders even within 3HO. The other, finer, side of 3HO life is the daily consideration for others, the caring and striving, the commitment to the higher qualities in the self and in others.

SUMMARY

In the early years community life and efforts at constructing an alternative reality were intensive. These were fostered by norms favoring suspension of disbelief, experimentation, and adaptation of 3HO teachings to personal circumstances and perspectives. Strong group spirit, community businesses, and constant interaction, as well as desires to belong, share and excel, furthered the development of shared norms and accounts.

As members matured, started families, and external institutions and exigencies left their imprint, members made their accommodations. In so doing, they moved towards the poles of rationality, individuation, allegiance to situated roles, and more privatized lives. Economic realities, the desire to explore and develop personal talents, and leaders' and members' efforts to further legitimate the organization were motivating forces. So were the facts of the life course; 3HO families, just like other families with young children, have turned inwards.

Through all the changes members have sought to develop, adapt, and interpret 3HO teachings in such a way that they create congruency between self, family, work, organization, and spiritual yearnings. They have tried to balance spiritual and practical concerns, community and family life, individuation and commitment. Counterculture beginnings and present realities have functioned to create a delicate balance between contradictory needs and demands, a balance not without difficulty and conflict. In striking this balance members have also elaborated the concept of the spiritual path, the topic of the next chapter.

Journal, Winter, 1986

Since I've been fighting off the flu and haven't felt well enough to go to my usual exercise classes I thought I'd try doing a little yoga at home. So I took out my yoga manuals and looked for a good, but not exhausting, overall workout. Found one that seemed to fit the bill and included some stretches that might help with lower back problems. It's called "kriya for nerve, navel and lower spine strength", and is described as "an excellent preparatory kriya for meditations that release you from false identifications to the body or mind" (K.R.I., Kundalini Yoga/Sadhana Guidelines, 62). I always bracket these promises of health and insight and settle for a good workout, but there's always that attitude, rather as with horoscopes, that it would be fun if it were true and there's no harm in playing a little with the belief system -- might as well hope the exercises are going to improve my nervous system or heighten my sense of self. One of the fascinations of exploring this lifestyle is that it's such a practical lesson in the sociology of knowledge. I can watch myself and others choosing, often quite arbitrarily, what to believe and what to set aside. It often leaves me uncomfortably aware of the degree that trust and choice are involved in other areas of knowledge -- books, lectures, etc. Anyway, I got out my timer in order to do the

exercises as prescribed (but feeling a little silly for following directions so slavishly -- am I being compulsive, getting too trapped in the detail of the belief system, or just making sure that I really do get a workout?), and felt much better for doing them. When I came to the meditation at the end of the set I decided that I didn't like it and would simply do my own. The instructions were:

...Mentally view the entire body. Then negate each identity that comes to mind: "I am not a man, not a woman, not a student, not a teacher, not sitting, etc." You are not the body, mind or spirit but the consciousness that gives rise to and integrates them all. Continue at least 3 minutes. (62)

The thought process went something along the lines of, "No thank you, I don't want to negate my identities and certainly not my physical body. Yes I do feel threatened by it. Therefore according to the Sikhs I should try it, just to overcome a block, experiment with my mental range. Why not try it? Because I prefer to use my will to say 'no', and I really do think there's something almost immoral about negating myself. Also, this isn't to be played with, once you start negating identities you pay a price and have to replace them with something, and unless I'm really willing to involve myself in this process and really think it's desirable I should just not fiddle with it. And the well-being that comes from meditation is what I'm after, peace not mind games."

So I did my alternative meditation, enjoying the early morning sun on my jade plant and then imagining a bright,

almost bubbly, light running through my veins and making me healthy. But as my mind shifted to the day ahead and I began imagining the day's scenes I found that the suggestion had taken hold. Each of the images of myself in action, each role, seemed flat and shallow, and I began wondering how I could be so absorbed in each of them, how I could invest so much energy, hope and anger. So I went ahead and concentrated on myself as a higher self, using techniques that I've learned in workshops: first just visualizing the outline of my body seated there in lotus position, then going back to some of the images that I have found helpful. They usually work, and did this time. I emerged with a general feeling of pleasure and calm and wholeness.

Two days later

Still can't entirely shake this flu and so tried doing yoga at home again, this time somewhat more in tune with the intent of the exercises. Was feeling tired, and fuzzy, and sorry for myself because I has to face my long day (13 hours and 4 classes) at work. Hoped I could feel better and cut through some of my resistance by doing yoga -- I really couldn't afford to take the day off. So I picked a set that was supposed to help with that sort of thing, again not really believing but this time willing to give it

a try and reckoning that at the least I could get a placebo effect. According to the manual:

This Kriya balances the aura and electromagnetic field, stimulates the elimination of body toxins, develops muscular coordination, and gives balance to the brain. It is a great practice to stay in tune particularly if you have something to do that requires quick clear decisions, and delicate manipulations. It is also excellent to practice if your work gives you brain fatigue and mental sluggishness....Exercise 11 consolidates your mental projection into a one-pointed positivity towards yourself and your daily tasks.. (K.R.I. Kundalini Yoga Manual, 23)

I needed some positivity, at least enough to drag through the day. Argued with myself again about the directions -- how precisely should I follow them. Followed them, mostly, but shortened one and left out a chant. Aware of the half-formed thoughts going through my mind, watching myself conduct a semi-conscious debate: should I follow rules or go for self-regulation, should I do battle with the tired side of me or is that really letting myself be dominated by the superego? And knowing that I am supposed to watch this debate unfolding and see it as representative of the conflicts within me, but not at all convinced that it is typical of my responses to other situations. But then I am ambivalent about a lot of things and I am often torn between my rebel and achiever selves. But I think this tension may be desirable and I don't necessarily want to dissolve or resolve it. (It would be

funny if what I personally took away from this encounter was an affirmation of my own ambivalence, conflicts and skepticism, if I opted for a modern multi-selved, untidy identity with only a loose integration. Or is this the rebel inside saying, "If they want you to be single-pointed then be the opposite? Etc, etc., etc.). At the end I did a brief visualization, seeing myself happy and energetic as I taught my classes, and I could almost feel some of the resistance break and the day become manageable. And I did get through in better shape than I expected. In fact, a couple of classes went quite well.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRITUAL PATH:
CONSTRUCTING AND LIVING AN ALTERNATIVE REALITY

Well, we realized then that what we needed to do was to create certain kinds of environments which would allow a person, after being into another state of consciousness, to retain a certain kind of environmental support for new ways of looking at himself. After all, if you see yourself as God and then you come back from this state and somebody says, "Hey, Sam, Empty the garbage!" it catches you back into the model of "I'm Sam who empties the garbage." You can't maintain these new kinds of structures. It takes a while to realize that God can empty garbage. (Ram Dass, 1971, 1)

As 3HO members went through their changes and altered ingrained habits, they were giving form and substance to an alternative reality. Analysis of their beliefs, or a depiction of the life course as 3HO members experience it, is essential to an understanding of this experience, but the essence of the endeavor is difficult to capture. If a new religion is to prove meaningful, an extraordinary, and essentially inexpressible, reality must somehow be given texture and contour. It must be rendered with sufficient detail to be useful in everyday life, but must still retain sufficient mystery and possibility to remain suggestive and extraordinary. The relationship between ordinary and extraordinary realms must be sketched out, and believers must then learn to shift back and forth between the two realities, clearing and maintaining a route between them. They may also strive to re-work each reality in terms of

the other, so, in effect, their calling requires that they transmute and recreate realities. Their activity suggests magic and sorcery, and indeed they are involved in social alchemy.

THE PATH

3HO members often refer to their efforts to act upon their belief in a higher order of being, and to integrate this belief with their daily lives, as being on a spiritual path. If asked to define this term, they emphasize discipline and progress toward enlightenment:

I think a spiritual path is fairly clear-cut in a lot of ways. A spiritual path is going towards enlightenment. There are models for a spiritual path. If you read lives of yogis, or the life of Christ, or the life of great spiritual teachers, I think there are apparent stages, and I feel like once you start getting into your own path and see it unfolding you can almost see where you are....A path to me implies that there is an end, and I think the end is somehow to go to God in this lifetime, to make a conscious effort to go towards God....I believe...my past lifetimes and my future lifetimes are all operating in the same time....This time [the present] is just an illusion. If that's true, then my becoming conscious or enlightened means that all of a sudden that entire veil of illusion drops and I'm united with God. I think that that's possible. (AP 4, 1985, 5)

I guess a spiritual path is when a person decides to develop their higher consciousness and they're striving to do that, and they are doing that....It doesn't have to be Sikhs, but it can be any kind of thing where people have guidelines in their life and they follow those guidelines...being a positive person, being neutral, positively neutral, and relating to the God inside them...the thing is to relate to that and realize it's there, realize it's in everybody, and keep working towards always

thinking about that, always believing that way.
(AP 14, 1985)

* * * * *

Like a spiritual path is really hard. Like talking to my parents about being on a spiritual path or living in an ashram, they probably think of "love" painted on the walls...and it's not that....If you're really into it you have to be very honest with yourself all the time, and that's really hard...like, "Why am I not doing this? What am I afraid of? Who am I trying to mentally control? Who am I trying to please? Why am I trying to please them?" (AP 11, 1985, 5)

The above statements were provided in response to an explicit request for a definition or description of a spiritual path. If one relies instead on contextual statements -- on conversations and discussions about Sikhism and 3HO -- it becomes clear that the term has a variety of other implications. It refers to Sikhism and to the distinctive 3HO distillation of traditions, but it also can have a broader meaning since it is a term that is widely used in New Age circles to suggest an interest in the exploration of consciousness and a willingness to organize one's life around non-utilitarian priorities. To be on a spiritual path means to be an explorer willing to investigate new modes of thinking and perceiving. It suggests that one is part of a social movement, a new vanguard, not only a member of a particular religion or sect. It can also imply willingness to embrace alternative traditions, to participate in ancient, sometimes esoteric, systems of belief and practice. 3HO members vary in their

interpretations, some adopting a universalistic approach and viewing 3HO as one instance of a broader phenomenon; others assuming that they have found the one true path.

When 3HO members are asked specifically about the stages encountered on a spiritual path and about its trials and rewards it becomes clear that the term has even more depth of meaning, and that it overlaps with several concepts that are employed in interpretive social science. It can imply the existence of distinct provinces of meaning and several levels of reality. To use the term is to acknowledge the significance of accounts and symbols in constructing and structuring everyday reality. The path challenges common-sense approaches to biography and necessity and requires that seekers bracket ordinary realities, study their own thought processes, and become ever more reflexive.

Thus, the spiritual path requires an interest in many of the issues that fascinate interpretive social scientists: interest in the nature of consciousness; in the relationship between objective and subjective realities; in the possibility of knowing truth and of linking different levels of reality and experience. In 3HO these interests are always accompanied by praxis, by efforts to alter the self, broaden the range of consciousness, or act morally. If one is on the 3HO spiritual path then one not only contemplates the nature of

reality but actually attempts to open chakras and gain access to a higher reality and become a channel for this reality and for the energy it encompasses. One attempts to tune one's awareness until one can distinguish between truth and the desires of the ego, and to become so enlightened that the self is no longer shaped or determined by objective factors.

In the 3HO case one is aided in this effort by charismatic leadership and group spirit. Inspiration, intuition, revelation, and even supernatural powers, are acceptable rationales for action and belief. Leaps of faith, intuitive synthesis, and some inconsistency of belief are allowable, and thus one can act and believe without evidence or logical support for one's actions. One must, however, practice a discipline of constant self-examination and regular self-doubt, and one is faced with the paradox of having to question received realities -- to practice radical doubt -- while still holding onto one's faith.

In the academic realm, the same self-doubt and radical questioning are ideals, and many of the same or parallel issues are of central concern. Social scientists, however, are limited by rules of logic and evidence. Leaps of faith are not acceptable and intuition and symbolic thought must be disciplined, although revelation and sudden synthesis have their place. Social scientists reap the benefits of

method, of a body of previous research, of peer review and critical evaluation. But connections are harder to come by, and little can be taken for granted. Skepticism and demands for objectivity can slow progress as we question every assumption and fear to generalize, but they are also our protection from group pressures and the pull of charisma. The subject matter and issues at hand are similar, but ours is the more rational and detached approach and the new religionists' is the more intuitive and activist.

In this chapter, I view some of these issues from both spiritual and sociological perspectives. I explore the social construction of reality in 3HO. To do so I apply concepts drawn from interpretive sociology to 3HO beliefs, accounts, and metaphors. I also include members' own words and perspectives. The chapter focuses on several key aspects of the spiritual path and on several levels of reality: on the Tantric tradition, on sadhana and meditation, on historical influences, and on group and individual use of metaphors. In so doing it enters an arena where science and spirituality sometimes overlap, and alchemy reigns.

THE LEADER

In the construction of a new reality, Yogi Bhanan is cast in the role of wizard. He forges new metal out of the

old traditions of Tantra and Sikhism, and attempts the paradoxical task of institutionalizing the ineffable. He encourages his followers to transcend everyday realities but he and they still must use these realities to accomplish this delicate task. He must both affirm the reality that he and his followers construct and simultaneously cast doubt on most accepted versions of reality. He must remind his followers that their cognitive processes are not entirely dependable, and, often, are in need of repair and refinement, and yet give them the faith that they can know truth. Thus, in constructing his belief system he must name the country and the roads and the major landmarks, and leave no doubt that these are real places. Yet he must remind the traveller that there is an element of the arbitrary here and that other paths are possible. The follower must be aware that every landmark presents many aspects and can be approached from several different angles. Each can be mapped from a variety of reference points and on many scales; but nonetheless each is part of a larger picture, known to the leader.

If the wizard is to adapt to changing circumstances, maintain some balance between authority and approachability, and meet members' varied needs, he must also create a reality in which he can indulge freely in shifts in tone, framework, and perspective. Thus Yogi Bhanjan sometimes speaks as a practical man, sometimes as a

spiritual teacher, sometimes as a seer, and sometimes as peer or friend. He shifts his tone from formal to informal, from calm to angry, from serious to tongue-in-cheek. He indicates that he is speaking now in one role and now in another, and expects his followers to respond accordingly. Similarly, he responds to their shifting moods and expectations.

Bhajan is faced with the fact that while it is the essence of yogic tradition to teach that all viewpoints and concepts are relative and flawed, the realities of organization-building and of establishing a hierarchical organization may require firm strictures and unconditional beliefs. Further, leader and organization must appear to possess the truth, or at least a path to it, while reserving ideological flexibility. Thus, he is both tolerant and authoritarian. He suggests that all of his actions can be interpreted in alternative frameworks -- that what he is saying and doing is not the whole story, that the person who takes him literally is missing the point -- and then demands service and devotion. He insists on both obedience and independence. He allows for ad hoc interpretations of teachings and policies and then suddenly closes the door on choice and accounts. He expects his followers to be both true believers and Pirandellos. They must have faith that there is a path, however varied its forms, but may also be aware that it is being constructed.

They can know that there is a wizard, but must not believe that this is Oz. In fact, the belief system and the demands of building and maintaining an organization are often at odds, the one requiring relativism and individual interpretation and the other obedience and clear-cut rules and beliefs. The message is thus differentially expounded and adapted to individuals and circumstances, often with shifts in tone from world-accommodation to world-rejection.

THE SETTING: TANTRIC CLASSES, SADHANA, AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF MEDITATION

Tantra & Kundalini

Some people have claimed spaces in the large room where the Tantric Yoga class is to be held and have set out their mats and sheepskins in readiness. Others are registering or wandering through the "bazaar" room where tea, fruit, carrot muffins and apple crumble are on sale for the hungry, along with a variety of other goods such as lengths of cotton for turbans, shawls, tapes of 3HO mantras, vegetarian cookbooks and natural stone necklaces said to have healing properties. Yogi Bhajan is in town to teach the White Tantric Yoga which can only be practiced under his guidance. The class is going to be delayed, however, because he is in a meeting that is lasting longer than expected.

In the large and rather chilly room where the class is to be held people are arranging themselves in couples. Many are married or already with someone, others look for a partner. Participants are arranged in rows, men in one line and women in the other, the partners facing each other. A member of the Washington ashram gets up on the stage and starts warm-up yoga in preparation for Yogi Bhajan's coming. We do several sets of stretching exercises; one of them is camel pose in which the individual kneels and leans back over the feet with head tilted back. This pose is held for a long, uncomfortable time and the leader's comment that "this exercise is very good for asthma," is received with laughter since it is quite difficult enough to maintain with normal breathing capacity. We come to Sat Kriya, which is done sitting on the heels with a contraction of the pelvic floor and a chant of "Sat Nam, Sat Nam." It is supposed to raise energy from lower to higher centers of the body and can be very difficult if done for a long time. The chant comes out "Sut Nammmmm" with sharp intakes of breath and Nam's that are almost groans. The leader exhorts us to "keep up" and concentrate on energy passing up the spine and to the third eye. Periodically people rest and look around the

room, and late-comers continue to arrive and do warm-up exercises as they settle in.

With the warm-up stage completed we begin to chant to a softly played guitar, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru in order to "set positive vibrations." This continues for quite awhile until finally there is an announcement that Yogi Bhanan cannot leave the meeting yet and we are to take a break but be ready to return at a moment's notice.

Finally Yogi Bhanan arrives and begins,

"Are you ready for some fun?"

Nods and laughter follow and the class commences.

"Face your partner. Put your right index finger between his brows, and your left hand on your heart. Not his forehead -- don't you know what are the eyebrows? Those hairy outgrowths....Now breathe in deeply and let it all out. You are breathing in life. Breathe in with reverence and breathe out with love."

The room is filled with the sound of deep breathing and the breaths sometimes issue as shudders as the exercise goes on and on. Our arms are shaking

before it ends. When it finally does, we talk for awhile with our partners and then move on to the next Kriya. There is some trouble starting the tape that is to accompany the exercise, and Yogi Bhajan turns to the man who is struggling with the tape recorder and says, "So you go through life pushing the wrong buttons? Do you do it with Siri Kaur [his wife], go to push one button and push the other?"

There is much laughter, and then the tape starts and we begin another set of exercises. With our arms on partners' shoulders we flip the abdomen in and out while chanting a mantra. Afterwards we lie down, relax, and meditate. We are told to imagine that we are beautiful colored birds, flying freely through the skies: "There is great power in you now. Leave your body and fly."

This kriya is followed by a break and an opportunity to get something to eat or drink and to talk with Yogi Bhajan. A crowd surrounds him, people who want to greet him, ask his advice, receive his blessing, or simply to be near him. In spite of the crush he appears to concentrate fully, giving each individual his undivided attention.

When the break is over we do one last kriya. It is a light-hearted exercise that has us turned back to back, arms linked with our partners. The goal is to push the partner over. There is a great deal of laughter and shuffling as people push and twist and stumble, and then the session is over. There is a final announcement that all are invited to join Yogi Bhajan and his party at the Chinese restaurant next door where there will be a specially requested meal containing no meat, MSG or sugar. After that people will go on to see the film Tarzan.

(Personal notes on Tantric Course, March 31, 1984).

Yogi Bhajan's 3HO adherents refer to him as the Mohan Tantric -- the only person in the world entitled to teach White Tantric Yoga. He travels around the U.S. and Canada offering courses in Tantric yoga similar to the one just described. This form of yoga is also the central element of two major 3HO events, the Summer and Winter Solstice rites.

Tantric, as previously stated, is a form of Kundalini Yoga. Basic to both is the concept of energy. According to yogic thought we are endowed with both physical and subtle bodies. At certain points they are said to intermingle; one major point of contact is said to be a channel called the sushumna which runs from the base of the

spine up through the spinal column and on through the crown. When awakened, the Kundalini energy is said to travel up this channel through various chakras. Above the crown is the Sahasrara, where Sakti meets Shiva:

Ordinarily the individual is polarized, with shiva residing at the crown chakra and the latent power of shakti (kundalini) lying dormant at the base of the spine....The practice of kundalini yoga involves not only awakening this kundalini shakti but also systematically leading her through each of the chakras to the sahasrara or crown chakra, the abode of shiva....When this is achieved in the individual, he becomes fully conscious....When the static shakti becomes dynamic and travels upward, fully energizing each of the centers along the way, the polarization of the body gives way and one attains the highest state of samadhi. (Rama 1979, 33).

There are dramatic accounts of this event in the literature. The following, describing an awakening during a meditation led by Yogi Amrit Desai, is representative of these:

...I had my eyes closed and I felt pleasant currents of inner energy. Then, as Amrit led us deeper into meditation, I began to realize that something unusual was happening to me. The first thing I noticed was a wave of euphoria softly permeating my being. I felt intensely happy....Suddenly surges of energy -- like electric charges -- streaked up my spine. These gradually evolved into a steady current of hot energy flowing from the tip of my spine to the top of my head....Brilliant colors swirled inside my head; I thought I would burst with happiness.... (Butler 1979, 185).

"But," as Swami Rama points out, "such an experience is rare. It is more usual for tiny bits of this energy to be released through various means. One then experiences breakthroughs, bursts of energy and enthusiasm, peak

experiences, a sense of well-being, and similar changes in consciousness." (Rama 1979, 33).

Movement along the spiritual path can be equated with the upward movement of the kundalini energy; 3HO members are trying slowly but surely to raise energy and consciousness. In Kundalini yoga this is accomplished by a combination of breath control (pranyam), mantra recitations, exercises, and meditations. Notable aspects of 3HO practice are vigorous exercises, the use of the "breath-of-fire," a form of rapid shallow breathing done in various postures, and a very technical approach to Kundalini yoga. Mantras are said to affect specific chakras and to perform specific tasks. The sounds in a mantra "are exact keys which you touch to telegraph your message to the infinite self. Your entire system is played by these sounds. Each sound vibrates and integrates a different chakra to its full radiance within the aura." (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 37).

Yogi Bhajan constantly refers to yoga as a science, and expects considerable attention to the details of performance. He also emphasizes practical benefits. Kundalini, he claims, is a rapid route to enlightenment. It purges the subconscious:

In Kundalini yoga we fry this subconscious mind. We make a toast out of it and eat it. It is one of the best dishes we make. We have a technical know-how to approach this subconscious mind which sits behind our mind and does the mischief." (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 8).

It empowers the individual and strengthens her aura. As one informant puts it: "A chant creates a pattern or an aura, like an envelope around you. You've got positive vibes which deflect negative energy if it comes at you."

Or as Yogi Bhajan describes it:

When the magnetic field is strong, you relate to emotions differently. You can choose to relate to someone or disconnect from their influence. When your radiance is strong and you direct it to someone, they will want to talk to you and be around you in spite of great differences or pains. (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 8).

Similarly, 3HO White Tantric relies heavily on the chanting of mantras as well as on various yoga kriyas. It is thought to unite male and female principles and to cleanse the subconscious of fears and "negativity," and even to alter the world's energy vibrations. In 3HO there is considerable emphasis upon cleansing and upon Yogi Bhajan's role in this process:

White Tantric is what you experienced at Solstice. You meditate, you chant in the presence of the Mohan Tantric. He encompasses everyone with his aura and you get cleaned out, and in an hour or two you do what would take you ten years. He takes on all of that within his own physical, astral and other bodies and he processes it. So he physically suffers a lot from those courses. That's why it's lucky when it rains, because it cools things down. His spine gets very hot. That's why you have to sit in straight lines because it's like his spine is attached to your spine. It's a very real thing, and those who can see auras can see it. He waits until the aura turns a certain, proper color, then he has to separate the male from the female polarities. That's why you cannot practice any of those exercises unless he's there, 'cause you could get merged with the other person's aura and you might not be able to separate it again....It's a heck of a job because he has to be responsible for

helping people clean out their karmas. (Shakti Parwha Kaur Khalsa, Orientation Course, Khalsa Women's Training Camp, 1983).

The imagery evoked is the stuff of both magic and science, of science fiction and 20th century fact: explosive energy, electromagnetic shields, male and female opposition, the union of the extraordinary and the everyday. In 3HO such imagery is woven into individual spiritual paths and identities. The image of the self as a vessel of energy, in which energy and matter, infinite powers and mundane reality meet, lends considerable significance to self and biography. The individual becomes a model of the universe, potentially as powerful as its vastest forces.

Sadhana: The Crucible

3HO members settle on their mats in the dimly lit sadhana room. Some first sit cross-legged and bow from the waist in a gesture of respect and submission before the guru. Others begin with warm-up exercises, stretching, their legs extended straight in front while they grab the toes, or sitting with legs crossed, holding the knees and rapidly flexing the spine from slump to straight and back again. Sadhana begins with the chanting of a devotional mantra and of Ong Namō Guru Dev Namō, and with preliminary yoga exercises. Then the serious yoga begins. There are rustles and sighs, and during a really difficult set,

groans, as the yoga proceeds. There is also some coming and going as late-comers settle in or a particularly tired participant decides to go home or lie down in the room next door. Even if they can't make it through the entire sadhana, attendees are assured that just being there is valuable:

...you get together in group consciousness because it helps each other. That is what morning sadhana and group consciousness is: it is a help to each other. If I am trying to sleep, another is not sleeping. If in this whole group one person opens up to God just once, we all will be blessed in his openness. (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 2).

The yoga is followed by intensive chanting of a mantra. In the enthusiastic early years this sometimes went on for an hour. Now it is usually for a shorter period. There are some lovely voices in the ashram and these pierce the early morning gloom, lifting the chant, sometimes harmonizing with it. Some meditators sway as they chant, and slowly are lifted out of themselves and into the unity of syllables and sounds. The effect is much more intense on weekends when attendance is high and the weekday tape recorder is replaced by instruments. It is believed that the chanting lifts the individual out of her isolation and establishes group consciousness: "The breathing allows the mind to release particular emotional and intuitive energies that power the consciousness to expand. In this technique you go from the individual mind to the universal mind." (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 18).

After each chant the individual is to stop and meditate:

take a few minutes to sit completely still without any movement and try to listen to the cosmic echo of the sounds you just produced....If you can catch the subtle sound it will carry you without effort beyond the body consciousness into the sublime realms of self and bliss. (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 21).

Next there is a period of quiet meditation and deep relaxation. People wrap themselves in blankets and shawls and quiet descends: "You may have out-of-the-body experiences, you may have vivid dreams, you may remember nothing at all after closing your eyes." (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 22). The energies released by the kundalini yoga should "circulate and come to equilibrium." Healing is said to occur automatically.

Deep relaxation is followed by kirtan or energetic singing, and a return to the daily world. Then there is a period of prayer, including recitation of the Ardas, a prayer instituted by Gobind Singh, one of the Sikh gurus, which lists all of the Sikh gurus and includes prayers for the Khalsa and for forgiveness from sins. Then there is the blessing and sharing of prasaad as someone fills open palms with the sticky stuff and people rise and begin to chatter and get on with the day.

The individual sadhana experience varies from day to day. One day it may be viewed as an energizing set of exercises; on another as a time of extraordinary peace and

pleasure. Sometimes very little seems to happen; the yoga is a chore, the mind races during meditation, an attempt at visualization yields no results, or perhaps the would-be meditator simply can't stay awake. But participation is always considered valuable and is said to automatically benefit participants. It is said to ease the effects of stress, lift the consciousness, and balance the left and right hemispheres of the brain:

The West has pressed the left brain to the limit. We have filled our lives with action-oriented, goal-oriented, linear, logical, verbal thinking. The right brain that rules intuition and is the doorway to the deeper self has not been valued....Sadhana is a way of healing the left-right split and imbalance of our consciousness. It becomes a kind of therapy. Since it heals by stimulating the integrative mechanisms without the individual having to go into the origin of specific conflicts, it functions as a metatherapy. (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 23).

Sadhana is thus an effort to link and integrate -- left and right brains, self and group, lower and higher energies. Ideally, it also involves adroit shifting between meditative and ordinary spheres of meaning and the construction of a new reality in which each sphere is integrated into the other.

Phenomenology of meditation

Schutz and Luckmann (1973) distinguish between the "natural attitude" of everyday life and the assumptions of other 'provinces' of meaning. These provinces include those of science, dreams, fantasy, and religion, and each

is said to have (a) its own distinctive cognitive style, (b) its form of "attention a la vie," (c) its forms of sociality and self-experience, and (d) its distinctive time perspective. (25-27). The natural attitude is dominated by pragmatic motives, and by an active "wide-awake" attention to a factual world that clearly exists "out there." This is a world in which objects are clearly bounded, are assigned practical meanings and functions, and appear to others as they do to the observer. In this attitude "a man surely does not suspend his beliefs in the existence of the outer world and its Objects. On the contrary, he suspends every doubt concerning their existence." (27).

In the natural attitude knowledge and action are always related to projects and motives. They are always shaped by biography and social interaction, and they can be schematized. The contours of memory and expectation are shaped by the demands of the practical, intersubjective world:

The condition of wide-awakeness outlines every pragmatically relevant province of the world. This relevance for its part determines the form and content of our life of consciousness. It determines form because it determines the tension of our recollections and thereby the span of our remembrances of past lived experiences, while at the same time determining the span of our expectations. (26)

Schutz and Luckmann are primarily concerned with this

natural attitude and direct only peripheral attention to alternative provinces of meaning. They do point out that

It would have to be shown exactly how, with waning tension of consciousness and withdrawal from daily life, larger and larger segments and strata of the everyday life-world lose their "self-evidency" and the accent of reality. It would have to be indicated how the epoche of the natural attitude, which suspends doubt concerning the existence of the everyday life-world, is replaced by other forms of epoche which "bracket" belief in determinate provinces of the everyday life-world. (28)

The following, which draws generally from the literature on Eastern and mystical traditions and on my own experience with 3HO, is a brief sketch of how the "accent of reality" is altered in 3HO and of how leaders and ordinary members define and relate the different realities.

Attention a la vie/cognitive style/time and typifications

In the course of yoga and meditation, body rhythms are slowed, brain waves altered, and action foreclosed. Since action is not expected, the chains that bind objects to practical plans are loosened. Thoughts, images, and sounds can be experienced with unaccustomed intensity or detachment. Because it is not necessary to alter the "out there," the mind needn't be directed toward the solution of problems and it can be freed to allow new patterns of thought, sound, and perception to emerge. Ordinary boundaries between objects and individuals lose their overriding status and new associations are possible. New

images are created. The sounds of a chant, for example, may seem to take on an almost object-like quality, as if a layer of sound were being created, and the chanter may feel more attached to that layer than to her own body.

"Reference schemata" can be broadened or focused so that the meditator can allow associations to flow freely, or choose to focus on a particular sound or image.

Freed of the usual pragmatic concerns and attention to externals, the mind can observe its own functioning with more detachment or freedom than is customary. Memories can be treated not as useful tools for manipulating the environment, or for protecting the self from it, but as interesting examples of how the brain and its defense mechanisms work. Because the individual is freed of the necessity of receiving multiple external stimuli and of monitoring and guiding interactions, it becomes possible to create elaborate imaginary interactions, to conceive of alternative modes of interacting with people and objects, or simply to observe internal conversations and fantasies.

Because, when she is meditating successfully, the meditator is relatively free of "world time" and of the accustomed social "typifications," perceptions can take on all the freshness they had in childhood. The present stands out over past and future; roles and social categories lose their primacy. The self can feel intensely alive, aware, "centered" and empowered. The internal

dialogues that draw upon role expectations and serve to schematize experience and to direct self-presentations can appear tiresome, repetitive and self-limiting. Feelings of love, concern, and empathy may flow freely.

Linking Provinces of Meaning

Transit between two provinces of meaning, and construction of linkages between them is a delicate business. Each reality can threaten the other, and, as Berger puts it, the problem of faith is

...the problem of legitimating the coexistence of the "other condition", in which time stands still, with the world of everyday reality, in which all things continue to move through time....To the extent that...approximations to the "other condition" permeate everyday reality, the problem exists wherever everyday reality is "invaded" by other realities. From the perspective of either reality, the old or the new, there is the problem of "translating" the alternative reality into terms appropriate to the reality in which one has chosen to stand. (1970, 357).

Seekers on a spiritual path must learn how to construct, define, experience, and defend each reality. The discipline and the belief system help the aspirant to assign meaning to the separate realities, to define their boundaries and their points of contact, and to establish modes of maneuvering between the two attitudes. 3HO members are taught to respect each reality and to infuse each with the other, although the spiritual realm is accorded the higher standing. From the seeker's point of view, as the consciousness is raised the pre-existing

higher reality is better understood and becomes a part of everyday experience.

From a more phenomenological point of view, both realities are being created as much as revealed. Thus members learn not only how to meditate but what they should experience in a meditative state. They learn how to direct attention to the mind's workings while they are meditating. Equally, they learn how they should perceive the world when they are not in a meditative state. In fact, in order to define the two provinces, members must, paradoxically perhaps, borrow techniques, cognitive styles, and attitudes from one and apply them to the other. The practical world-altering concerns of the natural attitude are introduced into the meditative experience, so that it is given a purpose and a place within the world of everyday affairs. Similarly, the everyday world is to be viewed and reinterpreted from the alternative, meditative state.

One of the products of meditation should be the creation of a "neutral self." This self should be detached from the passions, fears, and motives of the natural attitude. It should be capable of regarding experience without desire or expectation. Rather, it should simply confront what-is without interpretation or thoughts of personal gain or of ego-enhancement. One of the functions of this neutral self is to link the different realities. It can make the passage between the two provinces of

meaning and can direct experience in each province. Thus it can introduce some of the pragmatism of the natural attitude into the meditative state, so that the meditator can learn to direct and utilize this experience. It can also provide a shield from some of the pressures exerted by the natural attitude so that the individual can participate in everyday affairs without being overwhelmed by the usual practical motives, associations, and forms of self-experience.

The neutral self is said to be formed, first, simply by the calm and safety of the meditative state. The individual is able to confront fears and anxieties, and examine the structure of the stream of consciousness. It is perfectly acceptable for her to admit the baggage of everyday life -- the internal dialogues, the worries and anxieties, the expectations, the motives -- but she should attempt to "neutralize" them.

In meditation, you are cleaning the subconscious of fears and releasing new reservoirs of consciousness and energy to guide you. As each fear comes up and you look upon it neutrally, the fear loses its power over you....In meditation the effects of old fears come to you on your time and under your conditions. Since they come at the same time each day, it becomes easier to deal with each one. Eventually the mind is cleared of the clouds of fear and begins to see the light and power of creative consciousness. (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 15-16).

As this occurs the meditator slowly increases her control over her own mind and her circumstances. She

learns to focus her attention on feelings of love, clarity, beauty, and peace and on images of unity and empowerment. She tries to neglect or "neutralize" self-seeking, anger, fear, anxiety, depression, and desires to manipulate others or to yield to the "lower self." The meditative state should be used to attain greater self-awareness, to experience peace and joy, and to alter the stream of consciousness so that attention is turned in new directions, and old attitudes, perceptions and feeling states are altered. Eventually one should

...enter into prabhupati, or mastery of God. This is the state of neutrality. Your motivation is neutral. No finite thing motivates you. No money, no fame, no sex, no personal advancement is enough to determine your actions....The stage of prabhupati represents the opening and attunement to the superconsciousness.... (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 15-16).

In the meantime, it is perfectly acceptable to use the meditative state to enhance one's capacity to enjoy and succeed in everyday life. The meditative state, for example, can be used to "reprogram" the everyday self, an idea that has sparked the imagination of the Khalsa Counselors (3HO therapists) who have employed it in a variety of ways. They encourage the individual to visualize herself as she would like to be in everyday life, or as the evolved spiritual being she seeks to become. She may imagine herself as surrounded by light, at peace in all settings, or gracefully submitting to God's will wherever she may be. She may relive an experience, altering it in

her imagination so that it is conducted in a more dignified, caring or graceful manner, in the expectation that in a similar, future situation she will indeed behave in this way.

Thus a therapist describes one of her own visualizations:

One of the ones I use a lot is I imagine myself bowing before an altar and the altar represents the highest, purest consciousness within myself and in all of us....It's a sense of humility and surrender and love and reverence....Another is...I have an image of the eyes of this kind of ageless person, the most compassionate, loving eyes that I can imagine, looking at me in a totally accepting way, and then I literally look through those eyes and experience myself looking at the universe through them, absolutely accepting and loving.... (AP 1, 1984).

Often, 3HO members emphasize the practical benefits of sadhana. This is one woman's account of her feelings as she left the sadhana room, quoted as she wrote them down immediately afterwards:

If I would really do this everyday I would be sooo together! My mind is clear, fast, calm and I project strength. I feel like I'm an inspiration to people I meet because I'm positive and happy and successful. (AP 17, 12/86).

And another's:

Feeling centered. So much to do! Getting ready for solstice I feel like I'm "backed" by the Nam. (AP 2, 12/15/86).

Just as the natural attitude can be introduced into the meditative reality, so the meditative reality should in turn enter and alter the world of practical affairs. The products of meditation -- peace, love, a sense of

empowerment, clarity, neutrality, new sets of associations and schemes of reference -- should inform everyday thought and action. Pragmatic, self-interested, and circumscribed chains of thought should be broken or broadened. The natural attitude should be altered and expanded with the introduction of new reference schemata, stocks of knowledge, and typifications.

Repetitive, emotional, defensive or self-serving thoughts and actions can be intentionally interrupted as one learns to "re-access," meditative states:

After every exercise you should rest a minute and meditate to integrate the changes, experiences and sensitivity the exercise created. By practicing meditation after a kriya, you will be able to regain the state of consciousness produced by that kriya any time during the rest of the day by a few seconds of meditation. (Kundalini Research Institute 1978, 22).

And constancy at sadhana should pay off, in small increments of God-consciousness during the day and in increased ability to re-enter the altered state. As one of the speakers cited above recounted her thoughts upon leaving sadhana on another morning:

I've just started my day positively -- I can handle anything!! Instead of worrying or mindlessly thinking of a T.V. show or emotional response to something, the songs and mantras come into my mind. That's the best - it lifts the spirit. (AP 17, 12/86)

Ideally, a 3HO member should strive to extend the range of associations in most situations, so that they reach beyond the immediate and the practical. A child's tantrum for example, is not seen merely as an isolated event but as

part of a much broader pattern: as egoistic behavior that must be discouraged so that the child will be capable of obedience to a spiritual teacher and of acting in his higher consciousness. Similarly, a job becomes an opportunity to channel grace to others, and selling Oriental Beauty Secrets a way to overcome shyness and thus become more capable of service to others.

Stereotypes are to be avoided. 3HO members try to remember that every individual is a precious soul and not merely a category or a persona. To use one woman's example:

...the Siri Singh Sahib always would say you should relate to your husband as a god, and by doing that you won't feel the negative things....So whenever I would think my husband was the worst creep and he was acting like a total jerk I would always try to remember that. At least if I didn't consciously think of it I would at least not lay my trip on him.... (AP2a 16, 1985).

Similarly, members try to avoid the typifications and recipes of everyday life. Some criticize the automatic and routinized nature of the lifestyles they were raised in and now observe outside of the organization. They aim to avoid "reactive" and habitual behavior and to become more aware of their motives and their capacity to control situations. Sadhana should also broaden the range of awareness. A spiritual person should be aware not only of her own feelings in a situation, but of others' reactions and interpretations, and of all the possible outcomes and implications of the situation. That is, in part, what is

meant by "becoming conscious." If the natural attitude requires that one be "wide-awake," then this is an intensification and reinterpretation of it. The long-term goal is a self that is always transforming the natural attitude by extending the horizons of sympathy, reference, awareness, and knowledge. The self should become a channel for the Godforce and finally be profoundly altered, being at once the formless and the form, the mystic and the householder, the small self and the larger whole.

Negotiating between provinces of meaning: metaphor, struggle, and resistance

This effort to connect and move between realities is, of course, difficult and often frustrating. The pull of the natural attitude and the press of events is difficult to resist.

...the bottom line is always thinking about making God your focus twenty-four hours a day, so I try to incorporate that. I have a long way to go, but I try to. There's more of that in my life now than there used to be. It used to be me doing everything; now it's more me doing it through the presence of God....Not anything like walking on clouds, but being a really concrete business person and still having God in my mind...I have to keep bringing myself back to it -- just really having those few moments of absolute connection with God that I have now to be constant, to be totally through me, so when I go to work it doesn't just disappear, or when I step in the car I think of other things. I mean, I step out of gurdwara and my mind goes right into movies. (AP 10b 28, 1985).

Even entering the meditative state may be difficult:

I feel like I've gotten this far but I still have so far to go. You know, I want to meditate, now I

may meditate, but I don't do it deeply enough to get anywhere. So that's now the next thing: really forgetting the world for a short time every day. Which I usually don't -- I just do it as the right thing right now, but I feel good that at least I'm working on something. (AP 17a, 11, 1985).

Sometimes it is necessary just to go through the forms with the hope of deepening the experience. In the meantime one attempts to "keep up," a much-used phrase that refers (a) to efforts to maintain a positive attitude, (b) to efforts to transform the natural attitude and (c) to efforts to maintain the 3HO disciplines:

Suppose my daughter is giving me a hard time. Instead of saying, "Just leave me alone"...or just slamming the door or something...it is saying, "Now we have to talk about this."...That's keeping up....It's keeping UP. Up. To your up values. Keep going is one way of saying it. But keeping up is also to be up rather than just to keep going, to stay in a positive vein.

[Sadhana] really does make a difference, just preparing yourself for the day makes a big difference....Rather than just getting up and saying, "Ok, day, here I am, take care of me," you need to prepare yourself -- exercise and chant and think about all the good things.... (AP 16, 11, 1985).

The term "keeping up" is sometimes used to deflect doubts about the lifestyle. Thus, if individuals are asked if they ever wonder if they should continue in 3HO they are likely to rephrase the question and reply with a statement like, "Well sometimes I'm afraid I won't be able to keep up." Sometimes this effort is phrased in the warrior terminology of Sikhism, with emphasis on the resistance encountered -- resistance that is usually attributed to the

self, with its negativity and karma and subconscious conflicts:

...it's fighting in your everyday life -- the blocks in your consciousness. Anything that needs to be done you do it, and you never become overtaken by negativity....The battles you have to fight inside your mind are definitely there. (AP 12a, 5, 1985).

Given the difficulties of altering the natural attitude, of balancing realities, of meeting the sometimes onerous demands set by the organization, of maintaining a consistently "up" approach, and of regularly monitoring the self and its progress along the path, it is not surprising that 3HO people speak of overcoming resistance blocks, and separation, about "moving through" problems, and developing "piercing concentration." The spiritual path often involves struggle, although, naturally, its form and its intensity vary considerably from person to person.

Members encountered a nice metaphor for this, one that may have been borrowed from Outward Bound courses, at one of the first women's camps:

I remember the first year I went...that was only the second year, and I was scared. I didn't know what it was going to be like. I didn't know if I'd be able to keep up. That first summer I grew so much from it, just from the obstacle course -- climbing the wall. Have you heard about that? It was a BIG wall and you had to climb it with two other women; the two of them could help you get over it...you had to figure out a way to do it; no one tells you how. And then once you're on the other side you have to jump.... (AP 5, 12-13, 1985)

The boundaries of the different realities are often marked by tests and resistance:

What am I looking for at the third eye? I know that is the spot and it feels great to focus there but I want to go through that spot and see what's on the other side. (AP 17, her written notes, 12/86)

...it's like the mist, it's constantly changing, but I definitely have rhythms and times when I go through something, and then I'll get to the bottom of it, and then I'll surface, and then I'll go on to something else. It seems as though the subconscious, I guess, has its own process of cleaning itself. For instance, I might have a couple of weeks when I'm really feeling unplugged. I just can't feel God inside me, and I'm being short-tempered and over-eating, and I'm not loving myself, and then I'll kind of hit bottom...fall at my altar and say, "Ok, God, I give up."...then, you know, I realize, "Oh, this is part of God's plan. I'm meant to give up. I'm meant to realize that by myself I can't affect change and just surrender to the part of me that already knows that everything's all right." So then I have maybe a couple of weeks of just cruising, doing what I need to do and feeling happy.... (AP 8, 12-13, 1985).

Fluctuation in feeling may not necessarily be this dramatic, but for many there is a sense of alternating contact and separation from God:

It's like when I'm feeling really confident, I'm feeling real attuned with the universe, and in tune with myself and spiritual. It's like I'm real unified. When I'm feeling doubtful and not feeling together and confident, I'm also realizing that I'm not thinking about God much either. I'm not in contact much with my spiritual feelings. (AP 10, 31, 1985).

...things are easy for me if I'm listening to God. When they're really difficult is when I'm not paying attention. And what I mean by listening to God is listening inside....God is sort of like where everything is all right. I always have the image of a bright light and of all being in union with that bright light -- which is a real common

image -- but it's sort of like where I feel like all of the anxieties, all of the tensions, all the cares, all the worries stop, and they stop just because you're united with your creator. I'm part of God and I just don't realize it fully and that's where all the tensions and the anxieties and the anguish come from.... (AP 4, 7, 1985).

The sense of confidence and unity comes when the individual is able to unite provinces of meaning, overcome internal conflicts and mediate some of the socio-cultural tensions discussed in this paper. In a sense, being God-filled means being able to synthesize conflicting realities and conflicting aspects of the self. Things are right when the individual is a channel, no longer polarized, no longer divided between analytical and intuitive selves or between the transcendent and the situated.

THE SPIRITUAL PATH AS A METAPHOR LINKING COUNTERCULTURAL AND UTILITARIAN VALUES

Just as the self should become a channel that links separate realms of being and experience, so the spiritual path is a linking device. It can be approached as a metaphor that unites, among other things, countercultural and utilitarian modes of perception and evaluation (Tipton 1982). In many respects, this linkage of utilitarian and countercultural traditions parallels the effort to unite practical and meditative realities.

Countercultural Elements

In his treatment of the countercultural groups of the 60's and 70's, Musgrove (1974) emphasizes the countercultural attack on boundaries: on the "normal boundaries of sense impression and perceptual experience," and the boundaries of conventional social categories. The counterculture, he says, mounted a general "attack on fixed order in favor of openness, mutability and flux." (86). The counterculture declared that life should not be a steady, step-by-step progression, a slow accumulation of goods, knowledge, responsibilities and experience, but rather, episodic, and a matter of "exploits." The "highs" and the mystical experiences of sadhana and Tantric courses, as well as efforts to experience an alternative reality and to inform the natural attitude with this reality, are clearly within this countercultural tradition. So are the many changes in lifestyle that 3HO has generated and the regular interruptions of routine occasioned by solstice gatherings, Ladies' Camp, Yogi Bhanjan's visits to the ashram and the like.

Tipton (1982) suggests that three principles underlie counterculture morality: (1) situational and expressive ethics, (2) holism and distrust of bureaucratic specialization, and (3) a stance of acceptance rather than the utilitarian's preoccupation with "problem-solving activism."

Thus, right action is based on

...the idea that everyone ought to act in any given situation and moment in a way that fully expresses himself, specifically his inner feelings and his experience of the situation...First, it is an ethic of impulse...and self-expression...Second, it is an ethic of situational appropriateness... mainly oriented toward the agent's feelings, the feelings of others around him, and to the particular situation in which they find themselves, as discerned by intuition. (15-16).

Formal bureaucracies are distrusted because they impose specialization, and hence separate and categorize people. They distinguish between the powerful and the less fortunate. They also require manipulation of the self and seemingly inauthentic interactions with others. As people identify with work roles and large organizations they may lose the sense of a unified self and of a tie between man and nature. The utilitarian taste for problem-solving and control over nature exacerbates this trend, treating nature not as a living setting for the species but as an object to be exploited and transformed at will.

The counterculture ideal is a unified person, living without the mediation and fragmentation of social roles ("role playing"), striving after status and power ("power tripping"), or the distraction of impersonal and abstract communication ("head tripping"). One seeks to know the person, not about the person. (18).

Utilitarian Ethics

Tipton contrasts counterculture morality with the utilitarian style of evaluation which looks not to the present situation but to the future and asks which action

will lead to maximization of desired consequences. Here the end is "the subjective satisfaction of self-interest." (9). It is a comparatively "normless" approach since it is based not on rules but on outcomes, although it may also take the form of "rule-utilitarian moral theory" which "acknowledges the central place of rules in morality, but argues that rules are determined and justified by the consequences of their recognition" (9).

The utilitarian style favors specialized roles, practical exchanges, and "analytic discrimination." Often, the good is quantifiable. The career path is a necessary means to this quantifiable end, and individuals should expect to be trained to perform specific functions. The utilitarian accepts that it is a necessity that "the criterion of technical utility stratifies modern society by occupation" (22). Life is regarded as a series of problems to be solved, and nature is often a resource to this end. One does not aim for fusion with nature or with others.

3HO Synthesis

3HO borrows from both styles. It introduces a form of moral pragmatism that blends the utilitarian's future-oriented cost-benefit type of analysis with the counterculture's situational ethics and search for unity. This synthesis allows for role-playing and bureaucratic

discrimination while still positing an underlying, unifying principle. It also embraces, but with less success, both acceptance and problem-solving activism. Since counterculture morality overlaps with traditionally feminine modes of living and perceiving, this means that women are free to maintain aspects of conventional femininity.

Situational and Expressive Ethics

In 3HO the utilitarian's future-oriented, cost-benefit analyses are wedded to a situational ethic. The 3HO woman, like the hippy chick, seeks to be attuned to the nature and nuances of a situation, to live fully and to be in the here and now. "Situational appropriateness" remains a touchstone of evaluation, but there is much less of the countercultural concern with self-expression. Instead self-presentation is adapted to the audience, and often "what works" is what is right. Pragmatism and self-presentation become acceptable.

Expressivity, the ethic of letting it all hang out, is not entirely abandoned since honesty and sharing of self are still important values, but it is much altered. Considerable impulse control is demanded and is put in terms of rechanneling and transmuting energy. Individuals are encouraged to apply pragmatic principles to their desires for instant gratification. They look to the future

and ask if an act will enhance self-esteem, improve a marriage, have desired results, provide a good example for children, or improve group relationships. Self presentations need not reflect present feelings as long as they serve acceptable goals or are indicators of desired states.

Holism

Role-playing, job training, and career paths are acceptable in 3HO, but are to be placed in a spiritual context. Roles should be regarded as opportunities for growth, for channeling God's energy into the social world, and for legitimating and furthering the goals of 3HO. Women are not to allow career demands to interfere with family life, (nor to let their own demands interfere with their husbands' work life). Ideally, successful worldly performance should not lead individuals to perceive themselves as the separate, competing entities envisioned by the utilitarian individualist; they should remember that they are part of a transpersonal whole and strive for egoless performance. The holistic perspective should thus inform utilitarian performances. Worldly efforts should further personal growth, and the individual should always be willing to give up any particular role for the sake of spiritual growth or for the good of others.

Acceptance

Priorities seem to be less clear in the area of what Tipton calls acceptance vs. problem-solving activism. Inner-worldly mysticism is a difficult stance to maintain for those who find good positions in a competitive and technically sophisticated economy, even if they seek out jobs in the service sector. Those who are successful will experience occupational pressures towards ego development, a managerial attitude, analytical discrimination, and manipulation of others and of the environment. In time, they are likely to be motivated by career-specific reward systems.

It can be difficult to reconcile these pressures and attitudes with the forms of acceptance that are encouraged by some Sikh and organizational precepts. Members are encouraged to believe, and believe from the very core of the self, that "all things come from God and all things go to God." The corollary is that one should willingly accept hardship, dependency, service and obedience as willingly as one welcomes joy, wealth, autonomy and control. One should believe that whatever exists has purpose, meaning and worth, however unfair, cruel, or ugly it may appear to be from our limited perspective. Such attitudes blend well with the counterculture preference to "let it be," but do not tend to mix with successful performance in the American economy. This tension can be mitigated by serving in low-

level or part-time jobs or in the family businesses, but 3HO members may face further problems in this area.

By definition one cannot build a bureaucratic and hierarchical organization on counterculture ethics. If Yogi Bhanan and other leaders were to shape an organization, and legitimate it, it was advisable to alter some of the countercultural values and self-concepts, and to introduce more of the assumptions of utilitarian individualism. It was also functional to encourage the development of social skills and self-management if ashrams and personal relationships were going to last. Sensuality and the desire for intense group loyalty and mystical merger had to be organized and controlled, partly as a response to individual feelings of dissatisfaction with the hip lifestyle but also because leadership and charisma are more easily wielded if group feeling is controlled. Times of intense shared feeling such as solstice celebrations and intensive sadhanas provided an opportunity to experience fusion, "highs," loyalty and devotion. Emphasis on individual striving, self-presentation, reticence, and celibacy encouraged individuation so that leaders did not always confront a fused group, but could adapt their messages, advice, and demands to individual cases and could encourage routinization and individual adjustments to organizational expectations. Members could satisfy needs for an expressive and communal lifestyle and still act to

legitimate and establish the organization. They could work out their own interpretations of the teachings and often determine the pacing of their involvement and commitment and yet be amenable to direction, instructions, and demands for obedience.

The hip desires for independence of thought, and for community, expressivity, sensation, and merger could be connected to utilitarian pragmatism, conventional individuation, controlled sensuality, the enactment of traditional roles, and acceptance of hierarchy and power differentials. 3HO blends the linearity of the utilitarian perspective with the intuition and exploits of the countercultural ethos. It replaces the career path with another, more encompassing, image, that of the spiritual path.

SENSE-MAKING

3HO attempts to unite diverse traditions and opposing attitudes towards the dominant society. It blends countercultural and utilitarian ethics and links everyday to extraordinary realities. Such an effort must generate numerous interpretations of traditions, as well as justifications for internal contradictions, and prescriptions for thought and behavior. In their efforts to understand and apply 3HO beliefs, members generate accounts and interpretations and also apply pre-existing

accounts to their particular situations. Leaders generate accounts that support their own authority or that they think will appeal to outsiders or to members. Members have a number of beliefs, interpretations, accounts, and customs to choose among as they construct their individual spiritual paths and confront specific problems and opportunities. Their choice of accounts is influenced by background, by personal interests and needs, by intellectual perspectives, by peer pressure and by leader's attitudes. They are shaped by the desire to be accepted, by the need to protect self-esteem and self-concept, and by the requirements of tact and courtesy. Often, of course, these influences and motives are at odds with 3HO prescriptions to transcend such ego-enhancing concerns, but they are the stuff of social life and not easily surmounted.

Suspension of Disbelief

One of the accepted accounts for behavior in 3HO is one's willingness to experiment. One acts as if one were what one wishes to be, or as if something were true. One tries on a belief, a recommended attitude or an accepted account for behavior. A member may wear a turban, attend sadhana regularly, submit to the instructions of the spiritual teacher, or take Sikh vows in order to test the effects of these practices.

Life can even become an exercise in suspension of disbelief as one tries to live as if a beneficent power resides in the self, or as if every event in life carries a potentially useful message. One "brackets" everyday attitudes, and at the same time watches oneself bracketing them. One works at it, and keeps in mind the possibility of editing out the brackets if they prove non-productive. Suppose one is truly "the grace of God?" Suppose one has lived thousands of previous lives? Suppose a spiritual teacher can read one's mind and aura? Suppose much of the brain's everyday chatter is banal or negative or self-serving? And if one is a leader or a teacher, special questions can arise. What advice should one give, if any? What persona should be adapted? Should one include in one's advice beliefs of which one is not entirely convinced? If another person's pain might best be eased by explaining it in terms of past lives, even if one is not sure one believes entirely in reincarnation, should one use this mode of explanation? If an individual expresses doubts about the belief system should one say the organization-serving things?

Members settle such issues in different ways. Some have considerable capacity for suspending disbelief and experimenting with and observing their own thought processes. They regularly try on beliefs and practices. Others are much more selective. All reject some beliefs

and attitudes, but those who remain in the organization tend to accept the dominant accounts. They tend to conclude that beliefs and practices "work," thus adapting the preference for pragmatic accounts. They come to analyze behavior in terms of accepted concepts. They learn to think in terms of commitment, positivity, negativity, higher and lower selves, separation from God and God-consciousness, neutrality, and experiencing shaktipod. They apply these concepts to particular situations and their understandings of them vary somewhat. Some of the widely-used accounts are more world-accommodating; others fall at the poles of world-rejection and world-affirmation. The same person may use opposing accounts in different situations.

Explanations for Negativity

In the matter of self-evaluation, for example, a variety of feelings are accountable. Members are often encouraged to concentrate on the positive, on feelings of strength, clarity, capability, tenderness, generosity and the like. They are to look for the good in themselves and in others. They are reminded of the internal guru and of their potential for growth and enlightenment. Such ideas justify individual initiative and bolster self-esteem. They are often emphasized by leaders and are often employed in therapeutic settings and in workshops and courses that

are open to outsiders and hence tend to be of a world-accommodating or world-affirming nature.

There is, however, considerable attention directed towards "negative" feelings -- towards fear, doubt, insecurity, anger, and pride. The effort to keep up and to neutralize the subconscious would hardly be meaningful otherwise. 3HO members are told, and say they find through experience, that they will become irritable and lose their mental clarity if they neglect sadhana. Yogi Bhanjan has told them that their marriages will fail and the progress they have made will unravel if they leave the organization. Members expect to struggle against subconscious fears, personal insecurities, and the urge to give up and do things the easy, but non-conscious, way. They know they must make themselves strong to face the coming hard times. Negativity is for many a constant threat.

Negative emotions can be attributed to a variety of causes. The most far-reaching is karma. One is experiencing the pain one inflicted on other beings in another life, or one is continuing to cling to attitudes and limited perspectives carried over from past lives. Another inclusive explanation is separation from God. The individual may have an inflated notion of her own uniqueness and apartness and so forgets that she is really an extension of God. She must cease to act as an isolated, willful individual and, instead, should "let God do."

Cultural programming may also be a cause of negativity, and often contributes to separation. It can be the source of fear, neurosis and low self-esteem. Similarly, physical causes may be cited. Poor diet, insufficient exercise and feminine physiology are all possible sources of pain and negativity. In order to determine which of these is responsible, a woman has resource to several modes of diagnosis. She can meditate on the problem, talk it out with her spouse or a friend, bring up the issue at a women's group, seek advice from Yogi Bhajan or from the ashram director or his wife, seek the aid of a counselor, or seek the help of alternative medical personnel. Obviously, explanations and recommendations will vary, and one finds a diversity of perspectives within the organization, but few individuals would question the concept of negativity or its general symptoms and causes.

When specific troubles, such as economic difficulties, illness, or friction with an employer, another ashram resident, or a spouse arise, there are again a variety of possible causes. Karma may be responsible; perhaps the individual was an unsympathetic employer in a past life and is now getting a dose of her own medicine. Perhaps life is teaching a lesson; we all receive the lessons we need in order to grow -- over and over again, if need be. It is always wise to ask what can be learned from a situation and to act accordingly. Some trouble is inevitable since it

will spring from the vast numbers of people who are spiritually unevolved and are motivated by purely external rewards, in short, existing at a "lower level of consciousness." The spiritual person must protect herself from too much of this unconscious behavior or she will be dragged down by it. She should choose her occupation and her associates with this in mind, and she should leave a situation if she finds herself incapable of altering it for the better. She has every right to protect her own consciousness and to ask for help from the spiritual community in doing so and in evaluating a situation; 3HO does not necessarily embrace mass society. Both astrology and numerology provide further possible explanations for trouble; this may simply be a time of difficulty for Gemini, a typical Gemini problem, or a typical problem between signs.

Of course, there may be more immediate and more individual sources of a problem. The individual may simply lack skills, tact, or the ability to communicate. She may be acting out of her lower consciousness. She may be insecure and acting at the mercy of her emotions, being as 3HO people sometimes put it, "emotional/commotional." She may be trying to manipulate, threaten, or control another person, or she may be trying to compete with a spouse. She may be acting egotistically, or she may be failing in her spiritual discipline -- not attending sadhana, perhaps, and

therefore becoming irritable and erratic and unkind as negative aspects of the subconscious come to dominate her behavior.

The subconscious can be a source of some anxiety. It may harbor unknown and undesirable feelings and tendencies. In fact, all of the emphasis on positive thinking and graceful self-presentation may predispose some members to develop a 3HO-inspired form of "shadow self" that may haunt the spiritual self. It is assumed that a spiritually evolved person can see into another person's mind and soul, and some women expressed fear of Yogi BhaJan "seeing through" them, and thus seeing all the hidden negativity.

Individuals may choose those accounts that are in keeping with their usual concerns and modes of solving problems, or they may gain new and valuable insights by trying an unaccustomed approach. Some choices will be rationalizations for actions and decisions already taken. Thus, for example, the woman who was told that she should not train as a chiropractor found justification for this instruction in numerology. Her chart indicated that mastery was her gift and she had no need of extensive schooling.

Organization-serving Accounts

When there is difficulty in choosing between accounts, leaders may be consulted, and then there is always the

possibility that they will choose messages that benefit the ashram or contribute to their own standing. Thus when doubts about pursuing this particular spiritual path arise they are routinely treated as products of the negative ego. Doubts are the inevitable trials and temptations encountered on the spiritual path. Members are encouraged to account for such feelings not as questions about the teachings or the organizational structure, but as doubts about whether they are strong enough to keep up or as manifestations of personal ego problems. Resistance to specific policies, like wearing the turban or selling Oriental Beauty Secrets, can always be countered by positive arguments: "Just give it a try and see if you don't feel more centered," or, "Concentrate on overcoming shyness and becoming more assertive as you sell," so that the job becomes an opportunity to learn useful lessons and overcome personal blocks.

Some concepts are particularly open to organization-serving interpretations. Commitment and negative ego are among these, since criticisms and rebellion can be dismissed as failures of commitment or expressions of negativity. Shaktipod is a similar concept. Yogi Bhajan has taught 3HO participants that at some point on the spiritual path the individual's personal weaknesses -- her Achilles heel -- may threaten to overwhelm her and her spiritual life. Some need -- to feel important, be

successful, or dominate others, for example -- will lead her to doubt the teachings or abandon the discipline. This is shaktipod. If she can triumph over these temptations she will have made a giant step on the spiritual path. If she succumbs, she may go astray and not regain the path; rather than experiencing joy and evolution she will repeat the karmic cycle.

Further, the belief that the individual is prone to subconscious fears and neuroses can be interpreted in ways that bolster the authority of the leadership. This belief suggests that the individual often does not understand her own motivations and limitations and must depend upon the leadership to diagnose and treat these.

Some members are more inclined than others to accept such interpretations. Some are very independent and confident of their own capacity for self-understanding and growth. Others are not. Accounts may or may not be accepted for such psychological reasons. They may be accepted only tentatively. They may be accepted because they are offered by a respected individual or because they receive group backing. Occasionally, ashram residents may be quick to describe another's behavior as self-interested or negative in order to please leaders or to feel like members of an in-group. Sometimes they may doubt the wisdom of a decision or a policy but refrain from saying so out of tact and consideration and a desire for harmony.

They may doubt their own wisdom and clarity and bow to what they feel is greater knowledge and insight, or, conversely, they may quietly follow the inner guru.

World-accommodating Accounts

Somewhat different accounting conventions hold when dealing with people outside of the ashram. Several members stated that the inspiration they provide for others is very important to them, even a reason for persisting. They want to instill hope -- that grace exists, that people can evolve, that higher ethical standards can prevail. They want to be of service and aid people who are ill or hurting or poor or addicted. They want to earn a comfortable standard of living for their families. This, they say, calls for care in self-presentation and for concentrated efforts to choose the right words and the right modes of treating problems. It requires that one match one's style and message to the audience, and so the emphasis is on practical issues and on learning professional skills. Members learn the logic and language of different therapies, educational philosophies, and alternative medical practices. They gear yoga, cooking, and healing classes to secular audiences and often do not mention Sikhism or Yogi Bhanjan unless they are questioned about them. They learn skills such as computer programming and rug cleaning and are judged on the quality of their work.

They apply pragmatic and utilitarian accounts in these situations.

Members have also had to learn not to respond to baiting and criticism from a sometimes hostile public. They aim to appear poised, calm and neutral in the face of harassment. They have learned to turn potential criticism to their advantage and to define and control situations that might otherwise prove damaging. Negativity in the form of skeptics and enemies is met with aggressive positivity.

It appeared to me that many classes and workshops were structured so as to minimize possible criticism or questioning. Questions and discussion are usually welcomed, but the stage is set so that certain assumptions, such as the value of yoga, the existence of a spiritual realm, or the qualifications of the teacher, are simply not questioned. Because sessions are often opened by chanting Ong Namō Guru Dev Namō, and thus establishing a religious, and even esoteric, framework, attendees must suspend some disbelief out of tact and respect. There is much stating of beliefs as facts: this exercise will improve digestion, there is a transpersonal realm, healing is a matter of balance. Few people in any audience are likely to be rude enough to respond with, "How do you know?" When questions do take that turn, workshop leaders are quick to say that this is their particular belief system or what their

spiritual teacher has told them, and that of course they do not necessarily expect everyone else to agree. Some workshop leaders seem to cultivate Yogi BhaJan's style of teaching and humour. They struggle for poise and an aura of knowledgeability and authority. The spiritual path occasionally calls for some vigorous self-presentation.

With close friends or spouses much of the self-presentation and many of the spiritual modes of accounting may be periodically abandoned in favor of more relaxed behavior and other idioms. People will gossip, explain behavior in conventional psychological and materialistic terms, make small talk and joke freely about themselves, their experiences, and the lifestyle. Their conversations could be duplicated in many middle class settings since they talk about their jobs and purchases, and their children's progress, and the fate of the Baltimore Orioles, and the movies they just saw. But even in the most relaxed moments the more scrupulous members may continue to "work on" themselves, concentrating on being positive, calm, humble and graceful. Just like non-members, 3HO people alternate between flowing, "centered" experience and structured self-presentation, and this is accountable too, as a necessary step along the spiritual path. It can be defined as a form of duality that in time can pass, but is necessary for coping in the present.

BIOGRAPHIES

While the spiritual path is an intersubjective creation, individuals interpret it in the light of personal biography, expectations, and circumstances. They provide the accents and the nuances, and they choose to emphasize particular concepts, metaphors, and activities. For some this is a natural weaving of the new and the old, and of personal and organizational expectations. For others it requires more effort, or even creates outright conflict.

The following brief biographies illustrate these processes. Each individual has a distinctive approach to the path and each embarked upon it for different reasons. Convenience, intuitive and needy joiners are included, as well as recent and long-term members, and one woman who has recently left 3HO. All have invested considerable time and energy in efforts to alter the natural attitude and to explore alternative realities, but each has done so in her own way.

1. Commitment and Discipline

I begin with a comparatively new member who is deeply involved in reinterpreting her biography from a 3HO point of view. Her efforts in this direction are a good introduction to the early stages of cognitive realignment. Her self descriptions revolve around such 3HO concerns as commitment, gender, discipline, graceful self-presentation,

and personal change. Her previously peripatetic lifestyle, and her efforts to become more "serviceable" to men have already been recounted.

When she judges herself, it is in terms of 3HO standards. She evaluates her efficiency, her ability to communicate gracefully, and her capacity for commitment. She also worries about the flexibility of her personality and about her capacity for change and adjustment, more perhaps than one would expect from someone who has spent her youth traveling and changing jobs. This may reflect some pressure she feels to take Sikh vows.

She now views her youthful self as "uncommitted," and is somewhat troubled because she is what other 3HO members consider a "slow committer."

It's like I kept trying to leap for something. I wanted to be a dancer for awhile. I wanted to be a psychiatrist at one point when I first went to college. But then I got real discouraged with it...so I thought, "Well I really love dancing; I want to be a dancer." I left college because I thought, "Well I don't have to go to college to be a dancer"... (AP 10, 28, 1985).

Some people get committed before they're convinced. You know, they feel it in their heart or something, and they just get into it at that level...it takes me a long time to commit because I want to be sure before I do it. Some people have said to me, "You want to know what's going to happen before it happens." Maybe that's kind of true, but on another level, too, to me it's more like I want to feel in me that I'm going to be able to match the heights. I don't want to get into something that I feel like a month later that I'm going to get out of, which a lot of people do....Like if I commit myself to being a Sikh, I'll never be one hundred per cent sure -- that's probably impossible -- but I want to feel relatively sure inside, seventy-five

or eighty per cent, or even ninety per cent; that's my expectation of myself. (AP 10, 24, 1985).

I can move very fast once I catch a routine and I get into something; I get into the swing of it -- I go. And I can be very efficient, very organized. I'm slow to adapt new behavior but once I do I'm like lightning....I think my biggest characteristic on the plus side is probably my determination, although it can be negative sometimes; if I decide to do something I'm totally unyielding.

...I'm kind of rigid sometimes. I've been thinking that more lately, seeing the rigidity of my personality. I don't consider it like, you know, really sharp edges, but kind of a little rigid in places. It doesn't bother me -- I kind of like it -- but I can see where it affects other people sometimes. They don't understand it so I feel like I have to learn to soften up a little bit around certain people...because I feel so concrete about things it comes out tough and it hurts, so I've been trying to learn to be a little more tuned into other people. (AP 10, 23, 1985).

Most of all, perhaps, she is bothered by what 3HO members would consider issues of depth -- about renouncing superficiality and a tendency toward fantasy. 3HO members are expected to neutrally accept reality, rather than nourishing themselves on dreams of how things might ideally be. They are also expected to question their own behavior and reactions and to probe into the nature of their relationships and their effect upon their surroundings. She speaks wistfully of the days when she was free simply to be, not to observe and work on, herself.

I want to deal with reality and how it is, and I want to keep going towards God...but lots of times I say to myself, "Why can't this earth just be this earth? Why do we have to go so fast?" I would like to go back to a certain point in time and stay there because back then the earth was everything to me -- my family, my relations, everything was

perfect at that time -- and why couldn't I have stayed at that point...extremely carefree, not a worry in the world, living really light, very flirty, but modest and not promiscuous, just very boy-oriented, kind of a clown, kind of the life of my group, actually...I'd get everybody to laughing and enjoying themselves... (AP 10, 32, 1985).

She would be happy to maintain the attitude of youth, to avoid roles and paths and commitment and earnestness and discipline and loss. And, in fact, a part of her holds on to the pure, undefined child and experimenter as she tries out the lifestyle, proceeding at her own chosen pace, occasionally rebelling, as when she says humorously, "part of me is still holding out for John Denver," and at other times maturing in the 3HO mold, as when she says, "I've become more conscious of people, people I interact with, my responsibility to other people -- not just in the ashram, but all people...I feel much more of an individual...I've become a stronger person." And it is because she is both pliant and determined, playful and disciplined, willing to experiment and to be practical, that she perseveres, although she withholds her final commitment.

2. Tolerance and Independence

A long-term member, who began as a convenience joiner, emphasizes other aspects of 3HO life, and views her path as a trajectory towards empathy and autonomy. She has always been somewhat more career-oriented, intellectual, and analytical than many of the other women in 3HO, and she

did not share their hip background. These areas of difference probably posed some problems for her as she accommodated to the 3HO lifestyle, and they are central to her interpretation of her biography. So is a long-held allegiance to principles of tolerance and open-mindedness. She tends to see the organization as moving in directions that parallel her own growth, a not uncommon perception.

When she describes the person she was when she first encountered 3HO her tone is critical:

I was insecure. I was striving. I was selfish. I did have...some commitment to a community, a group of people, and I had some awareness of social change that I wanted to take place, and I was doing something about it in a small way. (AP 6, 10, 1985).

Now, she feels, she has made progress and some of those traits have been transmuted:

I think that where I am now is that I feel I'm doing something about it in a greater way -- in becoming who I've become my very being makes a difference. I think that I'm still striving, but in a very different kind of way. I think that I see possessions and money and all that kind of thing in a different way than I did then...I also think I'm a much more universal person than I was then...I think I've become much more eclectic. (AP 6, 20, 1985).

She remembers with distaste her grandmother's religious intolerance, and as a child she reacted against it. She began to read about different cultures and religions, and when she asked about people who didn't believe in Jesus, her grandmother replied,

"They're going to hell." Well to me that was the break. That's when I stopped being a Christian, in my head. (AP 6, 8, 1985).

When she found similar attitudes in 3HO she was disturbed but was relieved and impressed by the tolerance she perceives in Yogi Bhaĵan's approach to religious practice. She was so troubled by one case that she spoke to him about it, fearing that he might share that individual's rigidity. She was relieved when he responded that "some people in 3HO are fanatics." And she has never forgotten an incident in the early years:

...he [Yogi Bhaĵan] went through all of these ideals -- now this is what should happen, you should do this, you should do that -- and for a lot of us, we had already blown it...This one woman sitting not far from me started to cry...and she said, "I've blown it; it's hopeless," and just about then the Siri Singh Sahib walked by...and he said, "All things are redeemable." (AP 6, 4, 1985).

It was the assumption that change and redemption are always possible that impressed her.

She looks for tolerance and a willingness to forgive both in the organization and in herself. She criticizes herself for having been an "intellectual snob" in the early years. She is delighted that her son thinks that she is one of the most open-minded and easy-to-talk-to parents in the ashram. She assumes that the thrust of Yogi Bhaĵan's teachings and disciplines has been towards developing empathy.

Always fairly pragmatic and worldly herself she values those strains in Sikhism. She was pleased that Yogi Bhaajan taught that you could not serve people by withdrawing,

You had to know where they were coming from. You had to be part of the world they related to. This was another thing I think that for me personally was really important and appealing, the fact that you were trying to change the system from within it, as it were. You were trying to change the world by being in the world. (AP 6, 18, 1985).

She herself continued her worldly role, even in the face of some peer pressure, and in her struggle to continue to pursue her own goals, to find honest points of contact with the organization, and to learn from its tenets, she feels that she developed both depth and independence:

...I think I was a very different person at that time...I was much more likely to have somebody say something to me and let it bother me or have me do what they said...wanting to belong, wanting to be like everybody else. (AP 6, 9, 1985).

Now she is independent, proud of her accomplishments, feels that her life is useful and that her capacity for insight and empathy is increasing. She only rarely turns to her spiritual teacher for advice, and then she "does her homework" first so that all the facts are available. She is even, for the first time in her life, content.

She tends to see parallel trends in the organization: a loosening of some of the rules with increased grounding in the dharma, greater tolerance for other perspectives, a desire on Yogi Bhaajan's part for a more self reliant following as he grows older. Her sense-making has focused

on aspects of 3HO life that support long-held values and modes of processing experience, but she has also incorporated less familiar aspects as they seemed to offer opportunities for growth and accommodation. She sees the future as a matter of weighing her need for future security against present pleasures, the demands of her job against those of her family: "for me the future is balancing."

In the first example the woman was balancing her past self against 3HO definitions of selfhood. She was self-consciously trying to accept and apply 3HO teachings. This woman, given many more years in the Dharma, has integrated her previous identity and values with 3HO expectations. This may have been made easier by the fact that 3HO has become more pragmatic and utilitarian over the years, and she was originally, as she put it, "kind of a yuppy."

3. Mysticism and Motherhood

The next woman was introduced earlier as an intense seeker. She views herself as a mystic; her approach to life is as intuitive as the previous speaker's is, as she herself put it, "cerebral." As a child she felt herself different from her outer-directed achieving family. The contrast between intellect and feeling is central to her interpretation of her biography, and for her the path has represented an opportunity to express the mystical, intuitive, and caring sides of her personality. It has

also meant a struggle with what she views as the controlling, critical and overly-intellectual aspects of the self, which she has come to equate with internalized aspects of her mother's personality.

She describes her mother as emotionally distant and says that life in her natal family was cool, "uptight," and competitive. She feels that there was little concern with compassion or inner growth, only with achievements and externals. She tried to play the game but was unhappy:

I was always doing. I never stopped doing. I had a black book with a list of things that had to be done and that was all it was. I was very compulsive. Everything was suppressed...I was just totally success-oriented and the result was I was being a total failure in terms of developing myself. I didn't think about that. I didn't think about what I wanted. I was just doing what I had to do to get success stamps from outside so I would be acceptable. (AP 8, 16, 1985).

As recounted earlier, she rebelled when she reached college. She found the hip scene and experimented with psychedelics. Turning her gaze inward she found a highly visual, intuitive and, increasingly, spiritual world.

The 3HO emphasis on mothering and on the divinity of children has been understandably important to her, and she has tried to give her children what she feels she lacked. The organization has given her a blueprint for the spiritual self she set out to explore, and discipline and justification for her inward-turning gaze. It provides her with accounts for powerful emotional highs and lows, and it is rich in the visual and symbolic material that she

clearly craves. The belief system assures her that the mystical, caring, and intuitive aspects of her being are important, that much of what she disliked about her upbringing can be assigned to the negative or over-intellectual aspects of the self. The crevices of self-doubt, and even self-dislike, that she attributes to her upbringing can be formulated in terms of a negative self, and she has been able to assign priority to the inner life while finding a spiritual purpose in more instrumental activities:

...I'm a mixture of a whole lot of different elements. The best of me is the part that is totally one with God, and I do have a big part that longs for that, and can experience that, and can come back with the knowledge that it's there for everybody...and the worst is the self-pitying, anxious, irritable, doubting thinker who is trying to change things somehow by worrying about them -- which doesn't do any good at all. There's a very simple, happy me that loves to be out in the garden and cook and clean and hug children and read them stories, and I'm glad I've had the opportunity to give a lot of my life to that. There's a business part of me that's coming out more now that my kids are gone. That I'm comfortable with and I see that it does things for other people....I'm not normal in anything that I do -- not that I know what normal is...the way I see things and speak about them makes me stand out, and when I'm feeling strong and God-filled I don't mind that. I'm also very strong in negativity, which is one reason I think that I needed such a rigorous path, because my mental negative mind was just devastating...I think I'm mostly a good mother....People say my daughter looks like me, and it's wonderful because I never thought I was beautiful...and when people say I look like her it makes me feel there must be some beauty. (AP 8, 15-16, 1985).

4. Depth and Shaktipod

Sometimes, when the path is marked by internal struggle, as in the previous case, the struggle is an extension of on-going conflicts. Sometimes, however, the struggle is instigated by organizational requirements. The next woman, originally an intuitive seeker, describes herself as having been a popular and contented teenager. She did not join 3HO with a desire to change or to confront herself; like the first speaker she had enjoyed life and self as they were. She did, however, have an intuition that she was missing something, and that something had to do with depth of feeling and understanding.

She has always enjoyed being busy, involved, and central in a group. She has a talent -- and a weakness, as she now sees it -- for enjoying the surfaces of life. She was once very active in ashram affairs, but then was asked by her husband and by Yogi Bhanjan to cut back on these activities and put her family first. This she has done, but not without struggle. Her path has not involved a steady integration of self and teachings. Instead, there was a turning point. As she now sees it, she experienced shaktipod:

...my whole role was changing. I was no longer needed to function in the capacity that I had. I didn't quite know what I was supposed to do. I sort of had lost my foundation. I got tested in a way that went to my achilles heel, which had to do with love, with wanting to be loved in a certain way, and being unfulfilled with my marriage....I was very depressed. I was very angry....It was

something I was pursuing, a lack of fulfillment that I was experiencing...it was a fantasy that I had....It had to do with everything being perfect, harmonious. You know: your husband adoring you and willing to do anything for you -- and me being the perfect person who would be worthy of all that....I was developing a life that was having nothing to do with him because I was so angry....

What Yogi Bhanjan did was he saw it in me immediately and he took me to be with him. He had me live in New Mexico and Los Angeles for about six months...he yelled at me a lot. And what it did was it really crashed through my whole facade, my ego....I always thought that being just nice was the best thing you could be, but sometimes if a person is really stuck in their negativity you have to smash it really, to get through to them....I was in tears for months, literally....I didn't have my protective layer of my ego on me and at any moment I would burst into tears. What I realized was that I had made a step that was ultimately going to destroy my life. I mean I was ruining my marriage, I was ruining my children, I was ruining my relationships because I had just gotten into this framework which was no longer placing any importance on my spiritual values....I was totally withdrawing. I was trying to create my own life and my own relationships....

He didn't leave me in that state, of course. That's where he's a master....He gave me sadhanas to do, meditations to do, projects all in the spiritual realm....I started working my way up and growing....You know, the main thing was I wasn't the person in my fantasy so nothing else around me would be that way....Somehow he showed me that the work had to first be on myself and then everything would change and I would have exactly what I wanted. And that is what happened, and I couldn't believe it. You know, when I saw it starting to fall into place I was completely amazed, and I continue to be amazed to this day....

And now I know myself better and I learned it through that process. It makes things harder because -- and that's where I find the difficulty in the spiritual path...you gain this awareness of yourself, of your ego, of your tricks, and then you have to continue to do what you did but change your reasons for doing them. I think the reason why people have an easy time when they first come into

a spiritual path, or at least why I did, was you want to look good, so you're going to do the best meditation, the strongest yoga, all that stuff. It has to do with you wanting to look good, and then when that gets dropped you have to do it because it's the right thing to do....I feel like I had lived a very shallow life....I can ride the surface real easily. I can be very happy and just exist in that place. This required more depth from me and I had to learn it. That experience gave me an awareness of what to strive for...it took about a year or so, but when I realized that I had actually gone through this experience, had changed and had come out on top of it, I was tremendously happy and had a lot more faith. (AP7, 10-12, 1985).

Serving two Gurus

In the previous case, doubts were interpreted as evidence of shaktipod and fantasy, and the ego was wrestled to the ground. In the next, doubts were taken at face value and the ego asserted. An activist background may have made such assertion likely; therapeutic concepts and language provided the accounts.

The final speaker was in college and politically active before she encountered 3HO. In spite of her activity she was not satisfied, and yoga and meditation filled a gap. She increasingly came to feel that social change could only be accomplished at the level of individual consciousness:

...I started revolting when I was in college and got involved politically -- radical groups and so on. Not against the middle class so much as against the whole capitalist class system, and feeling a need for people to mobilize and get what they needed on the planet, and wanting to support that process. It had values of equity and opportunity for all, that kind of thing, in it. Over the years, though, it kept getting deeper and deeper so it became me rebelling against a value

system that prevented people from realizing their highest potential...bottom line it always comes down to each being and their own relationship to consciousness, their own consciousness, their own awareness. (AP1d, 2, 1986).

As she explored meditation and yoga she also trained as a counselor and began to integrate the Eastern techniques with her studies and her work. 3HO was part of her effort to further change and enhance consciousness; at first a spiritual teacher was not of great significance. She encountered therapies, such as Neurolinguistic Programming, that harmonized with her spiritual insights. She worked at blending these with yoga and meditation.

Her sense of her own "inner beauty" and potential increased, as did the range of her skills, and her perceptions, and her ability to further others' growth. At the same time, aspects of 3HO life appeared less and less growth-enhancing. She respected Yogi Bhanjan as a teacher of yoga and meditation, but was not convinced that his lifestyle and his advice qualified him as a guru. He seemed to encourage dependency and guilt, and some of the people surrounding him suggested that his personal life was not exemplary. 3HO members, it seemed, were encouraged to believe that any thought or behavior that strayed from the accepted patterns was evidence of negative ego or shaktipod. She was bothered because some people were dependent on Yogi Bhanjan for advice about the smallest details.

I know the processes are beautiful, but there's a lot about his personality and the personality of following and the structures that develop -- a lot of the materialism -- that I don't like, that I think is excessive. There's just a lot of guilt-based messages that come across. Like, "Your animal, sinful nature will rise up to the surface and strangulate you if you don't do X, Y and Z....And to me that was the biggest paradox that I couldn't live within: that someone was telling me, "You're divine and experience it." On the other hand. "If you don't do these things, if you think like that, or act like that or talk like this" -- all the do's and don't's -- "then the devil will take you." (AP1d, 6, 1986).

Sadly, she came to the conclusion that she should leave the organization, that this was not her path. She continued her sadhana and some of her personal ties, but she ceased formal affiliation and no longer wears bana:

...Beyond the personality and the politics, the vision and the beauty of a group of people dedicated to consciousness, getting up early for sadhana, living vigorous, healthy, natural lives, community -- I love it, I still love it. That makes me saddest....I love the practices and the processes.... (AP1d, 10, 1986).

I mediated myself beyond believing I was going through shaktipod, and I used meditation and prayer the whole time in my withdrawal, as a way to keep anchored in my higher self, to not get angry in my pulling out....I definitely went through a dialogue, and I definitely had to deal with parts of me that thought that maybe I wasn't good enough, or I couldn't work things out on my own well enough, or might make bad decisions, or might fall to my lower nature -- you know, all the things that I object to as lines in the system are things that are internalized, not only through SHO but as part of the superego....But that's been the beauty of it, that rather than coping to it and bowing to the pressure of my superego I just kept using meditation and prayer to reassure myself that I was fine. So I feel like I've grown a whole lot by just doing it...the only thing I know to do is to try to keep the same idealism and bring it to my

personal relationships and my lifestyle outside of the organization. (AP1d, 9, 1986).

SUMMARY

The spiritual path requires that the individual be involved in the process of integration, making herself a channel between ordinary and extraordinary realities, balancing organizational requirements and personal desires, blending past values with those now encouraged in 3HO, finding ways to tie religion, consciousness, occupation, and family. It also requires what might be called vertical integration. The member must be able to skip from one level of experience to another, from emotion to neutrality, from situation to pattern, and from personal to universal referents.

Understandably, several commentators have argued that the new religious movements tend to perform an integrative function, leading their young members to adapt to dominant social institutions, or to synthesize and reinterpret contradictory ethical premises and visions of selfhood. Robbins, Anthony and Curtis suggest that "new youth culture religious movements have the consequences of reconciling and adapting alienated young persons to dominant social institutions, and in so doing, they perform latent pattern maintenance and tension management for the social system" (1975, 48). They argue that they do so (1) by socializing members into "norms, values and skills" that will

facilitate coping within conventional social institutions, (2) by developing "meaning systems which are able to combine or synthesize countercultural values with traditional or mainstream orientations" (51), (3) by fostering "the renewal of commitment to conventional vocational routines, which derives from having the expressive needs that these routines cannot gratify, gratified elsewhere" (52), and (4) by providing a non-combative outlet for "disaffection and protest."

Clearly, the 3HO conceptualization of the spiritual path is a potentially integrative one. It can enable the individual to pick her way between countercultural and dominant values, and between public and private manifestations of the self, and it provides doctrines, traditions and ideology supportive of this effort. 3HO is one of the new religions that does encourage synthesis. But it is important to realize that that is not all that it does. Having both world-rejecting and world-accommodating poles it can also serve as what Robbins et al. would call a "marginal group," one that tends to remove its members from the larger society, or it can so encourage world-affirmation that members largely reject the balancing act and return to the dominant society. It may also simply maintain tensions rather than fostering synthesis, leading members to shift (according to personal circumstances, instructions from the leadership or shifts in policy and

direction) from one perspective to another without truly integrating them. It may simply replicate cultural tensions at the personal level.

Moreover, no matter how accurate it may be, a functional analysis cannot convey the vitality and creativity and dangers involved in the construction of an alternative reality. It cannot catch the constant changes in perspective, the subtle alterations in belief, the sleight of hand and mind, the framing, bracketing and reintegration of experience. The spiritual path is rigorous and demanding, always evolving, and, for the sophisticated, it is an exercise in metaphysics. In the 3HO case it is based on a pragmatic approach to truth that facilitates the linking of different levels of knowledge and reality, and on an associated willingness to treat ordinary definitions of reality as provisional or circumscribed. It is a spiritual effort to meet some of the challenges posed by the sociology of knowledge, to recognize the subjective and situated nature of our knowledge and to still find a way to believe in an ultimate, knowable, reality. But for all of that, it is indeed situated, it's very pragmatism leaving it open to self-interest and internal contradictions.

Expanded Journal entry, May 1986

During interviews when people talk about their youthful resentment of their middle-class surroundings, their conviction that there had to be more, their determination not to be sucked into the usual, they are talking about an experience that I shared -- still do. And I can imagine them younger, turbans off, hair down to waist, arguing with parents, feeling out of place in their high schools, mocking the administration and the rules and the jocks.

As I remember and empathize, old doubts and values surface. I seem to cross the boundary line between adolescence and adulthood. I remember myself as a college student vowing not to become too bourgeoisie. All my doubts about leading with the ego and accepting career-based identities resurface. I wonder if I'm not fooling myself by believing in the self I've forged and the boundaries I've drawn around myself. It has taken me a long time to trust, rather than dismiss, my ambitions and professional pretensions, and that old part of me suggests that these are really just game-playing. That part of me wants, briefly at least, to drop it all.

But another part says that there is probably very little choice in the matter, and that to drop such identities is likely to prove self-destructive since most opportunities for sociability, self-expression, and

intellectual growth are tied to them. Besides, I enjoy them mostly.

I worry about the ease with which some 3HO women dismiss their ambitions and the structures through which these might be realized, and at the ways that they come to dismiss their own doubts and skepticism. The shaktipod example is a case in point. Her case troubles me. I'm convinced that the concept of shaktipod was employed to smother her genuine criticisms of her role in 3HO, to short-circuit her growing sense of needs unmet, to force her to subjugate herself to her husband's and Yogi BhaJan's needs and wishes. Some of the criticisms leveled at her may have been valid, and she truly seems to have emerged from the ordeal with greater depth and insight into her own motives. Nonetheless, it served others' interests. All belief systems have these explanations for doubt, these bottom-line intellectual defenses against desertion. This one certainly has its value. It forces individuals to question their motives, makes them dig in and not run away as soon as the going gets tough. But it so clearly serves the organization and the leadership. I would find it easier to accept some of their beliefs and their criticisms of the ego if they didn't seem to suit the needs of the leadership so well. Perhaps that is why such beliefs have been retained in Eastern sects and cults for so many generations -- among other reasons of course.

CHAPTER VII

SELF AND ORGANIZATION: IDENTITY PROCESSES,
SELF DESCRIPTIONS, AND METAPHORS OF THE SELFINTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the interplay of organization-building and selfhood. It focuses on identity processes (Robbins 1973) in 3HO, on Sikh, Tantric and organizational metaphors for selfhood, and on members' actual self descriptions. It is based on analysis of interviews, as well as on formal beliefs and personal observations. Borrowing from Sartre's approach to groups and organizations (Hayim 1980) I speculate on the connection between institutionalization and selfhood.

In 3HO, the fabric of the self is shot-through with the organizational thread. The thread may be central to the overall design or it may only be worked into the background, but it is always interwoven. This is partly due to the fact that so many members matured with the organization, defining themselves as they defined their ties to the organization. It also reflects a variety of organizational identity processes, rewards and sanctions. Sometimes 3HO expectations, processes and demands seem almost to constitute the self. Powerful identity processes, symbols and concepts, rewards and sanctions are involved, and they connect the self to the organization and to traditions embedded in Sikh, Hindu and Tantric lore. At

other times self and self-concept may be only loosely tied to the organization, particularly if there are significant alternative sources of status and identity and if the individual is not highly visible in the 3HO world. An individual can usually integrate chosen aspects of 3HO belief and self-experience into her biography and ongoing sense of self. There is room for considerable flexibility and interpretation. But the visions of selfhood and of the ideal self that are embedded in the belief systems and put forward by the leadership are potent and cannot always be treated as a matter of individual choice. At any point the drawstrings may be tightened and the self and organization more firmly aligned.

As they are aligned, the self comes to reflect organizational structure and history, and the organization comes to reflect members' backgrounds, needs and self-images. Self and organization are mutually constructed and altered. As this has happened, 3HO patterns for selfhood have come to replicate some of the organizational tensions and syntheses, and even to duplicate 3HO's hierarchical form of organization. They have also come to resemble some traditional Indian models of the self.

Alan Roland (1984) argues that the traditional Indian self structure differs sufficiently from Western structures to nullify many Western therapeutic models. The Indian self as he portrays it is far more embedded in

relationships and hierarchies than the Western self. It is constructed within the extended family and is adapted to this unit rather than to social individuation. The Indian also has a well-developed spiritual self, by contrast to the American. In fact, Roland suggests that there are three Indian selves: the familial self, the individualized self, and the transcendent self:

The traditional Indian person has varying integration of a familial self with a transcendent self, with little if any development of a more individualized self. This contrasts dramatically with contemporary Americans in whom the individualized self is the dominant note, with only background chords of the familial self....and traditionally with a more or less deaf ear turned to the transcendent self....(172)

The Indian familial self, he says, has several aspects, but all "are oriented toward functioning within various kinds of hierarchical relationships that pervade Indian society" (173). Even conjugal and parental love are secondary to hierarchical and extended family relationships. But familial relationships are warm and rich in exchanges and mutual care. He portrays them as a form of "symbiotic reciprocity," which allows for greater degree of we-ness, identification and dependency than exists in the Western family, so much so that conventional Western therapeutic models might label it as unhealthy. The spiritual arena, by contrast, allows for greater individuation. There is "far greater emphasis on separation, privacy, and

individuation within the spiritual sphere than in family relationships" (188).

Yogi Bhanan has introduced aspects of this traditional self and its settings into 3HO. Members are encouraged to link their identities to their families and to the extended 3HO family. They are taught to subdue their individualism. They accept hierarchy and some dependency on and idealization of a spiritual teacher. They transfer some of their autonomy and independence from the social to the spiritual realm.

IDENTITY PROCESSES

3HO can be conceptualized as a fabric of identity processes, rewards, and sanctions. These favor particular self-descriptions, self-presentations and self-experience.

As Robbins (1973) puts it:

...If any society is to survive, it must have some institutional means of inculcating in its members knowledge of behaviors and symbols appropriate to given identities, and must periodically ensure that those identities are confirmed or reinforced. It must have means to ensure that individuals believe that they are what they are supposed to be, and means to facilitate identity transformations. These means are what we have called identity processes. (1208)

These identity processes are a crucial element in the accommodation of self to organization. Robbins goes on to identify particular types of identity processes, some of which will be briefly surveyed as they apply to 3HO. While most of these processes have not been explicitly named in

this paper, they have figured in previous chapters. Most have been instituted by the 3HO leadership, some by rank and file members.

Identity Diffusion and Dissolution

These are processes that dissolve old identities, or obscure the boundaries and definition of the self. In 3HO they include forms of mortification and trance, as well as changes in body image and interruptions in daily and yearly schedules. They also include descriptions of the self as opaque and governed by a multitude of past and present forces since such descriptions render the self difficult to define and bound.

Robbins mentions fasts, trance, shame, and mortification under this heading, and obviously all of these are employed in 3HO. Members are sometimes encouraged to go on special diets, even "mono-diets" which involve eating only one food for a specified period of time. The use of sadhana and meditation in order to recreate and reprogram the self has already been described. Public shaming is sometimes employed by Yogi BhaJan, as when he criticizes people in front of the assembled women's camp. There is a degree of mortification involved in accepting a vegetarian diet, giving up drugs, alcohol, caffeine, colorful and stylish clothing and extramarital sex. There is considerably more involved in rising daily

before dawn and beginning the day with a cold shower and vigorous yoga, in accepting an arranged marriage that is not desired, in seeing one's child leave for boarding school in India, or in abandoning fond hopes for a career. Such practices undermine self-concept and interrupt the sense of continuity. They may subtly alter the internal monologue and customary modes of self presentation. They may absorb the individual's energy in efforts to comply and adapt, rather than in self-definition or self-assertion. They limit access to outside groups and the identities these offer. As one woman humorously put it:

I was watching TV with the neighbors next door and there were like four or five commercials, and I said, "You know, not one of those commercials is useful to me." You know: color your hair with this, shave with that, eat our wonderful chicken dinner.... (AP 18)

These practices are explicitly intended to thwart the formation of clear-cut identities and to loosen the hold of long-held self-descriptions. The idea is to replace these with a new spiritual identity.

Identity diffusion is also furthered by the organizational rhythm. Members make the daily transition from sadhana to ordinary activities. They may end a work week with a weekend of Tantric courses. Everyday schedules are interrupted by a visit from Yogi Bhanjan, by his instructions to perform a particular meditation every night for the next 40 days, or by fellow-residents' needs and emergencies. Tantric classes, solstice celebrations, and

women's camp punctuate and interrupt the performance of mundane roles. Career and child-rearing plans can be interrupted by the leadership, as when a member is told to abandon her current occupation or to send her child to school in India. All of this builds an expectation and acceptance of alternation, of starting and stopping, being and doing, acting and evaluating. Contrast is built into the lifestyle and is accepted, and members, to varying degrees, accept that identities will be interrupted and reformed. They tend to regard this as a desirable state of affairs since it is expected to force the individual to develop a spiritual, rather than a worldly, identity. It is also said to reflect a more interesting and flexible lifestyle than the individual is likely to find outside of the organization.

The creation of a clear and firm self-concept is all the more problematic in 3HO because vast areas of the self are defined as opaque. Karma, conditioning, childhood conflicts, and the contents of the subconscious are said to be powerful determinants of behavior, but access to them is difficult. Karma and conflict will be burned off by Tantra and meditation and by the instructions of the spiritual teacher but this is said to occur outside of conscious awareness. One must accept the existence of such invisible processes, and of a dynamic that is understood and

initiated by the spiritual teacher, but is not necessarily accessible to one's conscious self.

Even the physical self is redefined. Lopez (1981) suggests that yogic beliefs and practices may stimulate concern with the body's internal workings and "frustrate" the creation of an external body image. Certainly meditation, the various forms of mortification, and the elaborate belief system associated with Kundalini yoga tend to alter the body image. The "material body" is revisualized as a series of chakras. It becomes a container of energy, and more sensitive and vulnerable than it was previously thought to be. The physical self may seem less substantial as it is mortified, comes to be associated with various forms of energy, and is envisioned as flowing into the spiritual realms beyond its visible borders. The body image is further changed when it must come to incorporate a turban, unshaved legs and underarms, and an invisible aura. Additionally, women are said to be by nature changeable and to experience several emotional cycles. Many 3HO women talk about PMS, monthly cycles, and the influence of the moon. The feminine self is officially difficult to define, often more cyclical than consistent. One woman, quite typically, tells herself

This is the way I feel about this now, but I'm a woman and my emotions change every two-and-a-half days. How I feel about something now will be different in two-and-a-half days. (AP 15, 8, 1986)

In the early years past identities were also modified by the effects of busy schedules, limited privacy and paucity of possessions. All of these aspects of 3HO life made it difficult to cling to past patterns of thought and behavior.

Identity diffusion in the new religions can have a particularly reflexive and intentional element. Many of the members of these groups understand identity processes quite clearly and choose to be exposed to them. They willingly experiment with identity, or at least choose to keep selfhood open and unfinished. Many are adventurers in this realm, and willing to take the risks and to pay the price involved. Some, however, are less self-conscious and aware of the effects of such processes. They accept them because they are devoted followers, or because the practices are normative. For these members the costs may be more difficult to calculate and the risks largely unchosen and unrecognized.

Identity Formation and Transformation

These processes enable the individual to learn the nature of different identities and to learn what behaviors and symbols are significant and appropriate. They encourage the belief that one is "what he is supposed to be or wants to be, or what other's want him to be." (1208)
In 3HO these include: initiatory rituals, meditations (as

when the individual chants "I am Grace of God, I am Grace of God..."); the use of lectures, manuals, ceremonies, and workshops; the assignment of spiritual names, and the wearing of bana; personal instructions from Yogi Bhajan; study of Sikh and Tantric texts; and identity-affirming teachings such as "you are what you project." As previously mentioned, some of the identity prescriptions may be contradictory, or may be differentially interpreted according to context, and this allows sufficient leeway for idiosyncratic identity formation.

3HO, marital, Amrit and ministerial vows specify statuses, duties, responsibilities and attitudes associated with new identities, and wrap them in a tissue of symbols and values. Yogi Bhajan's lectures and classes further define the nature of Sikh and Yogic identities and of his expectations of members. So do a variety of manuals, workshops, tapes, courses, and therapy sessions offered by Yogi Bhajan and by other leaders and significant figures in 3HO life. New identities are further defined and supported by the assignment of spiritual names and the donning of bana. When an affiliate of the organization feels ready she will ask Yogi Bhajan for a name, and he will provide one that is said to be based on his insight into the individual's path and on her numerology and astrology charts. Often an individual takes a name long before

beginning to wear the bana or deciding to move into an ashram.

New identities take further shape as individuals adopt the new names, attend camp, try living in an ashram, and start wearing white or a turban. The new member may begin to sense the rising of the Kundalini energy, or experience "purging" or new "insights" into her personality or into the quality of her relationships. Peers encourage a new sensitivity, openness to the teachings, and acceptance of 3HO approved norms and accounts. The newly-affiliated woman member may have periods of seeing herself as damaged, insecure, exploited, egotistical and manipulative. She will also experience herself as stronger, more graceful and more in control of her mind and her life than she was previously. She is likely to begin to look for positive ways to eliminate the "insecurity" or anger she has previously experienced and to practice "visualizations" of herself as strong, devoted and surrounded by light, love, and acceptance.

Identities may be further transformed and elaborated by Yogi Bhanan when he reveals unknown aspects of the self in interviews or in response to specific questions. He may tell a woman that she is an "old soul", has special talents, that she has difficulty making commitments, or that she has been wasting too much of her energy on unworthy men. He may tell her that she has narrowly

escaped death or faces trauma if she does not change her ways. He will see her character in her aura. Many 3HO men and women expect Yogi Bhanjan to know them better than they know themselves and to define the nature of their unplumbed depths and of their nascent spiritual qualities.

Haywood (1982; 1983) concludes that the loosely-organized and women-led spiritualist groups that she investigated offer many potential benefits to women because they provide alternatives to the often constraining and low status identities normally available to women. She begins with the premise that women, as minority group members, experience generalized "suffering," and that metaphysical groups take that discomfort as a given, interpret it spiritually, and assume that it can be eased, so that

...moving from sufferer to seeker is a transformation of identity available in the metaphysical movements....It means one becomes a self-conscious subject of one's life in spite of the ways one may have experienced social forces limiting one's potential role and relationships. (1982, 113)

Furthermore, she suggests, the use of trance and meditation serve to reinforce "an unconventional reality where spiritual identity predominates over any inferior social categories one may belong to." (1983, 165)

3HO is, of course, led by a man, and its ashram heads are also male, so it differs from the spiritualist groups of Haywood's study. Women's influence is less and expectations for women are more conventional in 3HO, but

the alternative spiritual identity is available and valued, and clearly liberating for some 3HO women. It can loosen the hold of past identities and conventional expectations. The transition from sufferer to seeker does occur and is most common in the "needy seeker" category, although, in 3HO, the suffering seems to have as much to do with the difficulties of coping in an impersonal and rationalized society as with the limitations imposed by gender. Other forms of transition also occur. Often, convenience joiners and pragmatic seekers speak of a selfhood that was originally equated with social roles and with group acceptance. They say that now an alternative, inner locus has been established, a change typically described as becoming "deeper." Intuitive joiners and intense seekers are more likely to speak of the elaboration of an alternative identity. Before joining, they knew that they were not satisfied with the identities supplied by family, school and occupational structure, but they had difficulty defining themselves outside of these given categories. 3HO, they say, has provided the needed concepts, images, and rules.

Just how far the new spiritual identity proves enabling probably depends upon the individual's opportunities and perspectives. Further, what appears desirable and liberating from the 3HO point of view may appear differently from outside of the organization. From

outside, spiritual identity may seem a pale substitute for other goods, and the 3HO criticism of worldly identities an obstacle to personal growth. From within, that same emphasis on worldly statuses appears to limit growth and obscure the individual's spiritual potential. Such contrasts in perspective are dramatized when a member leaves the organization and adopts a more secular perspective.

One ex-member's reinterpretation can serve as an example. (This woman did not live in the Washington community.) She acknowledges the generalized suffering mentioned by Haywood. When she joined the organization, she says, she suffered from low self-esteem and a general feeling that there was "something wrong" with her. Now she believes that her feelings of low self-esteem were exacerbated by 3HO membership. She was led to feel that she was an inadequate parent (Yogi Bhanjan told her that another 3HO member should raise her child), and that because of her gender she was unreasonably held responsible for any marital problems that she and her husband encountered. Her emotions, fears, and conflicts, she now believes, were treated as if they were of no consequence, simply as "junk" in the way of spiritual advance. They were to be overcome, rather than explored, and she feels that her emotional conflicts therefore went unresolved. Even further, she now believes that she was made to feel

that she as an individual was of no value, that her only value derived from her teacher and her spiritual advances. From her new secular perspective the goals of becoming egoless and transcending a negative self are less appealing. From a position of greater ego strength and with confirmed public identities to her credit she views the emotional and social selves with greater respect and sets greater store by individualism. (TI7, 1986)

From the insider's perspective all of this appears differently. The leaver may appear to have settled for shallow identities and to have abandoned her calling. She may have forgotten that all things came from God and that she is only a manifestation of God's grace, not an isolated individual. She has not mentioned the 3HO beliefs which encourage self-acceptance.

3HO is viewed by many of its members as a growth-enhancing organization and some view it as a setting for self-actualization. One attempt to test the likelihood of self-actualization through ashram life (Geller 1979) found no evidence that residence in a 3HO community fosters such evolution. Geller administered a standardized instrument, the Personal Orientation Inventory, used to test for Maslow's stages of self-actualization, to residents of three ashrams. She found that long-term members actually scored lower on the scale than did neophytes. In fact, test results indicated rigidity in thought and behavior, a

tendency to be unresponsive to personal needs and feelings, and dependency on authority. The subjects did not score high on self-regard or on self-acceptance.

Such a test may be of questionable validity in a setting that is removed from the cultural mainstream, but the results don't suggest that 3HO fosters growth as the term is meant in liberal and secular circles. The results are, however, in keeping with the 3HO emphasis on transcending the boundaries of the self and obeying authority. In some respects they seem to describe the type of self that Roland attributes to traditional Indians since they suggest adaptation to a hierarchy and identification with the group's ways of thinking.

Identity Confirmation

Robbins defines identity confirmations as "those cultural processes that function to permit or aid the individual in attaining consistency between his self and his social and public identities" (1973, 1215). Probably the most far-reaching confirmation in 3HO is the construction of a spiritual path that provides a master spiritual status, links public and private selves, and provides a wealth of potentially integrative imagery. Ideally, sadhana provides the setting for integrating public and private selves; that is one of its prime purposes. The combination of Sikh and Tantric traditions

can encourage consistency by structurally and metaphorically linking mystical and rational, hip and straight, public and private selves.

For many, 3HO provided the initial identity confirmation that it was all right to be different from the middle class and state university norm, that one simply was intended to pursue a spiritual path and, in fact, was chosen. For those who also wanted middle class goods, conventional forms of achievement and a family life, Yogi Bhanjan provided a blend of his own and Sikh teachings that legitimated these while setting them in spiritual context. The broad umbrella he provided allowed for confirmation of a range of external identities, all of which could potentially be linked with 3HO and a master spiritual status.

Inevitably, however, 3HO members find that their public and spiritual, or internal and organizational, identities are in opposition, or are poorly aligned. In such circumstances there are a variety of 3HO interpretations of the situation. There are also diverse prescriptions for remedying it.

A member may be encouraged to alter the public identity. She may be told to pursue a more graceful or less stressful occupation. 3HO theories of healing hold that an unhealthy environment -- e.g. stressful or ungraceful -- can cause illness. Thus 3HO beliefs about

healing and disease can explain a disjunction between public and private identities. Remedies center, in fact, on the concept of balance and the intent of the healing system is to re-establish a balance between mind and body and inner and outer selves.

Sometimes an individual may be encouraged to enhance the public self. She may be encouraged to seek a new occupation or to develop a talent. This has happened more frequently with the move towards legitimation and career development. She may be encouraged to teach yoga or to sell Oriental Beauty Secrets. If she feels that she is not skilled enough to pursue the new career, or out-going enough to conduct yoga classes, she may be told to meditate on the self as empowered, calm, and knowledgeable. She may visualize herself working or teaching successfully.

Dissonance between inner and organizational selves is allowed for in the 3HO belief system. As a woman quoted in the previous chapter pointed out, members learn that it is easy to appear to be a gentle, devoted, and spiritual person, but more difficult to actually be such a person. Further, members are told that they will often want to avoid the more onerous aspects of the lifestyle. They will want to skip sadhana, or use offensive language, or evade the discipline imposed at ladies' camp. They will doubt their ability to "keep up," and they may experience shaktipod. Such dissonance is portrayed as a normal aspect

of life on a spiritual path, and members are encouraged to regard it as a form of negativity or tantrum. They are reminded that they can become what they "project." They are often told not to focus on their doubts and resistance, and in this context one hears the phrase, "Don't think. Do." By teaching that internal struggles are inevitable and necessary and that higher and neutral selves will eventually emerge victorious, 3HO provides a language and rules for handling conflict between personal desires and organizational expectations.

Informants tell me that women's discussion groups often analyze situations in which "ego" is interfering with "growth," and members use language with their children and with one another that assumes a level of internal conflict and a capacity to watch and contain one's own ego displays. A scene at the women's camp dramatizes this nicely:

It is 4:30 a.m. Tired faces, lines of women in white terry cloth bathrobes around the shower stalls and at the bathroom. In the bathroom a young girl has been sick and her mother is making her presentable. She is telling her that her upset stomach is due to eating the wrong foods, but that she has learned a lesson and she should thank God for teaching it to her and just go on from there. When the child continues to cry and to say that she just wants it "to go away," her mother tells her that we must accept things and deal with them, and if she is afraid she should sing the song that begins, "We are the Khalsa...". (Personal diary)

Children are encouraged to develop and manage a self that is divided between neutral and feeling aspects. They are told that they may not like something -- a tummy ache,

wearing a turban, or going to India or to children's camp -
-but that it is good for them, will teach them lessons,
make them "strong Khalsa," or provide them with a good,
spiritual environment. Equally, their parents are taught
that even their strongest maternal feelings must be
disciplined and that it may be necessary for a child to
live with another couple or attend boarding school in India
in order to have the best environment in which to mature.

The emphasis on developing the neutral mind in the
course of meditation further enables the individual to
manage, or at least explain, any tension she may experience
between organizational expectations and personal desires or
between her public identities and her private sense of
self. She expects to observe a contest between positive
and negative aspects of the mind, but also to strengthen
her own capacity to transcend these. She is taught that
neither public nor private identity is final, that both are
subsumed under a higher reality.

Humor is also employed to achieve this frame of mind.
Members regularly employ humor and a tongue-in-cheek tone.
Sometimes this seems to involve an effort to imitate Yogi
Bhajan's style, although it is also a style reminiscent of
the counterculture. Yoga teachers and workshop leaders
regularly joke and often adopt a self-deprecating style.
This removes some of the formality from public roles,
suggests that they are no more than necessary and limited

forms, and defines the self as one who transcends mere roles and appearances.

3HO members also look for and discuss evidence that their spiritual lifestyle has made a public difference. They talk about how decent and devoted and natural their children are. They look for situations in which they have been able to "tune into" and meet another's needs, and for instances in which they have served as examples to others. One woman, for example, twice told me about a young Hindu man she had met at work. He, she said, had lost his faith and his discipline, but seeing her in bana, observing her vegetarianism, and learning about her daily sadhana, he returned to his own religious practices.

Identity Management and Identity Struggles

Identity management refers to efforts to maintain and perform identities and to get others to validate and confirm them. Struggles refer to "...those interactions in which there is a discrepancy between an individual's claimed identity and the identity attributed to him by others" (1973, 1214).

One of the major 3HO efforts in the direction of identity management has been the push to legitimate the organization by encouraging members to become professional, successful in businesses, better educated, tidy and well-dressed, and to live in nice, well-kept houses. All of

this makes it possible for members to present themselves as ordinary middle class people who happen to practice a minority religion and to rise early in the morning. This is furthered by the emphasis on careful speech, poise, and graceful self-presentation.

On a more individual level, there is encouragement to think positively. There are the injunctions to "keep up" and, if need be, to "fake it." Members are told not to expose their anxieties, fear and doubts. They are to perform their new identities with conviction.

Various rituals also facilitate identity management. Acts such as serving yogi tea to guests, washing the feet of the ashram director, offering a massage to his wife, greeting other 3HO members as "ji" (Soul, dear), or beginning a workshop with the Ong Namō chant tend to validate leadership positions. They also affirm the religious status of members' undertakings, and the special relationship between people on a spiritual path. They allow the individual to present herself in a desired guise and to confirm others' identities.

The concept of the path itself is flexible enough to encompass a variety of activities and broad enough to appeal to outsiders. It allows members to perceive and present themselves as part of a larger movement, as actors impelled by a widely-shared spiritual impulse. They can offer workshops in a fairly secular mode, pursue a variety

of therapies and interests, and place their 3HO commitments within this larger context. Thus they can manage their identities vis-a-vis outsiders and the larger New Age social network.

Many of these very processes, however, can lead to identity struggles. Members may come to perceive of themselves as successful members of a larger community or as followers of a more embracing and liberal kind of path. They may refuse to wear bana, or to run the businesses for the benefit of the organization. They may instead choose to leave the organization and run independent businesses and services, as recently happened in New Mexico. They may adapt more secular modes of assessing truth and responsibility or come to value ego assertion. They may begin to doubt the quality of Bhajan's leadership, of the 3HO hierarchy, and of the requirement for obedience. Values of autonomy, financial success, and self-enhancement may be tested against those of obedience and humility.

Often these struggles are cast in the language of spiritual growth. Thus in the case of shaktipod cited earlier, the woman's desire to be a central figure, to star in the family and to be very active outside of it, was countered with the argument that these were destructive desires that would undermine her husband's effectiveness and lead only to pride and the enhancement of a negative and unrealistic egotism. An individualistic vision of the

self was pitted against one that made the self an extension of family and group, and the struggle was dramatic, involving shouting, tears, unremitting criticism, and a threatened loss of security and separation from friends and family. The final outcome was acceptance of an essentially familial and organization-based identity, coupled with a conviction that the true self resided not in personal and external accomplishments but in increased insight and generosity and in facilitating the successes of the group and the next generation. Modern and traditional, or American and Indian, views of the self were pitted against each other, the contest phrased in spiritual terms.

Instructions to marry, to change careers, to return or not to return to school, even to have or not to have children, can also become occasions of struggle. A career choice involves an image of the self: of who one is, who one would like to become, and of how one expects to be viewed and treated. A decision to have a child involves an assessment of one's maturity and one's emotional and economic resources; it is an expression of hope and faith and generosity. A decision to return to school implies an assessment of talents and tastes. In this culture the choice of a mate is bound up with the very core of the self image and with childhood experience and physiological rhythms. An attack upon any of these is a profound attack upon identity. People may refuse, argue, cry and

experience intense anxiety, while the spiritual leader will in turn insist and argue, claiming to be able to read the individual's aura and to perceive the individual's needs. He will argue that the individual's desires reflect an unhealthy preoccupation with a limited and repetitive identity, or that they are misguided and egotistical. The stakes may be quite high: continuation in the organization, acceptance by peers, holding a family together. Rejection of organizationally-assigned identities can lead to divorce or intense pressure from others, not to mention a pervading fear that resistance was indeed inspired by ego and by the lower aspects of the self.

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

Identity processes are underwritten by various rewards and sanctions. Rewards can take many forms. There are the feelings of pleasure, calm, and empowerment that the individual experiences during sadhana and meditation. There are the rewards of belonging to a small, expressive, and supportive community. There are opportunities to integrate diverse elements of the self and to express aspects of the personality such as gentleness, trust and submission, that are frequently ridiculed or rejected elsewhere. There are the relief and the support that come with finding other people who share a spiritual

interpretation of life. There may be an added sense of meaning and purpose in life, even a dramatic sense of personal significance since one is ushering in the New Age.

Many 3HO members have acquired skills, knowledge and employment opportunities by virtue of membership. They have attained knowledge of another culture and language, of massage and alternative medicine, and of nutrition and gourmet vegetarian cookery. They have improved their verbal, social, and organizational skills. There are leadership opportunities available to 3HO women, and membership generates job opportunities such as selling tapes of mantras, marketing the Oriental Beauty Secrets line, or serving fellow members as a seamstress or a child care worker, or as an administrator or therapist or a medical worker.

For women particularly, there are some of the psychic rewards mentioned by Haywood and, in spite of all the ideology and pressure surrounding them, some flexibility in defining gender roles. As one informant put it:

I think women feel a greater self-esteem in 3HO....In some cases women are in real traditional roles. There was one woman who had tried a number of different jobs and nothing really worked out for her, and the Siri Singh Sahib said, "Ok, your job is to be a spiritual wife," and she was so relieved. The society would say she had to work or she's just a parasite or lazy or whatever....Women here, they can work or not work....I really feel I've had more flexibility here in 3HO. (AP 13b 3, 1985)

There are also sanctions. The individual who questions the leadership or refuses to follow an order may be criticized by her peers, publicly lambasted, or simply pressured into believing that her deviance represents egotistical or negative thinking. Since Yogi Bhanjan teaches that the awakening and raising of the Kundalini energy can lead to pride and a dangerously inflated ego it can be difficult for a member to know whether she is following the promptings of the higher self or being ensnared by ego. Conformity is further ensured by teachings about women's vulnerability to exploitation, insecurity, stress and men's lower consciousness. A woman may feel that she must accept the rules and structure or she will fall prey to all of these dangers, a point of view that is further impressed by talk of American corruption and by descriptions of the world outside of 3HO as nothing but drugs, materialism, sensuality, and crime. A woman is also likely to fear that she will lose her precious sense of selfhood and specialness, her capacity for balance and clarity, if she leaves the fold and abandons sadhana and the other disciplines.

In some cases members are inhibited in expressing doubts about policies and organizational forms by peer pressure and fear that their criticisms will be reported to the leadership. They may also still their own doubts out of fear that these doubts may lead them down a dangerous

path that could end in the loss of family and community ties. The application of critical thinking is also inhibited by instructions to "do" rather than to think, by frequent efforts to suspend disbelief or by pressures to obey the teacher and accept the teachings. Even the 3HO preference for positive and "uplifting" communication can lead to conformity. The person who is too honest or critical may be considered ungraceful and negative. This preference for positive and tactful statements can obviously be beneficial to members and to group morale, but it is not necessarily conducive to the development of critical capacities, and it can put members at a disadvantage in situations where skepticism and suspicion may well be called for -- as in the case of the ashram director's dishonesty. It may lead members to swallow doubts and worries or to subject these to rationalization rather than to exploration. Eager to belong, and to be -- and appear to be -- generous, spiritual and kind, they may not voice legitimate concerns. They may even come to distrust logic and analysis and replace these with hope, fear, and intuition in inappropriate situations.

Persistence and acceptance are also furthered by a belief system that plays down the significance of roles and circumstances. Resistance to roles that are a systemic part of the organization, or a decision to leave the organization to take up another lifestyle or other roles,

are deprived of validity. Members are encouraged to believe that whatever is going wrong in the current marriage will just be repeated in the next marriage, that whatever justifications are offered for leaving the spiritual path are really just the excuses that the individual always uses to avoid difficulties. Better to simply stay where one is, maintain commitment, and stop looking for nonexistent greener pastures.

Another potent sanction is Yogi Bhajan's special position. Since he is believed to be spiritually advanced and able to see into both the future and the soul, and because he represents both individual and group destiny, Bhajan is not easily challenged. Members vary considerably in their attachment to him and in the powers and significance they actually attribute to him, but they all assume that he is special and his advice should at the very least be carefully weighed. I found that I could express some skepticism about his powers or suggest that he is vested with too much authority, as long as I was willing to accept his charisma, his specialness, and his superior insight. Whenever I suggested that he was bending the truth, throwing the kinds of tantrums that he criticizes in others, or limiting women's self-definitions, or when I admitted that I wasn't particularly affected by his personality, I was firmly assured that he was incapable of telling a lie, was having the tantrums to achieve a

specific effect, that his teachings about women were "incredible" or that if I spent more time around him I was bound to recognize his special qualities. He is responsible for final policy decisions. He is to be obeyed and his advice respected. His authority weighs lightly on some, far more heavily on others. He has encouraged and supported some women in their chosen projects, enhanced their sense of autonomy and self-esteem. In other cases he has undermined identities and worked to reshape self images. He clearly works to exert his influence on the women, particularly those who are married to important men or are themselves significant figures in the organization.

Although staff members deny them there are persistent rumors of Bhajan's philandering. Current suits accuse him of forcing his sexual attentions on two women, and of physically abusing one of them. (Felt vs. Khalsa 1986; Khalsa vs. Khalsa 1986) An ex-legal advisor who left 3HO in 1976,

says that although when he left most of this property [3HO property all over the country] seemed to be owned by individuals, a lot of it was actually owned by a clique of five or six top echelon women who were under Bhajan's control. This, claims Hoskins, made the group look more decentralized than it really was. (Naman 1980, 93)

SELF AND METAPHOR

Selfhood is shaped not only by rewards and sanctions and identity processes. It is expressed in metaphor and

imagery. It is defined and imagined in symbols. It is shaped by organizational metaphors and symbolically expressed ideals. In a sense selfhood is metaphor (see M. Brewster Smith, 1985). As metaphor it is reflexive and complex, for it is in the nature of metaphors to link and condense a multitude of perceptions and experiences. 3HO metaphors for selfhood often serve to tie past to present. They have personal, organizational, social structural and cultural referents. The imagery that is applied to the self in 3HO reflects organizational history; it even replicates much of the organization's structure and its relationship to the larger society. 3HO images for the self, as they appear in 3HO literature and in individual accounts, are often spatial, or they focus on energy. They are likely to be either vertical or horizontal, or to refer to the boundaries of the self.

Vertical Imagery

Much of the vertical imagery is drawn from the Tantric tradition. The physical self is divided into lower and higher chakras and is itself a lower form connected to a higher self and higher realms. The lower chakras control the senses, and "activate the desire to cling, to crave, to have and to possess" (Colton 1978, 51). The higher chakras are the source of spiritual powers and, when awakened and energized, make enlightenment possible. People experience

the Kundalini energy rising; they speak of acting out of higher or lower consciousness. They seek to become clear channels so that the higher energy can flow down through them.

They also speak of the "depth" of the personality. They distinguish between the persona and what may lie below it. Thus 3HO people speak of automatic and superficial behavior and contrast this with thoughtful questioning of motives and implications. They talk, as one woman put it, of "becoming more inward and more outward": more aware of personal feelings and motivations and more secure in personal identity, while also becoming less shy and better able to communicate effectively with others. They speak of being "deepened" by experience, of acting more often out of a higher consciousness, or of being dragged down by those who remain at a lower point.

Such imagery connects situated and transcendent aspects of the self, as well as public and private, emotional and cognitive aspects. Although it was originally Indian and clearly in keeping with the vertical social structure of a caste system, this imagery may also resonate with members' experience of vertical imagery in American society with its bureaucratic hierarchies and its expectations of constant achievement and upward-climbing. It is also in keeping with the hierarchical nature of 3HO, and with its more

individualistic teachings which emphasize personal evolution and enlightenment.

Boundaries

If the body is a vertical connection with the higher orders, it is quite vulnerable at its margins. Body image is tied to boundary maintenance mechanisms and organizational folkways. The physical body extends outward in the form of an electromagnetic aura which should be protected and strengthened. The woman's aura is particularly vulnerable since it is so sensitive to "negativity." Her physical body, too, is vulnerable and must be protected by such Sikh traditions as bana and modest garb, and all bodies are threatened by drugs, caffeine, meat-eating and too much sugar.

Mary Douglas (1970) distinguishes two principles on which a society or community may be organized: group and grid. A group is a bounded social unit while a grid is more open but based upon rules about how one person should relate to another. Body imagery, she argues, will express social structure:

...the body is a symbolic medium which is used to express particular patterns of social relations.
(xiii)

In the case of a strong group and weak grid, as existed in the formative period in 3HO, and in the counterculture, there is a tendency for members to view the body as in need

of protection. Fears of intrusion or poisoning, or loss of strength, are an expression both of the importance of the group's boundaries and of the uncertainties involved in unclear norms governing human relationships. 3HO emphasis on diet, modesty, and aura fit this model.

Relationships within 3HO rapidly become more rule-guided, and differentiated roles more central to members' lives. As new disciplines were introduced grid was extended. The Sikh image of the self as householder was introduced. New imagery was added, but the boundary imagery was also maintained. The boundary imagery is still relevant to intense group loyalty and bonding. It may also prove useful in conceptualizing the relationship of the group to the larger society.

Self imagery, group history, and personal biography

In fact, I would suggest that imagery for the self expresses even more than structure; it expresses the relationship of the group to the surrounding environment, the group's history and individual members' experience. 3HO has progressed through a series of stages that correspond to Sartre's topology of fused group, pledge group and organized group (Hayim 1980). Each stage has left its imprint on self imagery and can be used by members to interpret experience and define the self.

group-in-fusion

As Sartre depicts it, the group-in-fusion is undifferentiated and its members share a common praxis and identity. In this stage a group is an extension of the self and fellow members are not experienced as other. The group is a refuge from, and antidote to, previous experience of "humiliations, powerlessness and mutual indifference" (93). This was the form of the first ashrams and the very early years of 3HO history.

Sartre does not discuss the imagery associated with these different stages, and Douglas' formulation does not necessarily apply to such intense group feeling. But some of the 3HO imagery for the self is suggestive of this stage of group formation. Visions of the self as limitless, as a housing for energy, and as capable of fusion with God are congruent with this group form. So are conceptualizations of the self that emphasize flux, evolution, and a perpetual state of becoming. These are images and concepts that are also in keeping with earlier aspects of members' biographies. Many had experienced the blurred norms and intense loyalties of the counterculture. The idea of limitless possibilities and expansion was part of the rhetoric of the 1960's, and easily adapted to a new religious conceptualization of the world and the self.

pledge group

A fused group is unstable. In time, its members seek stability and permanency. The group's persistence and unity, rather than praxis, become pervasive concerns. The euphoria of the early stage is replaced by the fears of a return to the old state of alienation and loneliness, and "...the members are ready now to surrender part of their freedom in favor of a pledge and a permanent group" (95). Shared symbols and signs gain in significance. Internal dangers may be perceived. To stave off the return of the old order, members may willingly give up much control over their own persons. This can even lead to violence, to "the implicit right of everyone over everyone else" (97).

In the 3HO case, this stage coincides with the institution of bana, vows and Sikhism, and with elaboration of the governing hierarchy. Prescriptions for everyday life proliferated, and disciplined living and obedience were stressed. Members imitated and sought the approval of those in positions of authority, some even to the point of self-immolation. Peer pressures were often intense.

Boundary maintenance mechanisms affirmed group identity and solidified the organization, and at the same time extended and bounded the self. The self extended to the bana and the aura and the new name. The individual struggled to incorporate new customs and values into the

essence of the self, and then protected that self from external threats.

Vertical imagery was also maintained and elaborated. It applied to the self, with cognitive and neutral aspects of the mind accorded priority over emotional and, often, intuitive aspects. Hierarchy extended into the self, and self, organization and the higher realms of being were to be aligned. Now imagery for the self reflected both the experience of a fused group and of the new, more formal, pledge group.

This combination of fused group and pledge group imagery could easily be applied to members' biographies. It was directly applicable to their experience of social and cultural tensions. They had matured in a society in which egalitarian ideals confronted sharp social divisions. In terms of this imagery it was a society in which both vertical and horizontal axes were employed, and often existed in a state of tension. Members had experienced both countercultural lifestyles and the structure of middle-class suburban life, a dichotomy that could be nicely expressed in imagery that stressed both expansion of the self and firm boundaries around it. They had experienced the dreams and optimism of the 60's and the curtailment that followed in the form of recession and an altered political atmosphere. Again, the juxtaposition of

images of evolution and infinite potential with those of limits and boundaries could encapsulate personal history.

As such imagery was internalized, personal goals could be reinterpreted in ways that were in keeping with the ideals of spiritual path, and in ways that were less socially rebellious, and less of a threat to the organization, than previous attitudes had been. Much of the rebellious desire to confront social boundaries could be transformed into a confrontation with internalized cognitive, perceptual, and emotional barriers. Members came to expect struggles and obstacles as integral parts of the spiritual path, and these could be attributed to karma, cultural conditioning, neuroses and the like, rather than to the larger social structure, to organizational policies, or to the teachings or actions of the leadership. Members' rebellious and innovative leanings could be turned inwards rather than being directed at the organization or channeled into more revolutionary social activities, but with the expectation that the internal struggle would, in the long term, alter the individual's environment and the larger social structure.

organized group

As a pledge group grows it is likely to become increasingly specialized and differentiated. Its members are more frequently defined by their tasks and their

relationships to the material world. Practical concerns carry more weight, and world-accommodation moves forward.

In the 3HO case this began to happen as the leaders and members sought legitimation for the organization and enhanced practical opportunities for themselves. They returned to school, learned new skills and sought to raise their families in comfort. They became increasingly concerned with personal efficiency and with creating a balance between practical and spiritual activities. For many members, external roles became more central to the self-concept. Images of the self as channel and energy were easily adapted to this development, as were descriptions of the self as having its inward and outward, connected and separated aspects. These images could help to connect the sometimes fragmented public and private, individuated and group-oriented aspects of the self.

Energy imagery, for example, can serve to both individuate and unify. As aura, energy surrounds, separates, and protects the individual. Kundalini energy is even said to lead to ego expansion and to misuse of power. But energy flows can also suggest union and the fusion of polarities. Members' descriptions of their periods of peace and at-oneness with God suggest that this feeling occurs when the usual tensions, conflicts, and discordancies are in abeyance. The individual feels that her capabilities, her thoughts, her group loyalties, her

social roles, and her spiritual intuitions are aligned. Then energy is flowing from higher to lower self.

accumulated imagery and layers of meaning

The images accumulated through the different stages of group life can be creatively combined to comment on and understand current realities. Much of the accumulated imagery can even be used reflexively, to comment on or interpret personal and organizational history. The boundary imagery, for example, continues to resonate in many contexts. The group creates boundaries and rules which the individual may experience both as a source of protection and identification and as a source of frustration and circumscription. Boundary maintenance mechanisms offer security, but they also limit and complicate relationships with outsiders. By encouraging legitimation 3HO has given the issue of boundaries and the 3HO term "breaking through" new meaning for individuals who must now regularly cross boundary lines between 3HO and other belief systems. In fact, the image of breaking through may fit many levels of experience. At the personal level it may resonate with many members' sense of having been trapped and circumscribed in their high school years and having broken through these limitations by joining 3HO or the counterculture. It may also express current difficulties experienced in attempting to move between

ordinary and extraordinary realities, and between 3HO and external roles. It may express 3HO-induced feelings of struggle and frustration generated by firm discipline, many rules, and by constant requirements to change, adapt and keep-up. But such feelings are also generated in the larger social structure, where efforts to break free of routine, of financial burdens and boredom are common, and where individuals must move between discordant roles and spheres of activity, so the imagery is meaningful within and outside of the organization.

Because its self-imagery can be readily adapted to reflexive purposes, 3HO provides a symbolic language which its members can utilize to define and redefine themselves, to continuously reintegrate self, organization and biography, and even to observe and interpret this process. This can be done in order to meet peer and organizational expectations, to adapt to the discontinuities experienced in meeting multiple expectations, or as part of a more personal effort to recreate the self and to construct a spiritual path.

These efforts in turn add to the organization's symbolic repertoire, and thus both to members' potential capacity for making meta statements about themselves and to their opportunities for aligning self and organization. There is a wealth of symbols and images with which to imagine and create a more encompassing, reflexive, and

rationalized self. There are also comparable resources for willful management of self-concepts and self-presentation so as to adapt these to organizationally-approved attitudes and images, even at a cost to individual judgment or self-assertion. The imagery can be employed to tighten or loosen the strings attaching self and organization, and to further either individual-centered or organization-centered interpretations and manipulations of the self.

SELF DESCRIPTIONS

As 3HO has moved in the direction of an organized group and has become more rationalized, the language and imagery with which to create a rationalized, complex, and reflexive self has kept pace. The resulting imagery and self-descriptions are often multi-layered and complex. They are rationalized in Brigitte Berger's sense of the term: they refer to a self that constantly observes, evaluates, adapts, controls, and reforms itself (1971). They are the product of a distinctive effort to realign countercultural and utilitarian, or what Ralph Turner (1976) would call impulsive and institutional, views of the self.

Self-as-Impulse vs. Institutional Self

The contrast between utilitarian and expressive images of the self is nicely developed in Turner's discussion of the individual's sense of her "true" or most authentic

self. He develops a topology contrasting the "self as impulse" to the "institutional self." The true impulsive self "consists of deep, unsocialized, inner impulses. Mad desire and errant fancy are exquisite expressions of the self" (81). This is a self that is uncovered or discovered, and it is most visible when inhibitions are lowered. From its vantage point, roles and institutional duties are regarded as "artificial constraints and superimpositions that bridle manifestations of the real self" (81). The institutional self, by contrast, is to be achieved rather than revealed: "The self is something attained, created, achieved" (82). It adheres to external standards, takes pride in self-control, in resisting temptation, in planning and controlling, and in developing technical skills and polished role performances. Turner suggests that Americans have moved toward acceptance of the self-as-impulse. 3HO members have moved in the opposite direction.

3HO beliefs blend the two approaches. The ideal 3HO self should transcend roles and institutional expectations. It is uncovered or revealed when ordinary constraints and duties are temporarily abandoned, as during sadhana and meditation. Like Turner's self-as-impulse it is to be protected from the worst of the institutional world, which can stifle and damage it. But it also must enter that arena as something more than a mere play-actor; it is not

there simply to earn a living or pass the time. It must take on institutional forms and infuse them with grace. To do so it must be subject to the institutional values of self-discipline and self-construction. Furthermore, 3HO imposes self-control, planning, "polished role performances," and resistance to temptation. In fact, it is my impression that it is the utilitarian and institutional aspects of the self that are most often approved and fostered by 3HO leadership, so that the impulsive self is contained, channeled and transmuted into a world of roles, distinctions, hierarchy and hard work. Emotionality and spontaneity are to be controlled, subject to calculation of utilities and consequences, although these are often spiritual. This is evident in members' self-descriptions. They often reveal tension between the intuitive/impulsive and rationalized/institutional poles. The pressure is towards the institutional and rationalized poles, but members may experience considerable conflict, may shift from one to the other, or may seek to unify them.

Members' self descriptions

Eighteen ashram residents were explicitly asked to describe themselves as they are now, as they were when they first encountered the organization (and, in some cases, as they were in high school), and as they expect to be in the future. They also inadvertently described themselves

throughout the course of wide-ranging interviews that touched on the process of joining, on stages of membership and steps along the spiritual path, on roles inside and outside of the organization, and on areas of special interest, concern, and difficulty. The following analysis of the self-descriptions is based upon explicit descriptions of the self that emerged either in response to the direct request for such a description or in other portions of the interview. It is worth noting that individuals had previously been asked to describe their major roles inside and outside of the organization, so these important aspects of self-concept do not often appear in the later self-descriptions; from the interviewees' point of view this would have been redundant.

Given the 3HO emphasis on positive communication, and the natural desire to look good for an outsider, the descriptions may lean toward the prescribed, the positive, and the ideal. It was clear, however, that the women were often answering spontaneously, and that while some answers and descriptions seemed to be the stock expected replies, others emerged in the situation. If some of the replies were shaped and limited by the "fake-it-you'll-make-it" philosophy, others were the product of the equally important 3HO norms of integrity and of sharing one's experience for the benefit of others. Because members' lifestyles are relatively unusual, they have probably been

required to think through, develop and frame their descriptions of themselves, as well as their descriptions of their activities and the purposes and effects of 3HO practices. Thus their descriptions are more ideologically informed and less naive than might be expected of members of other, less ideological groups.

In order to categorize their replies I have drawn upon the work of Chad Gordon (1968), Morris Rosenberg (1979), and Theodore Mischel (1977), although many of the categories are my own. Gordon proposed several categories to be employed in self-conceptualization: roles and memberships; abstract identifications; interests and activities; material references; and the four systemic senses of self. The latter are particularly applicable in the 3HO case. They are:

- (1) "the sense of moral worth" -- "the person's sensed degree of adherence to a valued code of moral standards transcending him";
- (2) "the sense of self-determination" -- "sensed ability to select one's own goals and determine their relative priorities, initiate and vigorously pursue necessary lines of action, and act with freedom from control by others";
- (3) "the sense of unity" -- "the individual's interpretation of his standing with regard to the

problem of personality level system integration";
and

- (4) "the sense of competence" -- the individual's sense of her capacity for adapting to the environment and coping (115-136).

Rosenberg probably provides what is at once the most incisive and the most sensitive treatment available. His influence is everywhere in this discussion but here specifically I have drawn on his sense of "regions" in the self concept (e.g. whether the locus is internal or primarily external, how far the ego extends), his concern with its integration, and his distinction between real and ideal selves. Mischel is particularly interested in "self-intervention," a matter of equal concern to the 3HO respondents.

self in the present

Most of the self descriptions, 95 in all, fell within Gordon's four sense of the self, with the preponderance falling under the headings of competence, self-determination, and unity. The most common replies blended competence, the capacity for self-intervention, and the sense of self-determination.

-- competence and self determination

Typical competence descriptors included:

"efficient," professional," "dependable," "good mother," "mastery comes easily," "overachiever," "a leader," and, on the negative side, "undisciplined" and "scattered."

Descriptors involving self-determination centered on spiritual rather than on material or occupational goals. The women described themselves in terms of efforts to train, discipline, and reprogram themselves in order to achieve spiritual goals: as working at attending sadhana, eating well, at uplifting themselves if they feel negative or depressed, at generally "keeping up" and doing things they found difficult such as wearing bana, selling cosmetics, getting up early, or teaching classes. They even spoke of working at relaxing. They talked of seeking balance in their emotions, and of balancing feelings and thoughts, practical affairs and spiritual concerns, of overcoming "physical blocks" and of learning more about Sikhism and Gurmulkhi. One woman said that she was working at not trying to force herself to be happy and another that, "I decided I wasn't going to be an emotional, up-and-down person because it wasn't fair to my children."

Frequently, when speaking about self-discipline and spiritual self-determination, the women spoke of the distance between ideals and reality. They spoke of getting tired, of failing to attend sadhana, or of becoming

enmeshed in dailiness. There was a generally shared view of this experience; as one woman put it, "I know what's right, and I don't always do it. A lot of times I have a problem getting started going, but I always know what's right and I usually end up doing it." There is a tendency to view the self with some detachment and find it progressing but still wanting. This approach is very much in keeping with observed trends in the modern self with its tendency towards self-observation and monitoring, calculated activity, goal-orientation and experimentation (Berger 1971; Lasch 1978; Zurcher 1977).

Five of the women placed considerable emphasis on occupational achievements and the importance of work in their lives while the rest emphasized spiritual goals. Even those who assigned high priority to occupation also talked about their spiritual work. One spoke of a general "solution-oriented" approach to life that bridged work, relationships and spiritual goals. The 3HO self is rationalized, but the rationality is applied primarily to spiritual and organizational goals, rather than to those of larger social institutions.

-- sense of unity

In 3HO, self-determination and the unity of the self are closely related. It is evident that the self-concepts encompass tension and internal struggle since they so often

involve "working on the self" and seeking balance. Members talked about having to overcome "tests," laziness, guilt, shyness and the "tricks of the mind," and of a tendency to over-value others' opinions and evaluations of the self. But nonetheless, seven of the respondents spoke of empowerment, of feeling "a stronger sense of self" and of being "more centered." Comments like, "Now I know who I really am," and "I'm stronger in my individuality" were typical. Another seven spoke of a strengthened neutral self, saying they were more "conscious," and "more the watcher" than when they entered 3HO. Others spoke of unity as a sometime thing, identical with the moments when they relaxed, submitted, and "let God do." Unity seemed to have two forms: (1) a cognitive form when the individual identified with the neutral mind and observed the internal struggle with the assumption that the positive and the neutral aspects would eventually with out, and (2) an experiential form that involved confidence and a capacity to focus and relax, which might be experienced either in meditation or in the course of everyday life.

-- sense of moral worth

Descriptions bearing on moral worth necessarily tended to merge with those assessing self-awareness and the capacity for self-intervention. Moral worth was tied to the capacity to serve, to "tune in" to others, to striving

and seeking and not accepting conventional social categories, to depth of personality and to a capacity to act without ego-involvement. Typical descriptions were: "kind," "tolerant," "less concerned with externals," "seeker after truth," "living my ideals," "not willing to compromise," "the best part of me is totally one with God," "trying to discover more of myself instead of just doing what my parents expected of me," and "a beautiful soul." On the "negative" side, women talked of their potential for falling from the faith, of giving into temptation or losing the clarity and confidence they gained from sadhana. Abandoning the disciplines and succumbing to the "lower self," to anxiety and moral confusion, was a danger.

When Bailey administered the California Psychological Inventory to 3HO members he found that "none of the differences between 3HO scores and the appropriate norms were statistically significant" (1974, 195), but there were some distinctive trends in 3HO replies, one being a tendency for 3HO men and women to score below the national collegiate norm on "socialization." This category refers to "social maturity, integrity and rectitude," and a low score is supposed to indicate "demanding, opinionated persons, headstrong, rebellious, and given to excess in behavior" (200). With good reason, Bailey is dubious about such judgmental and value-laden language, and suggests that rebelliousness and strong opinions are natural enough in

ex-members of a counterculture. Such attitudes might as well have been described as "committed" or "passionate." In any case, there are remnants of this independence and intensity in the equating of moral worth with refusal to compromise and with determinedly pursuing a path. This intensity is balanced, however, by an emphasis on helping or serving others -- a Sikh value -- and has been channeled into the 3HO belief system, which requires both commitment and defiance of conventionality, but within the organization framework. The sense of moral worth blends counterculture rebelliousness with organizational disciplines and values.

-- personal characteristics

While the major portion of the self-descriptions fell within the "senses of the self" category, this was closely followed by Gordon's "personal characteristics." These include descriptions centering on interpersonal and psychic style and on the personality. Approximately half of these replies had to do with affective tone: "happy," "positive," "optimistic," "anxious," "strong in negativity," "more in touch with my feelings," "not very emotional." The other half was heavily weighted towards evaluations of the individual's ability to share the self with others, and thus overlapped with the sense of moral worth. The positive evaluations included "outgoing,"

"friendly," "spontaneous," "humorous." More neutral descriptions included "like to be alone," "like things resolved," "learning to say no," while the less positive included "impatient," "unassertive," "selfish," and "have problems with authority." The descriptions appear to reflect 3HO concepts of positivity and negativity and the emphasis on learning to live with others in the ashram setting. They also reflect some tension between the more sociable and the more rebellious aspects of the self.

-- abstract identifications and roles

These were followed by the smaller category of "abstract identifications" such as "evolving," "changing," "growing," "longing" and "seeking." These were few in number (8), but if one combines all the answers centering on self-improvement, spiritual evolution and moral worth then the generalized concern with spiritual growth is clear; there are 34 such answers.

Finally there was mention of roles, with "mother or mother-to-be" first. There were no ascribed characteristics mentioned, a few references to leisure interests (two to music, and one to movies) and very few "material references." The paucity of such responses, however, may be due, as previously mentioned, to the nature of the interview.

-- observations

Numerically, self descriptions centering on self-discipline, self-determination and instrumental capabilities clearly outnumbered those focusing on the emotional, intuitive, and physical aspects of the self. This was ascertained by combining the number of answers stressing efficiency, work, self-discipline, roles and the creation of an objective observer self (28) and comparing these to the answers stressing affect and sensitivity (19). This is in line with the yogic ideal of transcending the emotional self, with the world-accommodating trend within 3HO, and with pressures to discipline the self so that it is responsive to organizational and spiritual requirements. The emphasis on rationally controlling and altering the self is all the clearer if one adds in the previously mentioned count of 34 descriptors centering on self-improvement, spiritual evolution and moral worth.

Self-intervention and rationality attain distinctive interpretations in 3HO. Opportunities to select a mate or a vocation may be severely circumscribed, particularly if the individual is high in the organizational hierarchy or asks for advice or instructions, but self-determination can be understood as a matter of determining how one will think or feel in any particular circumstance. Then, no matter what instructions one receives from the spiritual teacher, no matter which life events intervene, one is able to

respond positively and gracefully and to begin to define and control the situation oneself. Mental and spiritual self determination replace social choices, but within this framework, self-intervention and determination are vital concerns. In this they appear to resemble Indian women who tend to identify self with family and to serve that family, but maintain autonomy in the spiritual realm (Roland 1984).

The number of descriptors focusing primarily on the self, its traits and its evolution was 77. The number focusing on capacity for self-extension, concern for others, roles, and quality of relationships was 18. Judging numerically, rationality, in a spiritual form and individuation, again in a spiritual form, are given more attention than intuition, affect and sociability. Self realization comes before service. However, the rationalized, struggling and inward-looking self is expected to eventually give way to a self that has become an instrument for God's will.

ideal selves

Descriptions of the self as it is now, criticisms of how it used to be, and descriptions of future selves involved many allusions to an ideal self. Descriptions of future selves, in fact, often turned into descriptions of ideal selves. These clustered around two categories: (a) becoming more caring, "serviceable" and selfless -- an

instrument for God's will, and (b) becoming more stable, calm, secure, and balanced. Typical of the first were descriptors such as: "more able to help," "relating from the heart," "serviceable," "more flexible," "being able to relate to anybody, being able to really connect with anyone," "helping people," "more accepting," and "a channel for God's grace." Examples of the second are: "more relaxed," "peaceful," "less reactive," "less easily influenced," and "balancing spiritual and worldly things."

A minority of replies dealt with the material self and focused on energy, success and health: "energetic," "richer," "my health and my body, I'm trying to get them to a certain place," and "more creative."

These future ideal selves are more neutral than the present selves. They experience less struggle and conflict and have overcome more blocks and anxieties. In spiritual terms they represent the victory of the "higher self"; in organizational terms, greater usefulness. From the perspective of Gordon's categories, conventional self-determination is severely limited in favor of moral worth and unity, and the boundaries and locus of the self are further extended. Self-intervention is still required but is no longer a central issue for the self is past struggle and self-conscious efforts to reform.

past selves

Descriptions of past selves are spread more widely throughout the different categories. Within the "sense of the self" the emphasis is on unity, with past selves being perceived as needy, as more diffuse, and as causing greater discomfort than present selves. Self-determination does not loom so large, and the self is described more as seeking than as setting goals, although the past self is given credit for looking, and, often, for moral qualities such as concern about the quality of social life or a desire for a more equitable and humane form of social organization. Abstract qualities loom larger: the self as "seeking," "looking for something," or as "political," or "disillusioned." There is considerable attention to adjustment and authority: "fitted in," "different," "preoccupied with social status," "intense," "enthusiastic," "shy," "rebellious," "carefree," "spontaneous," "unconcerned with my effect on others." There are many references to being a hippy and a student and to past career experiences, as well as mention of activities such as music, drug-taking, travelling and political action. References to the material self are few, but include descriptions of dress -- "messy," "I always had to wear the bright purple bell bottoms," -- and to "looking for highs." These were selves that were not so concerned

with discipline, neutrality, and self-intervention, nor with service or selflessness.

The self-concepts that emerge when these descriptions are abstracted from individual replies and biographies indicate considerable alignment with the ideals of selfhood that are propounded by Yogi Bhajan and found in the traditions from which he borrows. They indicate concern with monitoring the self and with bringing experience and perceptions into line with organizational expectations. The emphasis on competence, on self-control and self-intervention and on becoming "serviceable" is in keeping with the organizational expectations of obedience, struggle and instrumental action. It is in keeping with both 3HO concepts of spirituality and with "prosperity consciousness." Expectations of future peace and ease reflect the emphasis on personal evolution and the assumption that blocks, resistance, and tension can give way to flow and control. Current awareness of limitations and of the need to alter the self reflect the struggle to align the self with a new reality and the tendency to judge the self by world-rejecting standards. Selves are seen to stand between a past of indulgence, rebellion, confusion and seeking, and a future of disciplined clarity and enlightenment. The future self will transcend ego-limited forms of individuation, will heal the split between public and private selves, and unite impulse and reason, but for

now discipline, effort, balancing acts, and some struggle are usual. The rebellious, impulsive self confronts the organizationally-approved and neutral self.

REPLICATION: SELF AND ORGANIZATION

The metaphors for and the actual forms of selfhood that are prescribed and rewarded by 3HO are remarkably similar to the structure and processes of the organization itself. Like the organization, the self is to be a mediating structure. The organization is interposed between the individual and macro social structures; the 3HO self mediates between God-energy and the world. The organization unites different traditions and value systems; the same is true of the ideal self, which is to create a syncretic spiritual path and unite utilitarian and countercultural traditions. The organization is bureaucratic and hierarchical, and varies in form from ashram to ashram. It sponsors activities that vary in their orientation towards the world. The self, too, is hierarchical; it has higher and lower, material and subtle forms. It is multilayered and is constantly shifting its focus and attention. At its zenith, just like Yogi Bhanjan at the pinnacle of 3HO, is the highest, transcultural, and supposedly all-knowing self. The self is clearly bounded by bana, aura and folkways, just as 3HO has become more clearly defined and has established its boundaries. The

self is portrayed as vulnerable, particularly at its boundaries, just as a young struggling organization must be, but, again like the organization, it is visualized as potentially vast and powerful. The self is experienced as blissful meditator and as workaday self-presentations, as a oneness with the God-energy and as painful separation, just as 3HO has been experienced as a fused group and as an organized group. 3HO selfhood is evolution and change and intuitive knowledge. It is also form, discipline and conscious action.

As an effort to unite often contradictory traditions, the organization has its share of internal contradictions. These also appear in 3HO conceptualizations of selfhood. The self is to be both intuitive and rationalized. The self is the guru, but it is often dependent. It must be autonomous but obedient.

The self that is fostered by 3HO identity processes is thus congruent with the organizational structure. It also is similar to the traditional Indian self in several respects. It is defined and shaped by hierarchical relationships. It is shifting, complex and multi-layered. Roland finds that for the traditional Indian, "Correct behavior is much more oriented toward what is expected in the specific contexts of a variety of roles and relationships, rather than any unchanging norm for all

situations" (1984, 174). It is familial and it is spiritual.

Their actual self descriptions indicate that many members are struggling to attain the ideals, but encounter considerable resistance or some internal division. Individualism is not easily overcome and there is a long way to go before members become as "serviceable" as they would like to be. Most, however, feel they have attained some spiritual autonomy and have watched the spiritual self develop and expand.

Actual selves also have distinctly modern aspects. They are rationalized and complex. They practice emotion management. They also reflect the cultural dichotomies discussed in this paper: some separation of rational from more intuitive and affective aspects; an effort to balance private and public aspects; efforts to redefine individuation and enhance the capacity for self-extension; and the coexistence of a meta self and some more particularistic self-concepts.

The organization, with its diverse sources, and the culture with its contradictions have contributed to members' sense of self. Imagery for the self reflects members' biographies, the organization's history and the cultural surround. 3HO provides instructions, concepts and metaphors that can be applied to everyday experience and employed to further elaborate the relationships of self to

group, organization, culture and world. Even tensions or contradictions, such as those between countercultural and utilitarian images of selfhood, can be incorporated for they can be employed to explain personal conflicts, internal contradictions embedded in the organization, or discontinuities in the society at large. They can be maintained as tensions within the self-concept, or integrated into the personality. As tensions they can be incorporated into a divided self with negative and positive or emotional and neutral aspects. Higher and lower, real and ideal, everyday and spiritual selves can remain in tension or opposition for years. Metaphors, however, can link otherwise opposed aspects of the self and enhance possibilities for integration, growth and reflexivity.

Subject's responses to the final chapter

In the next, and final, chapter I describe a series of workshops offered by a 3HO member for the general public. I analyze the themes of these workshops and my own reactions to them as a participant. I asked the workshop leader and one of the ashram residents to comment on the chapter and on my interpretations. One responded in a long letter, the other in a telephone conversation. Their responses are a comment on the quality of their spiritual commitment and their concern for others in that each focused as much on my psychic divisions and on what they probably perceived as my spiritual needs as on my analysis of the workshop themes or my feelings about 3HO. Both had caring suggestions for my personal growth, one referring me to a book, the other to a meditation group, but neither being insistent. It is worth noting, however, that neither was willing to accept my view of the world.

I was pleased to hear that the workshop leader found my depiction of workshop themes and theory to be well done and "wonderfully accurate." She was troubled only by my "either-or" way of viewing the world. Both respondents felt, however, that I might have over-emphasized the world-rejecting aspects of 3HO life and had overstated the concern with transcending past programming and internal resistance to change. Both reminded me of the diversity of the membership. As one put it, "there are some guilt-

trippers but also others who are more fluid and relaxed." She did not entirely disagree with me, though, for she agreed that the idea of cleansing was present in 3HO life, and that "there is some undercurrent of negativity to wash from the system." She also felt that Yogi Bhanjan uses "aversion" as a technique to alter people's ways of thinking and doing.

The other respondent was troubled by my use of terms like 'self mortification' and 'world-rejecting'. She also expressed some dismay that my picture of the organization had been so much influenced by a member who had finally chosen to leave. Her view, she wrote, is that

Somehow we are at this moment just the way we are supposed to be. To mortify the Self is to say God made a mistake with me, but that's not a belief I've ever heard espoused in 3HO. Quite the contrary....Yogiji uses the image of a horse drawn carriage. The body is the vehicle, the horses are the mind, the driver is the soul. Often we (in our ignorance) let the horses determine where we go, how fast, etc. Yogiji recommends the driver picking up the reins and directing the life. So in this image, the mind is recommended to be the servant of the soul, not the master of the person. If "self" in "self-denying" means "mind", maybe someone could misinterpret being subservient to the soul's directives as denial. It doesn't feel that way to me. Rather I feel more relaxed when my soul is in charge. I spent too many years with my mind and emotions in charge to believe that that brings me happiness or peace. (Letter to the author, March, 1988)

In the chapter I express some doubts concerning 3HO members' willingness to accept advice about their private lives. She viewed this phenomenon in a different light:

Yogiji answered questions for people when asked. Many of us had lost faith in our own ability to make decisions because we had made such a mess out of our lives. At those times, he would share what he saw or experienced. He sees auras, understands destiny, things like that befuddle our brains. I used to ask him questions regarding my personal life. I always found that his response fit with what I most deeply wanted. Once we had grown to the point that we recognized God as within ourselves as well as within Yogiji, we made our own decisions. Yogiji is there if we need him to answer questions, but he's also delighted to witness our maturing. (Letter, March 1988)

In the course of describing meditations that we tried in the workshops I mention what was for me a special experience of peace and pleasure. She writes: "This point of your dissertation to me is the opening of the skylight." Such experiences became for her the central purpose of life:

For myself, those experiences of the light became my #1 [sic] priority. Everything else paled in comparison...academic degrees, family acceptance, financial status, friendships. I was willing to risk everything. And now, having done that, everything else comes. (Letter, March 1988)

My request that she compare our perceptions of and trajectories through the late 1960's and early 70's proved an unexpected stumbling block. She responded by saying that she prefers not to draw comparisons or to dwell on the past because all experience is unique and only the now is real. "Analyzing and comparing ends up empty for me," she said. When pressed, however, she did suggest that her extensive experimentation with drugs was probably a

significant difference, and that it left her more "desperate" and willing to throw everything over. She also suggested differences due to astrological signs, but ours proved to be the same.

She commented on my final attitudes about selfhood by putting my position in terms of duality, certainly a fair comment, given the theme of the chapter:

There seems to be such a strong part of you that enjoys your duality...[sic] having one foot in each perception of life -- i.e. spirit being paramount vs matter-mind-emotions being paramount. Perhaps part of you believes you to be unworthy to be deeply happy. Perhaps a "safe" hold on reality as most people perceive it is safer than holding onto the invisible, unknowable, mysterious reality of the Eternal Energy. In any case, I do believe you are where you are supposed to be at this moment.
(Letter, March 1988)

The other respondent was also troubled by my duality. She suggested that I had "left a piece out," and that there are cosmologies that would not say either-or. Their goal is acceptance of reality. From this perspective, "whichever aspect of a polarity emerges, be with that, let it unfold and guide you." Meditation will take "take you to a place where you're not trying to change yourself or anything else...to just be with whatever presents itself in your life...There is detachment, but accepting, mindfully accepting."

I find her approach appealing enough to pursue it further, and agree that I am inclined to dichotomous thinking (that is one of the points of the chapter) -

although I regard this as an analytical tool, not an absolute. I still, however, maintain some of my doubts about wholistic perceptions of the world. I also think the emphasis on what Wallis would define as world-rejection is clearly present in Yogi BhaJan's lectures at the Women's Training Camp and in aspects of 3HO life, although I agree that there is much room for individual interpretation. As one respondent said, "each person in 3HO is an individual so you'd probably get as many responses as people to any given situation." Some of our disagreement probably springs from the terms I use since my respondents were not aware of Wallis' definitions or my assumption that world-rejection is only one strand of 3HO life.

CHAPTER VIII

WORKSHOPS: THE PERIPHERY

This final chapter moves to the periphery to examine one of the more world-affirming aspects of 3HO: a series of workshops for the public. The focus is on the nature of the contact at the periphery and on the attractions of 3HO for the sympathetic outsider. I also explore my own contact with the organization, looking at the interplay of biography and interpretation.

There are several reasons for this reflexive stance. (1) The workshops were designed to facilitate observation of the stream-of-consciousness and exploration of the structure of the self and its imagery. The nature of the experience is therefore best conveyed by describing personal responses. Furthermore, I was in many ways a typical participant, and my reactions and background are to some degree representative and worth exploring for this reason. (2) Qualitative research involves considerable interaction between researcher and subjects and is best understood as a joint product shaped by individuals, groups and settings. If it is to be properly evaluated relevant aspects of the researcher's cognitive patterns, emotional reactions and models of the social world must be revealed. Similarly, the reader should know something about the ways that specific relationships have shaped the research. This

chapter focuses on a particular group and on a primary informant. I focus on ways that my research was shaped by my contact with the group and with her, as well as in ways that my own psychic organization affected my selection of themes. (3) Accounts of my own reactions and background can serve to illuminate social, historical, and cultural influences that I share with 3HO members. Equally, the reader can understand 3HO members' choices through contrasts with my own. Thus, I describe ways in which I differ significantly from my informants in background and values. (4) Finally, my interests and reactions may parallel those of other academic commentators on the new Eastern religions. They may thus contribute in a small way to an understanding of the attractions and cognitive filters involved in the study of these new movements.

INTERPRETATION AND SYNTHESIS: EASTERN RELIGION AND HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

The Counselor

The point of departure is a series of workshops led by a 3HO counselor and attended by primarily non-Sikh women. The counselor was my first contact with 3HO. Now, four years later, she is no longer formally affiliated with the organization and her mode of doing therapy has altered.

When we met she did public relations work for 3HO and was always ready to point out the organization's strong points and to override my arguments when I expressed doubts

about what seemed like high-handedness on Yogi BhaJan's part, or too much submission and obedience on the part of 3HO women. Her therapy combined yoga, meditation, Psychosynthesis and Neuro-Linguistic Programming, and the focus was on personal change. She now questions the hierarchical structure of the 3HO organization and has pulled away from it, although she maintains friendships with members and does not regret her previous attachment. She still employs many of her original techniques in workshops and in therapy, but her emphasis has altered. Previously, her accounts of selfhood emphasized internal and external obstacles that blocked self-actualization. She shared the 3HO imagery. Now her approach is more world-affirming and self-accepting. There is a Buddhist element in her thinking; she is more concerned with owning and accepting the "now" and its load of experience, and with teaching her clients the gentle art of self-acceptance. As she has moved away from the organization she has left behind some of the insistence upon intentional alteration of the self. The ideal self has receded and the extant self now receives more attention and respect. She has retained her faith in the possibility of enlightenment, but expects it to come about through acceptance rather than through constant re-programming of the self.

Therapeutic Perspectives

Throughout my period of attendance (1981 - 1986), the workshops were intended to provide opportunities for intentional alteration of the self. The counselor's vision of her role was taken from Eastern philosophies and Transpersonal Psychology:

...my role...is to help them to reconnect with their own inner being, and that means helping them get in touch with those resources or those qualities that are really a part of their more high or evolved consciousness...all change really is remembering or reconnecting with that highest aspect of yourself. Everybody's got a sequence, steps, that they end up going through uncovering who they are and experiencing it fully, and there's usually layers of different fears and complexes that have to be gone through. So each person is very individual. But the thing that runs through all people, the common thread, is that all beings in the long run want to experience an unconditional love and experience a unity or a sense of connectedness with the universe. (AP 1c, 1, 1985)

In order to achieve this goal she borrowed techniques eclectically from different psychological traditions. From the Eastern and transpersonal traditions she took the premise that "we all have infinite, unlimited potential." She assumed that our thought processes are often self-limiting. We convince ourselves that we cannot do things and that we are trapped in a world that is operating according to certain rules. We create mental and emotional disturbances on the surface of the mental pond, calling forth pain and anxiety and blocking fulfillment for ourselves and others. She employed yoga and meditation to still the mind and enable the individual to break

repetitive patterns of thought and emotion. She encouraged the client to recognize that she is not her thoughts, nor any of the limited and partial selves she might believe herself to be. From a place of calm the client was then to recognize a guru within and learn to alter her own cognitive processes, and to choose her thoughts and, by extension, the emotions that are associated with particular ideas. Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) and Psychosynthesis provided techniques for locating the sources of an individual's discomfort, for defining goals and "desired states," and for altering an individual's cognitive map. Even though the therapist is now wary of too much concentration on future states, given people's tendency to live in the future and so miss much of the present, she still finds these therapies useful.

Neurolinguistic Programming

Throughout the period of my attendance, the format of a typical workshop required that participants identify a persistent feeling or behavior that they wished to change and then more precisely define "the current state and the desired state." Neurolinguistic Programming (Bandler & Grinder 1975, 1; Cameron-Bandler 1978) provided techniques for gathering information about the problem and for identifying the individual's "resources" for coping with and growing from it. There was, for example, the

"metamodel" used for questioning an individual about a problem. "Universals," "unspecified verbs," shoulds, can'ts and have-to's were broken down into, "You're angry at what?" "When can't you?" "Why should you?" Thus, the therapist attempted to define the precise conditions under which the problem arose.

NLP also provided a means for understanding an individual's "representational systems." NLP theorists hold that an individual will tend to favor either visual, auditory or kinesthetic modes of organizing experience. It is useful for the client to know her own patterns so that she can use them for her own benefit. Similarly, the therapist can most productively converse with and question the client in her dominant mode. It is not very helpful, for example, to ask a predominantly visual person how something "feels" to her, but it may be very helpful to ask her for visual images. One representational system can also be reinforced with another, so a client might want to verbally define a "desired state" and associate it with particular bodily feelings, and with colors, images, textures and sounds.

NLP is also used to identify obstacles that keep the individual from reaching the "desired state." The workshop participant was questioned about the obstacles that she believed were blocking her progress. This could be done in the language of feelings, or in images, or by asking her to

remember specific instances of difficulty. In the workshops we would often be instructed to remember a difficult situation while we were in a relaxed state after doing yoga or meditation. Then we were to ask ourselves what personal traits or needs had impeded successful resolution of that past situation. Such obstacles could then be "reframed" by seeking their "positive intent" and then, as the therapist put it, by "befriending them." Thus it might be that what the participant viewed as a tendency to be overly argumentative and aggressive could have as its positive intent a desire to see her talents and insights put to use. The positive nature of seemingly undesirable traits was to be recognized and accepted; then the participant was to ask how she might alternatively meet the needs that gave rise to them.

Identification of a desired state and of the obstacles in the way of attaining it was followed by asking what "resources" would be needed in order to reach the desired state. The argumentative person, for example, might decide that she needed the ability to speak up about her skills, or that she simply needed to have some faith that she and her talents would someday be recognized. Then, again in a meditative state, we would all imaginatively reexperience a situation in which we did have needed resources. We would identify the feeling of having the resource, find imagery for it, and maybe assign it a color or a texture. We might

"change history" by remembering a "stuck" situation and seeing and feeling ourselves experiencing it again, but this time with a "positive outcome." The idea was that both the imagery and the new and revised experience would then be available in future similar situations.

Several other SHO therapists have pursued an interest in NLP. The emphasis on imagery, on the individual's unlimited resources, on self-hypnosis, on personal change and on overcoming obstacles makes it in many ways a natural addition to the SHO therapeutic repertoire. There are potential areas of tension or contradiction, however. NLP is very specific. It does not, for example, make the assumption that the way one reacts at ladies' camp is the way one always reacts. Rather, it breaks down generalities. It also encourages a high level of individual control over behavior; the individual decides upon a specific desired state and works to achieve it. This could conceivably conflict with the SHO expectation of obedience. NLP encourages tolerance of personal limitations, something that is officially encouraged in SHO but sometimes contradicted by instructions to simply ignore or "pierce" right through them. NLP practitioners are often quite interested in Eastern concepts and certainly not likely to be averse to them, but as humanistic psychologists they are likely to favor self-expression, a "working-through" of emotions and blocks, and considerable

personal autonomy. These are values that may conflict with the more world-rejecting strands of 3HO life. 3HO practitioners are thus likely to run into some value conflicts if they are active in the NLP community. In fact, one Sikh NLP therapist faced a dramatic instance of this. One of the best-known figures in NLP had been planning to appear at one of this therapist's workshops but declared that he would not lend his support after hearing of an instance of Yogi Bhaajan's use of shaming and criticism before a large audience.

Psychosynthesis

The therapist supplemented NLP with Psychosynthesis and other transpersonal psychologies. Psychosynthesis was used for its techniques for integrating and understanding the structure of the personality, and for contacting the unconscious. The discipline was originated by an Italian, Robert Assagioli (1965), and recently has been developed and popularized by a follower, Piero Ferucci (1982).

Assagioli began with the assumption that there is a higher self, "above and unaffected by, the flow of the mind-stream or by bodily conditions; and the personal conscious self should be considered merely as its reflection" (19). Most people, he and his followers maintained, are trapped in the "mind-stream," tossed about by their emotions, perceptions, and conflicts.

Psychosynthesis is designed to remove the individual from this stream and lift her towards unity and the higher self. This requires that the individual analyze her personality and its multitude of "subpersonalities." She should probe the mind's unconscious contents and gain control over its operation, employing disciplines and techniques designed for "the discovery or creation of a unifying center" (21).

A variety of such techniques are employed. The unconscious is tapped and cleansed with "free drawing," and associative writing, by employing creative movement and by efforts to find images, colors, textures and the like for its contents. Subpersonalities and their traits and attitudes may be personified or symbolized and given shapes, names, and voices. The individual catalogues and observes the subpersonalities with their distinctive patterns of behavior. Then she is to learn to "dis-identify" with them so that she can intentionally step out of them or intentionally choose to employ them. This process is said to intensify awareness of a core self:

As long as we are identified with sensations, feelings, desires, thoughts, it is as if our sense of being were sewed onto them, and therefore they can submerge us, control us, limit our perception of the world, and block the availability of all other feelings, sensations, desires and opinions. (Ferrucci, 62)

As the center is strengthened the will must be developed: "If understood in its proper perspective, the will is, more than any other factor, the key to human

freedom and personal power" (Ferrucci, 72). Thus, Ferrucci provides a variety of exercises for strengthening the will. He assumes that with a strengthened will it should be possible to control feelings, and argues that we should not "trust our feelings indiscriminately....From the center of our being we can choose which feelings on the stage of our psyche deserve the magic spotlight of our attention." (96)

Meditation and visualization are used to improve concentration and unify the personality. Ferrucci suggests meditation on symbols of unfolding, maturation, control, and goal attainment. He also suggests that the seeker visualize an inner guru and conduct internal dialogues with this guru when decisions must be faced or when the individual feels ready for a significant change. He refers to such techniques as "coaching our unconscious," a valuable process because

Part of our unconscious is fragmented, dispersed and unpurposeful....It needs to have a rhythm and a direction communicated to it. Evocative symbols can greatly help in this task, because they tend to focalize free-floating psychological energy without repressing it....
(127)

The inner guru is to lead the individual to higher states of consciousness, to create new lines of force within the personality, and to provide access to a transpersonal realm and to self-realization. Assagioli and Ferrucci advocate a view of "life as a training school, where a series of situations tend to teach us exactly what

we need to learn." It assumes the "fundamental all-rightness of the universe" (Ferrucci, 116).

Psychosynthesis is congruent with much of what is taught in 3HO. Both systems of thought posit a need to cleanse the unconscious, unify the self, and seek transcendence. They assume the existence of a higher order and a higher self, as well as the necessity of constructing a neutral self. Each affirms the centrality of the will and approaches the emotions with some reservations. But there is a significant difference. Psychosynthesis places much emphasis on personal autonomy. The individual catalogues the self and amasses her own imagery and visions. She determines her own direction and follows her own pace and path to arrive there. While this could certainly be done within 3HO, it often happens that demands for obedience, and the imposition of organizational imagery and expectations, overwhelm or conflict with the individual's private plans and vocabulary.

World-Affirming Characteristics

The tension in 3HO between the world-affirming concept of self as guru and the more world-rejecting acceptance of external gurus, such as Yogi Bajan or the Granth Sahib, is highlighted by these therapies. Each has a following among participants in the Human Potential Movement, which is essentially world-affirming. They are thus attractive to

people on the periphery of 3HO who want to blend intuition with a rationalized and mobile lifestyle.

Both NLP and Psychosynthesis focus on cognition and imagery. Both begin with the assumption that people create limited, situated selves and then convince themselves that they must live within the confines of their creations. These traditions suggest that, in fact, there are no necessary limitations; we can alter the constructs and their accompanying emotions. In Psychosynthesis it is assumed that we can tap a vast reservoir of energy if only we can strengthen, discipline, and unify the self. Each of these traditions employs extensive imagery and self-hypnotic techniques and attempts to unite left and right brains. Both are intensely rational in their assumption that we can manage and alter ourselves. The self is something to be defined, coaxed, coached, organized, lifted and unified. It is certainly not left simply to be and feel. It is a construct, but one that is open to intuition and symbolic processes. These psychologies are likely to prove attractive to educated, thoughtful women who are embroiled in the bureaucracies and service industries of a postindustrial society. They are congruent with the more world-affirming and rationalized aspects of 3HO. An essentially optimistic, somewhat intuitive, psychological, managerial and rational frame of mind is encouraged.

Ethical behavior, joy, satisfying relationships, self-direction, even wisdom, are the goods to be attained.

Both psychologies contradict, however, some aspects of 3HO life. They may assume the need for transcendence and neutrality and will, but they do not employ confrontational methods or interrupt individual modes of evolving and unfolding in order to achieve these as happens in 3HO. Nor do they begin with the premise that the self is or has been necessarily misshapen by the culture. Psychosynthesis and NLP supply fewer rules and guidelines. They are more individualistic and more accepting of the world and they ask for less self-mortification.

PARTICIPANTS AND ISSUES

Workshop Participants

The women who attended the workshops were primarily members of the middle-class and most were employed in the knowledge and service fields. One workshop included, for example, a government project administrator, a vice president of a small publishing business, the owner of a bookstore, a journalist, a policewoman, a social worker, a property management analyst for a local jurisdiction, and myself. Another included most of this group as well as a successful poet and a doctor. A core of these people regularly attended the workshops; new and occasional participants appeared frequently. They typically learned

of the workshops through the New Age newspaper, Pathways, through 3HO-sponsored yoga classes, or through friends. Several saw the therapist privately as well as at the workshops.

Several had sampled other New Age or Human Potential programs, while some were more interested in fitness and yoga. Members had attended courses in "Psycho-Spiritual Integration," "Lifesprings," and "Progoff's Intensive Journal Workshops." Most were samplers. They were exploring spirituality and the psyche, although these were concerns that waxed and waned. Their beliefs were not always clearly formulated and were often quite open. The following quotations catch the spirit of involvement.

I've always had a latent interest in spiritual things, but it gets squashed. Other people, or something in me, says its not real. I come in and out of it. It's cycles. It was in depth for a time but I can't maintain the depth. I'm other-directed lately. I've put the spiritual stuff on the side, on the shelf for later. (AW1, 1985)

I'm just playing with it....It's just another thing that I've stumbled across. I like it better than anything else I've stumbled across...it's sort of like a journey that I started when I was twenty-two. Because I was raised in a fundamentalist religion and I dropped it the minute I got out of high school. Then I just started intellectually reading and exploring, all different world religions...I guess I was looking, even at that age, for a spiritual path.... (AW2, 6-7, 1985)

I do yoga every day. I mean absolutely every day....And I walk, and I try to meditate some. It's just my thing and I like it...the sense of peace and connectedness and that sort of thing which is coming out of the directed visualization...I don't necessarily believe....all this stuff about energy going to the chakras -- well maybe it does.... Because it's all so

new to me what I'm trying to do is not to back off and say, "hey that's crazy"...Where I'm going spiritually I'm not really sure, but I hope I'm going somewhere....It takes some growing and I've got the rest of my life, so I don't think it has to be today or tomorrow. (AW3, 4-5, 1985)

I share many of the other workshop participants' background and outlook. I am middle class and employed in a service field. I am fascinated by the psyche and by the nature of consciousness. I am both introspective and hard-working, and am able to shift readily from an internal to an external focus. My interest in things spiritual is real but is not a constant. It is more in the nature of a hobby than a major source of identity, and it is laced with doubt and skepticism.

Workshop Themes

Although self-revelation was always voluntary, over time group members learned about one another's issues and even something about one another's patterns of thinking and imagining. The themes that emerged were typically world-affirming. They were also consonant with the modern tensions that have been highlighted in this paper since members were concerned about the relation of public and private selves, about acting too much on the basis of either will or intuition, and about expressing the essence of the self through its various social forms. Often participants were concerned about balance. They worried

about maintaining a sense of self and self-control in the midst of emotional difficulties and pressures at work, or simply about finding a lifestyle that provided a satisfying balance of security and challenge, work and play. Thus one participant who had struggled with poverty throughout her childhood and then had functioned successfully as a single mother had recently remarried and now feared that her new security removed the challenge and excitement from life. Another worried about maintaining her own rhythms and sense of calm in the face of her husband's high pressure, hard-working lifestyle. I spoke of wanting to feel less constrained, "more myself" in organizational settings since it appeared that, like it or not, I was going to have to work within them, a concern that evoked nods of agreement when I expressed it. Another woman spoke of trying to balance her feeling for things spiritual with the rather tough lifestyles of her friends and workmates. All seemed to have a sense of a self with its distinctive rhythms, tensions, needs, qualities, and tastes, but one that struggled for expression. Its nature was often threatened, in danger of eclipse, of being ignored, or even of being violated. All wanted to root this self more deeply, and to both project and protect it.

There was no talk of social change. This was not a group that believed that social change was necessary in order for the self to be expressed and enhanced. To borrow

from 3HO terminology, there seemed to be far more concern with empowering, adapting or disciplining the self than with altering its environments. This did not indicate a liking for the status quo, however, so much as a preference for focusing primarily on the self and on the spiritual realm. The survival, strengthening and evolution of a spiritual self was the primary goal, and it was to be attained in as peaceable and caring a way as possible. The social structure seemed to be taken as a given framework, whether or not it was a particularly ethical or likeable one. The women wanted to uphold some of the conventionally feminine virtues -- love, intuition, expressivity, friendship, poise -- and yet to participate meaningfully in the economic structure, increase their personal autonomy and gain greater satisfaction from their lives. They thus fit Wallis' description of world-affirmers, but their approach had some distinctively feminine elements. I shared the concern with balance and with enhancement and nourishment of the self, but my world view was more political, critical, and feminist than most group members' appeared to be.

The Workshops and the "Female System"

From my more feminist perspective, participants' sense of a self that was easily obscured or "uncentered" reflected the not uncommon feminine experience of being

devalued and of finding womanly values and perspectives overridden. I saw it as the product of being expected to place others' needs before one's own and of living in an environment that is dominated by often uncongenial styles of interaction and organization. I also tended to view our search for balance as a social product. I saw it as the result of tensions in the social structure. I also saw it as a response to the contradictions inherent in highly rationalized service employment, for this requires both intuition and self-management, identification with others and defense and elaboration of the ego. We were responding to the demands of our place in the social structure and to changing gender expectations, while seeking to redefine ourselves. I was more critical of the rationalization process and wondered about internalizing it in the form of a willed and intentionally created self -- even as I proceeded to create such a self.

I tended to view the creation of the workshop groups, in fact, as an effort to create a special women's place. The group had many of the earmarks of traditional women's groupings, as well as some distinctively modern traits. Bernard (1981) suggests that the "female world" has long been characterized by its *Gemeinschaft* nature, the tendency to be a "kin- and locale-based world"; by its integrative qualities; and by an emphasis upon trust, loyalty, association, and identity. It is, she writes,

"characterized by its love-and/or-duty ethos" (29). She uses "love" in a very broad sense to include romantic love, friendship, philanthropy and humanitarianism. Duty implies concepts of obligation, sacrifice, and responsibility for the quality of the human relationships around the self. These are themes that came up regularly in the workshops. There was much discussion of children's needs, and of maintaining and improving human ties. The women were quick to criticize themselves for not being sufficiently loving or patient, and spoke of wanting to give and experience more warmth and support.

There was recognition of and involvement in the traditional female world, but this was balanced by members' interest in the public sphere and by an awareness of the potential costs of the traditional female values. Workshop participants clearly did not want the servility or the sense of powerlessness that can go with the ethos, nor the guilt. As Bernard puts it,

...Women have so many -- sometimes cross-cutting -- obligations, responsibilities, and loyalties that no matter what they do there is plenty of room for guilt. They should have done more. Guilt...is the inexorable flip side of the love-and/or duty ethos. (503)

The focus in the workshops was on feeling empowered and finding the resources to do what could be done. The therapist's intent was clearly to avoid that guilt. Nonetheless, feminine guilt and responsibility seemed to creep in. Members were always trying to better themselves;

the basic assumption was that the self had to be changed. Further, one of the therapist's premises was that one changes a situation by changing oneself. This can certainly be an appropriate approach, but it can conceivably burden the individual with a feeling of responsibility for problems beyond her control.

Premises often seemed to shift from traditional to modern, and this shifting probably reflected members' struggles to unite often conflicting belief systems and perspectives. On the whole, the group seemed to use the language of spirituality in an effort to construct a modern version of the female world. It was one in which expressivity, understanding, encouragement, egalitarian relationships, responsibility, love, sharing, mutuality and spirituality are still central, but autonomy and participation in all sectors of the society are taken for granted.

Schaeff (1981), in an admittedly impressionistic work, suggests that a new "female system" is emerging. Its ethos favors intuitive and wide-ranging cognition, egalitarian modes of organization, non-directive leadership, intimacy, sharing, loosely interpreted and flexible rules, and, most importantly, in its contemporary form:

This Female System includes a relationship with the self -- something that was never present in our earlier concept of the female system. Self-awareness and focusing on the needs of the self are not the same as selfishness....The essence of self-awareness is a tenderness toward and respect for

the self which in turn allows one to be more tender and respectful toward others. (112)

Such self-acceptance, she suggests, is often attained only after following a long and circuitous path, and to reach it a woman often goes through a predictable series of stages. First she expects her relationships with men to provide identity and self-esteem. When a woman realizes that this isn't going to work, she enters the next stage and embarks on a life within the "White Male System." Work and achievement may become the center of life. "We become 'selfish'...and start to put our own needs first. We devote a great deal of time, energy and money to the process of self-discovery and the realization of our creativity.... Relationships become less important to us" (111). Once, however, the woman feels she has "made it" she looks around and wonders if this is all there is. She begins to move back into the "Female System," but on new terms:

The essence of life in the Female System a woman comes home to is relationships -- not relationships that define and validate, but relationships with the self, one's work, others, and the universe that nurture and grow....She begins to have an understanding of how it all fits together and a feeling that life has true meaning. She sees herself and others in relation to the whole. (113)

While this may well be a definition of ideal maturity for both sexes, and Schaeff makes no claim to scientific samples, her stages are suggestive. The workshops do seem to represent an effort on the part of some participants to

move into Schaeff's final stage and, for those in the second stage, to maintain some awareness of alternative values and modes of interaction. The workshop ideal was a productive relationship with the self and an awareness of the place of the self in the larger whole. The leader herself has moved from the 3HO system which was originated by a man, one that is hierarchical and in some ways self-denying, to her own world of women's therapy in which self-acceptance and self-nurturance, and relationships are primary. Similarly, I am sure that this paper is colored by my sense of having finally established sufficient confidence, security, and credentials to be able to evaluate where I have been and how I want to blend the "white male" and "female systems."

PERSONAL AND CULTURAL CONFLICT: MY RESPONSES

The Voyage In Is The Voyage Out? Author And Organization.

As previously mentioned, Tantric lore suggests that the self is a microcosm, that it is continuous with universal forces. It would be in keeping with this tradition to suggest that the cognitive structures and images that were uncovered in the course of the workshops were representative of more general mental processes or that they gave shape to or overlay more universal tendencies. From this perspective the workshops provided more than mere self-knowledge.

From a sociological perspective their generalizability and significance is less clear-cut. It is difficult to assess the prevalence of the themes, images, and motives that preoccupied us. Certainly these were shaped by the structure of the workshops and by the traditions on which the workshops were based. To at least some degree they also reflected member's pre-existing interests and concerns. On some occasions members were discussing and working with concepts and issues that were already important to them. On others, they were sampling what was offered.

Certainly we were often concerned with the socio-cultural strains that have been discussed in this paper, and with the tendency of the mind to arrange facts in dualities. We discussed the relative weight we assigned to intuition and imagination on the one hand and to analysis and will on the other. Additionally, the structure of the workshops required that we shift from imaginative to more analytic exercises, a shift that most of us could make with relative ease. We took imaginative journeys into outer space, into our own brains, and to mountain peaks where we met with imagined gurus. We also decided how to use these experiences in the future so as to intentionally change our feelings, attitudes, or behaviors. We regularly shifted from imagination to analysis -- from willed imagining, to absorption in fantasy, to analysis of it, and to plans for

willfully recreating the imagery in the future. We similarly shifted from self-extension to individuation. We shared ideas and chanted in unison until the self no longer seemed to be a separate entity. This was balanced by concentration on our own individual issues and modes of perception. Both transcendent and situated accounts of the self were incorporated. The goal was to move closer to the universal, transcendent self. This was to be achieved by first understanding the nature of the limited and contingent self and then altering and broadening it. We shifted from consideration of individual goals to the experience of alternative states of consciousness. The public/private opposition also colored our discussions. Several individuals felt they were much more successful in one of these spheres or that their energy was directed primarily towards one arena rather than the other.

These themes are further developed in the following scenes from three different workshops. So also are my own reactions.

Scenes From The Workshops

We settle in the therapist's living room. We all sit cross-legged on a rug, backs against pillows or the wall, a collage of vari-colored warm-up suits in a beige room. We chatter until the group leader arrives and strums on her

guitar, and then join her in chanting Ong Namu Guru Dev Namu. She introduces her theme:

A couple of years ago at women's camp several of us got to talking about our relationships and the things that interfere with them having the depth, the quality, and the intimacy that we desired. And we all finally came to the conclusion that it was something within ourselves that interfered: our self-dislike or distrust. (Aug. 26, 1984, 1)

The subject of the day's workshop, she says, will be, "having a love affair with yourself." Journeys inward and outward are identical, she begins. To find beauty outside the self is to find it within, and to perceive it within is to see and spread it without.

We do a series of yoga exercises and then we are asked to say to ourselves, "I love myself." How, we are asked, does that feel? How does the "I" feel? The "myself"? Which do we like best? People differ. Some perceive the "I" as bigger, essential; others the "myself." One person divides them into a disciplinarian parent and a playful, fun-loving child, another into an eternal, essential "myself" and a series of "I's" that take the forms necessary in order to deal with others and with reality. I have a formless, central "I" and "myselfes" that are peripheral, changing, and the source of information and sustenance for the "I."

Next we break into pairs and are told to remember and examine periods when we have felt considerable self-love, as well as times when we have felt little. My partner and

I bring in the "I's" and "myselfes." She talks about her difficulty making decisions, how the two parts enter into warfare, and about her need for a coach to get them to work together. I talk about my need for a balanced activity level: too few challenges or activities and life seem grey and my self-esteem goes down, too much activity and I get stranded on the periphery, feeling estranged from the "I." My life, I say, often seems to be an alternation between the two: between feeling I must be totally independent, always learning, absorbing and working or I will "thin-out," and feeling that I simply want to retreat, relax, and "just be." If my partner is divided between "parent" and "child" aspects, I am divided into utilitarian and Romantic aspects.

Then we are to talk about what we would need to know, or what resources we would need to have, in order to still the conflict between the parts. The therapist drops in on the two of us and helps us along. I close my eyes and concentrate when she tells me to, and have what seems to be an insight -- that I would need to know that there is always sufficient energy available to me. I need to know that if I relax my mind will not empty and I will not become permanently dependent, and that if I am busy and extroverted it is always possible to relax and get recharged. She tells me to "meditate on how that feels," and on situations in which I felt that energy available.

Then she has me imagine new energy coming to me on every breath. I'm resistant, since I don't really believe the energy is available. Jokingly, as though prescribing a medication, she tells me I should meditate on the breath and the energy it brings every day for half an hour.

We return to the group to do more yoga and then, when we are in a very relaxed state, we are told to recapture a situation when we had the needed resource. We are to reexperience it, and imagine we hold it -- radiant -- between our palms. Then we break for lunch and a swim before we begin the afternoon session. I find I am torn between different world views. Clearly I subscribe to a utilitarian version of reality which pits the ego against a recalcitrant reality and a world of limited opportunities and resources. In this model, the self is to be driven to achieve, shaped to survive, and must always be self-protective. Equally, I would like to believe in a more beneficent order, in which one can trust to forces beyond the ego.

* * * * *

Six of us settle in on a January evening after some talk and drinking of yogi tea. Tonight's topic is "polarities." This is something that she has been working on with clients says the leader; they often seem to

experience life as dualities. She asks for examples and they are rapidly forthcoming. One woman opposes duty and practicality on one hand to joy and spontaneity on the other. I come up with a similar theme, opposing the exercise of will and self-discipline to a stance of relaxing, letting life happen, and generally "going with the flow." Another participant builds on this and says she constantly fails to exert her will and capacity for decision-making because she fears that she would then be responsible for the results of her decisions. Another opposes periods of calm and tranquility to those spent smoldering with anger, while another opposes spirituality and practicality. It is clear that we have built on one another's themes. Suggestion is operating and the workshop could have moved in another direction entirely, but the intuitive/rational, public/private split is certainly evident.

The workshop leader then asks us to come up with examples of situations in which each of the poles might be desirable. She points out that life is not really a matter of either-or, that all traits can be valuable, and that individuals can blend the traits rather than choosing one or the other. Then she leads us in an exercise in guided imagery intended to help us synthesize the opposing parts. We are to imagine three cities: one in which everybody has the trait that we regard as negative; one run solely on the

polar alternative; and, finally, one that blends the best of both. We are to imagine what they would look like, what the people would be doing, what the architectural style would be, and so on.

At first I have trouble with this one, but then I see a town of buff-colored, adobe, low-lying houses, carefully spaced, surrounded by brick walks and revealing the occasional touch of green. It is very orderly and attractive and people are purposeful, energetic, and well-dressed as they go about their business. Conversation is lively and enjoyable. But nobody understands what you mean if you want to talk about a feeling or an intuition, and there are no spontaneous acts. The other town is set on a river. Small houses blend with green hills and are hardly visible as they merge with the landscape. Children are everywhere and people wander and talk and make paintings together, although they don't bother to hang them. Things often go unfinished and get messy, but people are happy and friendly. The third city is divided into sectors with many bridges and passageways going from one section to the other.

When we "share" our imaginative cities, someone points out that I haven't really created a blend in my third city. I have just placed aspects in proximity. The leader decides on the spur of the moment to add an exercise. It is to lead to what she calls "releasing anchors." She uses

work and play as polarities. We are all to imagine our right hands filled with work associations, both positive and negative, and our left hands filled with similar play associations. We shake out each hand and then raise both arms above our heads, palms to the ceiling. We are to keep shifting our attention from right hand to left, from a work trait to a play trait and back again. After a time we bring the palms together and down and concentrate on the self as greater than any divisions.

Then we do a yoga set and follow that with a period of relaxation to the accompaniment of a gong. After a long and deep rest we sit up and recite a chant that is supposed to unite cognitive polarities. Then we extend our arms outward and concentrate on the arms and palms and finally raise them, imagining an aura spreading from the palms and encircling the self. Next we are to bring our arms down and sit quietly, breathing slowly and visualizing the self as if it were surrounded by light. We are to slowly become aware of the self as a source of wisdom and to experience it as greater than any of its parts. We are to think of it as a piece of a beautiful universe. I work at visualizing endless space and my connection to it. As with most such exercises, I feel both pleasure and self consciousness. Soon, I see a door opening into space, stars scattered in the dark and light pouring in, and myself a glowing shape touched by the light as it enters. This is one of the

nicest moments I experience in five years of workshops. I am convinced that the light that is pouring into this room is benign and that whatever is out there is good; I feel an enormous longing for it and peace because it is there. I am not accustomed to trusting and believing, but I do so now, totally.

* * * * *

In this final example, the "love and duty ethos" looms large, as does the issue of duality. Direct quotations are intended to provide a sense of the leader's perspective and the tone of the workshops.

Ok, tonight we're going to be doing some of the most powerful yoga that I've run into that works on opening up the heart chakra. So I consider this a special night. I figure with the full moon coming as it is we'll go straight for the real yogic element and we'll do a little bit of talking because I'd like you to focus on a few things beforehand....I have a woman that I'm working with....and it wasn't that she felt the potential for love wasn't there, but somehow or other she and her husband got into this routine day after day of acting and interacting in a way that she felt it was a real shallow relationship, and its like she can't stand to live her life without some sense of fullness. And the thing that most amazes her is that she's in the people-helping professions and she's amazed that she can go and have somebody come as a client and be working with them....and she can feel so linked on heart-center-type-level that, you know, they can almost cry together and she just feels tremendous compassion and empathy - she's a very caring person. She has terrific ability to put herself in another person's role and so on, but come the evening, come the husband coming into the house, all this tremendous empathic feeling and compassion and love collapses, shatters,

disappears, evaporates, and vanishes....And what's been a real breakthrough for her in the last two weeks is she's starting to do a meditation that is literally designed to open up the heart center.... and then when he comes home she uses the same mantra and it helps to reconnect her with that feeling and helps her to pierce through or let go of some of her fears so its been a real breakthrough. So what I thought would be interesting just to start off is get into pairs and just review, tell your partner, in the last month, two months, whatever, what stands out as maybe the two or three experiences you've had with anybody that most reflect loving qualities...where you felt real loving and open. And two or three experiences where you felt really shut down.... What I'd like you to do is just close your eyes for a second, and now that you've talked them out, just pick one that is poignant on either side of the coin. And first taking the one where you felt unable to feel loving in some way or you felt shut down and just imagine the situation, visualize it, and use all the senses....Let's call this experience A. And then, sit up tall, inhale shake your hands a little. And now go on to situation B....(tape, May 2, 1985)

She has us rapidly alternate from A to B, and then we examine and discuss what we learned from shifting states. This is followed by a Kundalini yoga set intended to "open the heart center," by the chanting of mantras, and finally by a relaxation period. The intention is to increase our understanding of our emotional patterns and to free us from them.

In each of these workshops the love and duty aspects of the female system loomed large. So did the issue of "polarities" and attempts to overcome these. Many participants opposed will and flow, planning and evolution, emotionality and rationality, and bureaucracy and private life. They found that they could associate concepts and

feelings with colors and places and textures. When I asked, most said that while they did not self-consciously apply what they had learned in the workshops to their everyday lives, they did find themselves recalling specific images, observing their own behavior more than they had previously, and felt that they had gained some control over emotions and behavior.

It should also be evident that I uncovered in my own psyche many of the tensions and contradictions that I attribute to 3HO and to the larger culture. The status of my insights is ambiguous, certainly. Some of my themes and images had emerged in workshops I attended years previously, so not all were evoked by my attendance at these sessions or by my contact with 3HO. Thus, there may be an element of projection in the dichotomies and themes that I describe. Being internally divided I may have been predisposed to accept theories about sociocultural oppositions. Personal and academic modes of accounting may have overlapped and blended. Alternatively, various macro-processes and culturally-approved forms of accounting may have shaped my mental processes. My self may reflect the social structure, and the themes I emphasize may accurately reflect the historical and social settings to which both I and other participants in New Age groups have been exposed. Probably all of these factors are involved, for self, setting, product and circumstance are entwined. I would

not necessarily agree with the therapist who conducted the workshops and argue that to look into the self is also to look outwards. I do not think that macro and micro worlds are mirror images of each other, but each certainly is filtered through the other.

Biography and Social Structure

An understanding of my background and position in the social structure should prove helpful. It can illuminate points where my experience and thinking overlap with those of 3HO members and other workshop participants, and points where our experiences diverge. Our trajectories through the 1960's and 70's are particularly significant since this was the period in which the counterculture and new religious movements were born.

Norman Mailer (1968) dramatically evokes the presence of many of the tensions I have discussed during the 1960's, referring to them as the "fire and ice" of American life. Portraying the 1968 Republican convention and the "siege" of the Democratic convention in Chicago, he posits a distinctive form of national schizophrenia. Miami is his symbol for one-half of the split personality: the "ice" with its ascetic, buttoned-down, orderly, hard-working and unimaginative delegates -- an extreme form of the sociologist's utilitarian and institutional selves. Chicago, on the other hand, symbolizes the instinctive life

and the irrational, impulsive, and Romantic strain in American life, as well as the potential violence inherent in these. Miami is superego to Chicago's id:

The Miami delegates were the clean, the brisk, the orderly, the efficient...in their immaculate cleanliness, in the somewhat antiseptic odors of their astringent toilet water and perfume, in the abnegation of their walks, in the heavy studied moves so many demonstrated of bodies in life's harness.... (35)

Chicago, "was a town where nobody could ever forget how the money was made. It was picked up from floors still slippery with blood" (89). Chicago is impulse, sensation, greed; it is "simple, strong, warm-spirited, sly, rough, compassionate" (86).

Mailer's American society is a fragile set of contradictions, and modern man a "natural schizophrenic." The country generally manages to work in spite of its schizoid quality. But the sixties, says Mailer, threatened the perilous balance until "at different heats, the oils of separate psyches were loosened -- different good Americans began to fry." (188) The counterculture and the new religious movements grew out of this environment, and responded to the heated oils.

There were also those social critics who, unlike Mailer, thought that rationality, materialism and technocracy had consumed American life, that schizophrenia would be healthier than the subliminal manipulation they perceived. As Roszak put it:

the regime of experts...while possessing ample power to coerce...prefers to charm conformity from us by exploiting our deep-seated commitment to the scientific world-view and by manipulating the securities and creature comforts of the industrial affluence which science has given us....As it approaches maturity, the technocracy does indeed seem capable of anabolizing every form of discontent into its system. (Roszak 1969, 9-14)

Those who felt that the ground for opposition was being eroded actively sought to re-introduce a dialectic into the one-dimensional society (Marcuse 1964), and their tactic was to look to libido, to the "visionary imagination" and to the intuitive self. So they also set up an opposition between rational and romantic, practical and transcendent, analytic and intuitive spheres. These oppositions were crucial to the intellectual currents of the time, inescapable for thoughtful rebels and experimenters. Any organization that sought to offer relief from the stresses of the period and to put a meaningful construction on its events had to address these contradictions, and one, like 3HO, that offered a middle ground had to straddle them. Certainly it is not surprising that I, and many 3HO members should also have internalized such tensions.

The sense of a self divided and the need for some organizing principle, was only heightened by the competing ideologies of the times. I, for example, remember feeling almost comically boxed-in by them. Opportunities for experimentation were balanced by almost limitless possibilities for "selling out." The choices sometimes

seemed to boil down to mindless acceptance of one particular movement or constant maneuvering through mine fields of ideology. As a sometimes sympathizer with the New Left I looked to a future in which I could never work for a major organization, since it would have suspect investment and hiring policies, and, if I were really dedicated, my personal life would always come second to the "cause" -- a proposition I did not like at all. I would always be one of a weak but determined minority standing up against big business, big weapons and the machine mentality. But then, as a sometimes sympathizer with the Hippies, and having been painted with a broad Romantic streak, I could also try to explore my consciousness through drugs, try to live a communal lifestyle, treat life as an experiment and accept that there might be no lasting attachments -- just honesty, and evolution, and life on the open road. A lot of that was appealing, but the costs were high and I had considerable doubts about treating a life as an experiment. That, of course, made me bourgeois and utilitarian, and there was always the threat of the conventional bourgeois life and of becoming the kind of woman who lives through others and is slowly effaced by children and marriage. As a firm believer in the women's movement I knew that I should avoid that; probably I should avoid marriage and children entirely -- that would be safest. There was academia, of course, but that would

probably destroy my intuition and spontaneity and turn me into an unimaginative pedant. And if all this weren't enough to make me doubt the possibility of leading an ethical or fulfilling life, there were plenty of opportunities to feel guilty for living in a country that was waging war in Vietnam and exporting weapons to much of the world, or for being white and middle class. At times I had a sense of being almost overwhelmed by the policies of an impersonal, war-waging government and by a fear that there were no niches for someone like myself who, however hard-working, intelligent, practical and even ambitious I was, disliked materialism and competition, believed more in the reality of an impulsive than an institutional self, and found the economic system wasteful and exploitive and likely to turn its employees into productive robots. Where was an achieving Romantic to go, I wondered. All I was sure I could really believe in was friendship and caring, and reform efforts directed at improving educational opportunities and alleviating poverty. And the money for the latter was soon to dry up. It is understandable that I, and others, felt the need of a more positive and open belief system. It is equally understandable that a leader of a new religion and his followers should both incorporate such divisions into their thinking and seek more accepting and world-accommodating modes of assessing behavior.

Like the therapist who conducted the workshops, I issue from an upper-middle class family. We both participated in the women's movement. She was also active in rent strikes; I worked for an Anti-Poverty program. We are now both pursuing PhD's. Like many 3HO members, I navigated between a humanistic, educated family and the seeming insensitivity and superficiality of a mass society. I grew up with the ethos of "cool" and super-rationality and longed for a richer symbolic environment and for evidence of compassion and intuition. I was aware of being "different" and bored by most of the conventions that occupied people. I was idealistic and angry at the pettiness and lack of imagination that I saw around me. Thus, there were good social reasons for me to encounter 3HO, considerable overlap with members' backgrounds and attitudes, and good reasons for me to share in some of the members' impulses and imagery.

But there are significant differences. I am about five years older than most of the 3HO women and thus was raised in less social upheaval; full-scale rebellion had not yet entered the high school when I was there. I was also lucky enough to attend an excellent private college where everyone had been "different" in high school and where informed social criticism was a tradition. I could find roots for my discontent, a setting where I belonged. I am also a feminist, far too much of a feminist to accept a

masculine definition of womanhood. In short, I have been able to find grounding for my sense of self in existing institutions and traditions. I also, of course, maintain a sociological perspective, something which many 3HO members do not possess, and am too much of a sociologist to stop analyzing the social factors behind beliefs or not to stand back and see any organization as a type and my own reactions as in some way typical and structurally determined. I have looked for areas of shared experience and belief, and there are many, but my world view differs significantly from that of many 3HO members.

I wound-up marrying and going to England with my husband where we stayed for six years. I worked for awhile as a secretary and hated it, had a son, completed a Masters degree in Anthropology, and began to teach. I grew up and saw enough of other countries to realize that America certainly did not have a monopoly on poverty, insensitivity, racism or any other evils, and was at least lucky enough to have the resources to do something about many of its ills. I allowed myself time for a private life away from the cauldron of American politics, and never followed the crowd to San Francisco. I was ambivalent about that, felt particularly that I should have had a go at communal living or have done something "more activist." Part of me hankered for drama and causes and action and upheaval; part for time away from all of that and

comparative peace in which to let my own priorities unfold, to find out who I might be apart from all those formulas and tensions. I have no difficulty understanding the appeal of 3HO which offered calm, stability, and priorities in the middle of it all.

I wound up, like many humanists and many 3HO members, adapting to the recessions of the 1970's, devoting much time to survival and child-rearing, and took what I could get in the way of employment. In time I came to the conclusion that I was too inward-looking, too much of a believer in the impulsive self. If I was to use my talents constructively, and simply garner enough intellectual and spiritual nourishment, I would have to become more outer-directed and more willing to act out and try to believe in institutional roles. I decided to become more concerned with surfaces and structures and forms and what they have to offer. I developed a more rationalized and institutional self. Of course I wondered if I were "selling out." I found that the more humanistic and interdisciplinary academic enclaves were among the few institutional structures that I trusted and could allow to shape my understanding. I could take satisfaction in observing the ways that we create and are created by our social worlds and in understanding the mix of creativity and repression that mark social institutions. I enjoyed developing an overview of society as webs of insight and

delusion, earnest effort and deception, valuable actions and absurd acts of self deception and self-presentation. So I developed my own version of maya. My solution, to the extent that I have one, has been disciplined participation and a search for institutions that are not essentially compromised. I have even pursued external goals, enjoyed spending money on clothing and entertainment, and become far more committed to my professional role. Still I maintain some distrust of success and belonging, and of over-identification with roles, statuses, and ideologies. I can shift readily from utilitarian to Romantic perspectives, and I can accept a kind of hopeful, even energetic, ambivalence.

This is evidently not uncommon. Yinger concludes that people touched by the counterculture remain divided and ambivalent years later:

...what seems to me the most crucial aspect of countercultural participation is heightened ambivalence. Old conflicts and antipathies do not disappear; they are seen in a new light. Utopian dreams fade, but in the new, more complicated light reality doesn't take their place as the promised land. Sadness over goals not attained is often blended with a chastened activism for goals still to be won. Through the range of effects we see a common element, a confirmation of "generational theory": The major experiences of early adulthood are decisive in shaping the issues that dominate a person's life. These become, of course, not simply personal issues but social issues.... (1982, 303)

Similarly, Tipton in his conclusion suggests that the conflicts and tensions of the sixties are largely

unresolved and the need for synthesis and re-thinking pressing:

...If we inquire into our own moral views as we have into the views of sixties youth in alternative religious movements, will we find traditional answers still clear and powerful? If so, then the voices we have heard here may sound curiously confused, the lives we have glimpsed may seem odd or obscure. But if instead we find ourselves unsure of what to go by, unmoved by our received ideas and symbols, and uneasy in the world around us, what then? Then we cease to be observers safely watching others search to get saved from the sixties. Eager or unwilling, we have already joined them in a cultural drama where their efforts to renew tradition or transform it offers us cues. Whether we take their examples as paths to follow or avoid, possibilities to test, or puzzles to solve, the answers they give us about how we should live cannot simply be dismissed. For the questions are our own. (1982, 281)

This paper is a set of accounts that reflects my idiosyncratic modes of describing the world and my distinctive interpretation of the 1960's. It reflects my academic biography and social placement and my political convictions. An NLP practitioner would probably describe me as visual and kinesthetic, and my preference for describing and visualizing a society as a set of tensions may reflect these predispositions. I think of society as tensions and tugs and visualize it as a set of balances.

There are also structural reasons for this approach. My experience spans rational and countercultural settings. I grew up in the quietism of the 50's and the activism of the 60's, with the conventional female roles of the 50's and the women's movement of the 60's. I grew up with an

Irish Catholic mother who had little time for the work ethic and a hard-working Protestant father. I am currently in an American Studies Department that combines the humanities and the social sciences -- the symbolic and the factual. My first introduction to the social sciences was structural and symbolic; later I learned about conflict theory and interpretive sociology, and I still tend to assign priority to structural and symbolic elements. I have been exposed to both sides of each of the socio-cultural tensions.

I also do this, however, for ideological reasons. Like Marcuse and other of the critical theorists I fear the decline of cultural tensions and am impressed by the necessity of dialectic. Thus I look for it and report it. I don't share the 60's critics' inflated expectations for non-rational modes of thought but I do share their sense of a need for opposition, for a toe-hold for critical thought.

Unlike the therapist, I am not certain that I would want an integrated self, or think that such a self could be sufficiently open to experience. I rather like the texture and the complexity of my own internal contradictions and of the diverse selves I can draw upon in different situations.

This paper is thus my own situated account of 3HO, prepared for academic purposes, and it cannot be identical with a member's perspective. It is a unique account, as is each member's. It also, however, reflects members'

stories, my exposure to the organization and its "technology," and historical influences shared with 3HO members. It grows from a point of intersection and common ground.

3HO, Women's Issues, and My Response

Most of my ambivalence about the organization has centered on the tension between my own Romantic and rational selves and around an issue that has absorbed feminists of late: whether feminism should aim for a fairly androgynous vision of the sexes and for women's full participation in all spheres of life, with a focus on basic bread and butter issues, or whether it should instead focus more on women's supposedly distinctive and higher qualities. The latter strategy calls for the creation of separate women's organizations and a woman's culture.

3HO women have chosen a separate feminine reality, and it seems to me that their choice highlights the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. It can be empowering and can lead to self-acceptance. It is an important ethical choice that allows for the cultivation of old-fashioned and important values and may add to the general level of kindness, decency, compassion, and hospitality -- obviously no small contribution. It may lead to social and cultural innovation as women feel free to listen to their own inner

voices and create lives they consider meaningful, whether or not they fit accepted patterns.

There is, of course, a potential price to be paid for this. Historically women have been placed on pedestals, consigned to the essentially symbolic sphere, and then successfully ignored, exploited or confined. As one writer describes the Indian situation:

Women have been attributed a second nature and glorified for their unique capacity for patience, for suffering, for unselfishness and the ability to submerge their personality for the common good of the family.

Women, however, have been glorified for the wrong reasons -- to perpetuate their suppression and elevate the hold of the patriarchal society. (Bhasin 1972, 13)

The effects in 3HO are uneven, but I have no doubt that in many cases the gender ideology has been used to manage women. Women who have legitimate doubts about organizational policy have been led to believe that their doubts indicate something radically wrong with their spiritual lives and their approach to gender. Yogi Bhasin dismisses what may be justifiable resentment and anger as "nagging and bitching," just as men have called women names over the centuries whenever they become too uppity. He disregards women's hard-won right to "control their bodies" when he tells them when to have, or not to have, children. All of this reflects a traditional, Indian ethic, but I am dubious that the Eastern approach to undermining ego is even appropriate to women whose patterns of evolution and decision-making are so different from men's. If anything,

women require opportunities to sample the world and build ego, as Schaeff suggests.

This brings me to what I think is the nexus of my own ambivalence. I have clearly invested in the rational, "male system," and one of my reasons for doing so has been my feeling that a decision in favor of the gentler, "female" virtues is, given the nature of the world, likely to impede growth and lead to exploitation. It is my way of protecting talents and self-esteem and avoiding manipulation. A great deal of what I have seen in 3HO has hardened my position and convinced me that the reform route is the right one, that talk of women's special qualities and women's appropriation of a separate sphere is likely to be followed by exploitation. But it has also forced me to look more closely at the nature of my choice. There is much else that goes with a rational, scientific world view, including skepticism and disbelief. I cannot believe that "the universe," as 3HO members familiarly call it, is necessarily friendly; it may house frightening reservoirs of energy and great voids. Nor do I see the world, as postulated by Psychosynthesis, as having an "essential rightness." I am often too impressed by poverty, disease, torture and pollution to perceive a basic goodness. Just as I cannot let down my guard and freely cultivate the "feminine" virtues, I cannot relax and trust my setting. From a 3HO or New Age perspective I have bought into a

"zero sum," materialistic view of life which makes it impossible for me to be what I might be. Trapped in a rationalistic, limited, cognitive map I am unlikely to give freely and intuitively, to thoroughly trust my own and others' resources.

I am not sure what I make of this argument. I think skepticism, or at least caution, an unintegrated and somewhat divided self, and a willingness to balance intuition and intellect are good humanist values -- and I am willing enough to remain a "secular humanist." I do not always like the level of distrust and the energy that I put into maintaining skepticism and seeing all sides of issues, but I am still the balancer, still convinced that that is more honorable than simple faith. I cannot simply choose to believe something because it might make me happier, and I cannot join 3HO members in experimenting so freely with my identity and my thought processes. I can and do believe in some natural internal healing process, and in the validity of contacting and directing the unconscious. That puts me properly on the periphery of 3HO, divided, a sampler of the wares available in a complex society, and still looking for a women's place.

CONCLUSION

An Eastern teacher will often give his students a koan to meditate upon. This unanswerable question or paradox is to become a focal point of the student's thinking and meditation. As Ornstein portrays its purpose:

The koan becomes a meditation object, day and night, a constant and compelling focusing of awareness on a single source. The lack of a rational, logical solution forces the student to go through and to discard all verbal associations, all thoughts, all solutions -- the left-hemisphere activity usually evoked by a question. He is then forced by the nature of the question itself to approach the condition known as one-pointedness-- concentrating solely on one thing: the unanswerable koan. It is an attempt actively to destructure the ordinary lineal mode of consciousness. (1977, 162-163)

Often, I found that studying 3HO resembled meditation upon a koan. The organization originally appeared to me as a pattern of paradoxes and unreconcilable contrasts. Every trait seemed to be countered by its opposite and every fact offset by another. Often there appeared to be a gap between what people said and what they appeared to feel and know. Members were articulate and helpful, but their replies to my questions were often self-conscious, controlled, and limited to specific areas. 3HO's purposes and goals were clearly presented in public statements and in official publications, but attempts to penetrate more deeply into its day-by-day realities and into members' actual interpretations and compromises were often

frustrated. The nature and meaning of the organization often seemed as opaque as the meaning of a koan, and often the questions I posed to myself proved unanswerable or meaningless. I was forced to concentrate long and hard and to examine my own ways of knowing and judging.

Efforts to categorize the organization often proved unsuccessful. Terms like cult and sect were not particularly revealing. My desire to assess whether the organization was beneficial to its women members soon appeared naive. By what standards was I to judge? I could apply utilitarian standards and assess members' opportunities to accumulate quantifiable goods, or I could apply a calculus of pleasure and pain. I could take a functionalist perspective and ask how the organization helped members to adapt to a rationalized economy. I could use the standards of feminism and look for opportunities to gain skills, articulate a feminine world view, express the self, and experience increased autonomy. I could adopt a critical perspective and view the organization as an outgrowth of rationalization or as an imposition on its members. There was justification for all of these perspectives, but all tended to miss the point of membership or to oversimplify the realities. Autonomy means something different to a 3HO member than to a feminist, and 3HO ideas about pleasure and pain are complex and contradictory. What standards could be consistently

applied to such a cultural hybrid and to an organization that encourages members to question most standards and most conventional modes of assessing truth and value? Often questions seemed to ricochet off the organization's surface and come back to me.

It became clear that I would have to present the organization's contradictory qualities and its layered notions of truth and identity. I would have to examine and include my own responses and cognitive categories. I would also have to take an indirect and non-linear approach to knowing what membership meant, examining now one aspect and then another, focusing narrowly on an individual and then broadly on the organization's ties to surrounding society. I would have to construct my own interpretation of the organization and its teachings, just like any member, and this would inevitably reflect my own biography and notions of relevance and social reality.

Only after approaching the organization in these ways was it possible to apply academic concepts and linear modes of analysis and to compare my interpretations and reactions to those of 3HO's members. The connections that I trace between self, organization, and the larger social structure clearly bear the imprint of my training in Anthropology, American Studies and Sociology. They also clearly reflect concerns and conceptualizations that are common in 3HO. I describe areas of cultural and social overlap, realizing

that much remains untouched and unexplained. In the language then of academia, but in language that has parallels in 3HO, here are my conclusions.

3HO members brought to the organization their experience of a divided and changing society. In many ways their lives were shaped by social and cultural discontinuities. Their experience spanned traditional suburban values and American high schools and universities in the throes of upheaval. Those universities, generally state universities, often confronted the future 3HO members with values that were distinctly different from those learned at home or divergent from their beliefs about human potential and the ways that people should interact. Members encountered both utilitarian values and countercultural ideals, conventional definitions of gender and the influence of the Women's Movement. Inevitably they were exposed to sometimes confusing pulls in the directions of both self-realization and self-management, towards an ethic of leisure and self-expression and towards an ethic of self-discipline and hard work. They had learned the ideals of peace and democracy but were exposed to the realities of a Military-Industrial complex, the Vietnam war, and critiques of the American social structure. They experimented with hallucinogens and came to doubt previous perceptions. They had heard the American rhetoric about all things being possible and all problems solvable, but

they were aware that America faced many seemingly intractable social problems. Many knew that, given their humanistic approach to life, they faced difficulties finding meaningful work in an increasingly technological and rationalized society, and some found it difficult to imagine a satisfying life within the ordinary range of "straight" expectations. Many had experienced opportunities to develop trans-national and trans-cultural values, and some had developed quite sophisticated and relativistic worldviews, but many felt contradictory desires for roots and absolutes, and for clear-cut values to live by. Members varied considerably in their reasons for joining 3HO, but many needed the benefits of group life to balance the impersonality they found in the society or sought values with which to negotiate in a consumer society riddled by contradictory expectations -- by demands for both self-expression and self-presentation, for self-indulgence and asceticism, self-knowledge and manipulation of the self.

Members brought such contradictory influences and impulses to bear when they evaluated and interpreted the organizational belief system and lifestyle. Past experience probably predisposed them to appreciate both Eastern dualistic modes of thinking and the Eastern search for unity and transcendence. Previous experience could be encoded in new concepts and imagery. The idea of moving

from one province of meaning to another was easily understood and could be incorporated in the self image and in daily life. Members' varied reasons for joining, and the many contradictory forces to which they had been exposed, demanded some flexibility from the leadership, but also afforded the leadership considerable latitude. World-rejecting, world-accommodating, and world-accepting beliefs and practices could be mixed and varied types of accounts incorporated. Thus, social and cultural strains were embedded in the organization, a process furthered by efforts to both legitimate the organization and maintain members' loyalty in the face of the straitened circumstances of the 1970's recessions. 3HO's evolution from fused group towards organized group furthered this incorporation of contradictory tendencies as beliefs and imagery typical of both types were employed and elaborated.

As the organization changed and evolved members were able to mine its considerable symbolic resources. They could adapt 3HO symbols and metaphors to explain and express their experience. Similarly, they could borrow from a range of organizational accounts for feelings and behavior. As they did this, and as they were exposed to the organization's rewards, sanctions, and identity processes, they learned to align self to organization, or to arrive at some accommodation of personal needs and goals to organizational demands and imperatives. 3HO became a

mediating structure that provided powerful imagery for several of the contradictions and tensions that arise in a late, or post, industrial setting, and for some that have long permeated American culture. Because, as the Symbolic Anthropologists tell us, metaphors and symbols often serve to unite discordant or opposing concepts, 3HO offers its members the wherewithal to either tolerate strain or create new syntheses. 3HO's multiple accounts and rich system of metaphors afford members a language for transcending or commenting upon their own experience, although all do not avail themselves of this possibility. These same resources can, of course, be employed to justify and maintain the status quo.

According to Tantric lore the self is a microcosm of the universe. Just as the universe is both essence and form the self is both Siva and Shakti. As Shakti it is embroiled in material reality. As Siva it is reflexive, observing and altering its own forms, always more than it appears to be. Applying the same imagery to 3HO one could argue that it also has these two aspects. Its essence is a vision of a transcendent life, a life that overcomes the laws of maya and that is not subject to the ordinary social and cultural shaping of beliefs, values, and behavior. Its essence resides outside of the world of forms. But it is also an organization, and as an organization it has been shaped by history, self-interest, and personal and social

conflict. Every belief and practice has its worldly antecedents.

3HO AS SOCIAL PRODUCT

3HO is clearly the product of many social processes: of leadership strategies, of efforts at legitimation, of group processes and of identity processes. Members vie for esteem and influence and group acceptance. Accounts are often pragmatic or self-serving. Imagery often reflects the structure of the organization and of institutions in the larger society.

Yogi Bhajan responded to members' diverse needs and backgrounds quite pragmatically. He drew eclectically from Tantra, Sikhism and Hinduism, and from utilitarian and countercultural traditions, employing those aspects of these traditions that proved useful to himself, his organization, and its members. He drew on world-rejecting aspects of the Hindu Renaissance and Sikh traditions to enhance group loyalty and to delineate the boundaries of the organization. This tended to encourage distrust of both the self, as culturally maimed, and of the outside world, and many members became dependent upon him or upon the organization for an alternative lifestyle and for an alternative vision of the self. When economic pressures increased and more members embraced family life in the mid-1970's he adopted more world-accommodating strategies.

Sturdy Sikh piety served well in this regard and provided the image of the individual as God's instrument in practical affairs. Bhajan, and many other 3HO members, also had to respond to the attitudes of workshop participants and to the influence of the Human Potential movement on people likely to fund, support, and affiliate with 3HO. They could not entirely ignore the consumer society. World-affirming elements were also called for. These were drawn primarily from Tantra, and from various psychologies.

There were other benefits to be derived from drawing on contradictory traditions. Leaders and rank and file members gained considerable latitude in constructing accounts for action and belief. They could adopt those aspects of the belief system that appealed to them or that were expedient in particular situations. They could explore and express contradictory aspects of the self and accommodate internal strains and conflicts. Yogi Bhajan could express different sides of his personality or take changing stances on issues without clearly contradicting the belief system. He could dramatically change his tone and message, and this could often increase his charisma rather than undermining his credibility. Members could occupy positions in the larger society, reap the benefits of a consumer economy, and still pursue an alternative lifestyle.

Of course it is not likely that an organization that encompasses so many traditions will avoid internal contradictions. Sikhism, Tantra, Hinduism and American society do not necessarily mesh; nor do world-rejection and world-affirmation. In 3HO the self is said to be sacred, but members are also taught that it needs vast improvements. Many are always working on it or altering it. God is said to reside in the self, but members often depend upon the spiritual leader to make basic decisions for them. Everything is said to be God's will, but people are described as neurotic, modern society as corrupt, and insanity on the rise. The goal of membership is to become happy, healthy and holy, but often membership creates pain, and progress along the spiritual path often seems to be very slow. Women are said to be naturally spiritual and graceful, but they have to struggle to believe in their grace and to enact the role of graceful woman.

There are concepts and metaphors that explain and bridge these contradictions. Thus, the self can be both sacred and misguided because sometimes one acts out of the higher self and sometimes out of the lower self. Sometimes one is separated from God, and neuroses and accumulated karma block access to the higher self. One can obey the spiritual teacher unquestioningly and still believe in the wisdom of the internal guru because sometimes the higher self in its wisdom must hand over responsibility to a

spiritual leader if it is to evolve further. As the organization grew and matured and beliefs and experience became more complex, many more such explanations and images were developed. Members used them to mediate internal contradictions, leaders to justify or obscure them. They could be used to consolidate or link the multiple levels of meaning inherent in the organization or to explain the experiences generated by movement between discrepant settings and between provinces of meaning. As images incorporated denser meanings and more referents they came to also reflect organizational tensions and history.

Members applied these to the self and worked them into their self-concepts. This was concurrent with the elaboration of 3HO identity processes and with the movement from fused to pledge to more organized group. Imagery depicting the self as expansive and evolving was joined to the boundary imagery of the pledge group and then to a more institutional view of the self. The self-as-impulse was subordinated to the rational and more institutional self, but alternative versions of the self were still available.

As these interpretations and images accreted they could be applied at different levels of social organization: to the self, the ashram, the organization, the larger society, or the linkages between all of these levels. Thus concepts of selfhood, for example, incorporated countercultural and utilitarian aspects of members' biographies. They

incorporated imagery drawn from different stages of organizational history. The image of a self that is always penetrating blocks and boundaries could express members' experiences of first penetrating a new culture, then crossing boundaries between alternative realities, and finally of moving between 3HO and external settings. 3HO, moreover, creates boundaries and divisions by requiring special dress and introducing a variety of customs and personal challenges. In effect, it creates boundaries and then asks members to adapt to or transcend them, and this image nicely encapsulates that experience. Imagery of the self as spiritual warrior or as a seeker on a spiritual path can integrate all of these images and provide for a coherent but changing sense of selfhood.

In his description of a group similar to 3HO, which he calls Yoga Association of Self-Analysis (YASA), Lopez (1980) borrows from Mary Douglas and argues that this group replicates aspects of contemporary social experience. It is, he suggests, a symbolic embodiment of the structures of modernity as they have been described by Peter Berger, and the typically middle-class members are "carriers" of the modern consciousness. He argues that their beliefs reflect the discontinuity that has developed between private and public spheres and the confusing multiplicity of social worlds that co-exist in a complex society:

If, as Berger, et al. suggest, the self beyond role and institution is a structured experience central

to modernity, then its postulation in transcendental terms by YASA echoes, at the religious level, a vital component of modernist consciousness. YASA ideology distinguishes between "ego" and Atman, between the secular, profane, outer self and a spiritual, sacred, inner self, much like modern society's cleavage of the public world and its role identities and the more amorphous private life-world of the self. The principle of reincarnation into different identities or of Atman's assuming varied forms, albeit illusory, in the material world corresponds to the "migration" of the self in the course of its day through a variety of life-worlds. The social experience of putting off and on different social hats not only suggests that there must be a "true" self behind the social kaleidoscope, but that roles are, by contrast, artificial....Thus modern society's organization of role vs. self is symbolically replicated in YASA's conception of ego vs. Atman. (344)

The parallel with my interpretation and with 3HO is clear, although 3HO members use the terms Guru or Sat Nam rather than Atman. Hindu conceptualizations of the self do seem to express aspects of contemporary society, particularly as it was experienced by the children of middle-class homes. I would now argue that such images offer more than mere reflections of the social order, however. They can be used in efforts to integrate discrepant experiences and even to comment upon the organization, the organization's tie to the society, and the link between self and organization. In 3HO they grow not only out of members' early experiences but out of the organization itself. They reflect its internal processes, as well as the impact of the dominant society.

METAPHOR AND TRANSCENDENCE

Metaphors and images encapsulate biography, organizational history and structure, and sociocultural trends and tensions. These images, in turn, are used to interpret and manipulate reality. They are employed by the leadership to explain, convince, and recruit, and to adapt ideology to fact and fact to ideology. They are employed by members to align self and organization or to distinguish between the two. Members use them to organize the biography, to account for emotions and behavior, and to make sense of ambiguous situations. The images may even be used to transcend or comment upon the self and its circumstances, or comment upon the organization and its major beliefs and practices. Metaphors and imagery are indicators of the unknown and complex comments upon the known. With their multiple referents, their encoded contradictions, and their capacity to link ideas and feelings, they can be employed to reify and sanctify what is, or to transcend and comment upon it. They are powerful tools with which the self can express, define and alter itself and its surroundings. They are also embodiments of accreted history, beliefs and customs and habits.

3HO as process: sense-making and dialectic

3HO is an effort to institutionalize the ineffable, to transcend the everyday while employing everyday modes of

thought and action. In a sense it reifies or comments upon this very contradiction, acknowledging the existence of duality and even working it into the structure of the organization. It creates dualities and multiple layers of reality and then asks members to transcend or unite them. It provides directions for this effort, and explanations for its necessity, and it even allows members to admit that they are constructing and fabricating along the way. It provides justifications for fabrications ("fake it; you'll make it"), while at the same time suggesting that none of this is ultimately construction or fabrication -- just a necessary step along the way to unity and enlightenment. 3HO provides accounts for hardships encountered along the way, and for doubts and disappointments and failures. It accounts for both mystical and practical realities, for their conflicts and their integration. 3HO teachings even explain the need for such accounts, while still implying that all accounts, while significant, are finally inadequate.

3HO beliefs are pragmatic. The belief system incorporates its own justifications -- and justifications for its justifications -- as do many other systems of thought. It is often self-serving and resistant to change and criticism. But it also nurtures the seeds of its own transcendence. As the ethnomethodologists point out, accounts are reflexive; they apply to themselves (Handel

1982). They can be employed to comment upon themselves -- and they often are, by 3HO's more sophisticated members. Symbols can always take on additional layers of meaning. The self can be viewed as an account, and gender as a symbol. The ideal of a spiritual path can be used to comment upon this particular, 3HO path. The idea that the everyday reality is not the ultimate reality can apply to all situations, to the self as it is, and to 3HO as it is.

For now, 3HO occupies a middle ground. It incorporates the tensions embedded in the surrounding culture, and the limitations and structures of dominant institutions. At the same time it offers beliefs, imagery, and practices with which a member can transcend or transform these. Paradoxically, it is an innovative organization, but also one in which conformity, obedience, and self-presentation are virtues.

This middle ground position may prove to be temporary. It may be only a stage in 3HO's progression from fused countercultural group to ordinary denomination. The 3HO structures that reflect such cultural dichotomies as the split between public and private or rational and symbolic spheres may also be fleeting forms assumed while the organization straddles the middle ground. 3HO may be overwhelmed in time by the imperatives of rationality and consumer capitalism.

Certainly many of the new religions have moved in the direction of accommodation, and many face difficult times. ISKCON, for example, has divided into factions since the death of Prabhupada. 3HO faces the two suits from ex-members who were well-placed to observe the inner workings of the organization, and many members of the New Mexico ashram followed their director when he decided to leave the organization three years ago. Bhajan has long complained of heart trouble and various physical complaints and has said that he may not live long, although the exact status of his health is unclear. Just as this paper was nearing completion (March 1988) the Director of the Washington ashram was arrested and charged with "continuing criminal conspiracy" to sell drugs over a number of years. A trial date had not yet been set. He responds to the charge by saying that he was actually working for a branch of the government, helping to uncover criminal activity. The implication is that Indian Sikh terrorists are at the root of the trouble, and that he was seeking to reveal their illegal activities.

Added to potential organizational instability are the inevitable vicissitudes of personal life and the multiple issues attached to maturation. With their children away at boarding school many 3HO women are reaching positions in which they can expect to take on added responsibility at work and within the organization. They have accumulated

skills and experience and may depend less upon the leadership for guidance and decision-making. Their visions of self and organization will certainly alter as they mature. Any alterations in the distribution of power and authority will coincide with members' maturation, the continuing effects of a policy of world-accommodation and prosperity consciousness, and the unpredictable influence of the growing children now being educated in India. It is my guess that these factors will lead to further movement in the directions of world-accommodation and world-affirmation, particularly if Yogi Bhasan's influence wanes.

3HO has certainly not transcended the difficult issues raised by the sociology of knowledge. However enthusiastically members proclaim the existence of an ultimate transcendent realm, their beliefs, and their predisposition to believe, have clearly been shaped by history and social structure and micro processes. Group processes and pressures, identity processes, and ordinary forms of exchange and self-concept elaboration have left their mark on 3HO beliefs and imagery. So too have large-scale social and cultural processes. To a notable degree self recapitulates organization and organization recapitulates contemporary society. 3HO members have the advantages of a mediating organization but it does not provide much of a shield.

3HO, however, can tap a sizable reservoir of talent. Its members have many skills and such cognitive talents as the capacity for radical doubt and for reinterpreting reality and reframing ideas. They know how to transcend habits and to experiment with new behaviors and ideas. They have a wealth of symbols and metaphors to employ in creative ways. These talents and resources can lead them either into new syntheses and social experiments or into self-doubt and uncritical submission. Their futures are far from foreclosed.

APPENDIX A

(Questions used as guidelines with some variation from individual to individual.)

Name

Age

Occupation

Education level and major

Married? Arranged? How long?

Children? Here? At school in India?

When did you "join" 3HO? How did you first come in contact with the organization? What appealed to you at first?

Where were you? Were you a "hippy"?

Have you taken vows? When?

What positions have you held in the organization since you joined?

How would you describe your role in the Washington sangat?

Are you very active, medium, not very? What

responsibilities do you carry? With whom do you mostly

associate? Do you spend most of your time within the

community or do you have extensive contacts outside of 3HO/Sikh Dharma?

Which aspects of the lifestyle have come most easily to you? Which have been more difficult? Are some easier for men than for women and vice-versa?

Which elements of the lifestyle are particularly important to you? How important is Sikhism to you? Yoga?

Have particular teachings been of special significance to you? Which?

Could you describe your relationship with the Siri Singh Sahib? Has it changed since you first met him?

Has obedience to a spiritual teacher posed problems for you?

Do you think that you have gone through different stages in your membership? Could you describe different stages or any overall pattern you discern over time?

Now I'm going to shift back to the present. Can I ask you to describe yourself as you are today? I know it's a

difficult question, but just say things as they come to you
-- nouns, adjective, phrases, images, whatever.

Now can I ask you to do the same thing, but describe
yourself as you were when you first joined 3HO.

Can you describe yourself as you were in high school?

Were you ever involved in the Women's Movement? (Discuss)

I'd like to ask you to help me with definitions and
explanations of some terms that are commonly used in 3HO:
grace/graceful woman; going through changes; Adi Shakti;
freaking out; spiritual path; nobility; insecurity.

What would you emphasize in writing about 3HO women? What
issues should I raise with others?

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