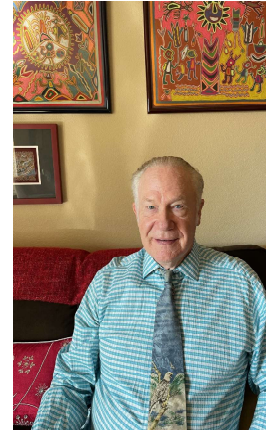


Confessions of a Recovering Anthropologist: Part 1

Jay Courtney Fikes

Parts of this essay are based on a September 26, 2024, interview with Çiğdem Akbay. I appreciate her feedback on earlier drafts of this essay. Mark Hoffman's editing of this essay greatly enhanced its clarity and helped me include subtle nuances of meaning I might have otherwise overlooked. I feel relieved now that I am finally sharing memories I had kept suppressed for years, and I am very grateful to Akbay and Hoffman for their support during the sometimes challenging process of preparing these documents for publication.



INTRODUCTION

I received the nickname of “Recovering Anthropologist” at the first Native American Church (NAC) meeting I attended in Winnebago, NE, in July of 1990 (Fikes 1996: 29). I don’t remember if it was Reuben Snake or his lawyer, James Botsford, who gave me that nickname. I soon realized that both of them and other members of the NAC sensed that “recovery” connoted humility and humor, especially because Reuben Snake and many other NAC members were recovering alcoholics. It was an appropriate nickname for me because, although they distrusted anthropologists, they perceived that I appreciated their reverent use of peyote and was committed to helping to secure religious freedom for them to continue ingesting peyote during their all-night religious rituals. Their trust in my dedication to help enact legislation to ensure their religious freedom was justified because in 1990 I was a registered lobbyist, employed by the Friends Committee on National Legislation to work on Native American legislative issues (Fikes 1996).

I embraced my nickname because I felt honored. I have reason to believe that they recognized I had internalized their view that peyote is a plant containing a spiritual teacher. My ingestion of peyote during my first NAC meeting, followed by my words of praise for “it,” i.e., my Elder Brother incarnate in peyote, occurred after several years of participating in and learning about Huichol rituals and ritual practitioners (shamans). In 1991, after Peter Furst began obstructing the publication of my book (Fikes 1993), I was comforted by the fact that NAC members accepted and respected me, even praying that my book would be published, while an increasing number of American anthropologists were abandoning me. Events leading up to this positive and proactive part of my “recovery” are explained in this essay, Part 1 of Confessions of a Recovering Anthropologist, on my website www.jayfikes.com and in other publications (Fikes 2002, 2011a, 2021a, 2021b).

The other reason I felt compelled to become a "recovering anthropologist" was that two University of Michigan professors penalized me for being truthful about Huichol society. Professor Joyce Marcus did not tell me she was a friend of Peter Furst in 1982, when she first warned me not to be so critical of Furst's version of Huichol society (Fikes 2002: 85). In her letter to Furst, dated Jan. 28, 1988 she was answering Furst's Jan. 18, 1988 letter to her. Instead of defending me, by pointing out that my 1985 dissertation provided precise refutations of some of Furst's false claims about Huichol society, she echoed Furst's unsupported allegation that I

was chasing “imaginary academic conspiracies”... by stating that she was not my psychiatrist (reminding me of Joseph Stalin’s abuse of psychiatry to suppress dissent), and had no control over my “very non-professional, weird and unacceptable behavior.” She then pledged allegiance to Furst: “Know that I am on your side and value your friendship. There were many times your generosity and advice helped me out—I remember all of those times” (Marcus Jan. 28, 1988 letter). If my correcting the ethnographic record about Huichol shamanism and ritual is “non-professional” and “weird” then it is time to become a recovering anthropologist. I was shocked when Professor Roy Rappaport ceased supporting my academic career by naively accepting Furst’s false claims, made in his unsolicited August 19, 1989 letter to Rappaport. Rappaport never gave me any opportunity to refute Furst’s defamatory allegations about me. He steadfastly refused to let me read Furst’s August 19, 1989, letter. I used the word “steadfastly” because Rappaport refused four consecutive letters from me asking him to provide me with a copy of Furst’s letter. This lack of professional support from Marcus and Rappaport contributed to my becoming a recovering anthropologist, especially after my contract with the Friends Committee on National Legislation was not renewed. I secured a research grant to study at the Smithsonian Institution in 1991, but once that grant concluded, I needed to find academic employment. After more than a hundred of my academic job applications were rejected, I had to admit that my career in academic anthropology in the U.S.A. was over. In 1999, my wife and I began teaching at Yeditepe University in Istanbul, where I continued teaching until June 2016.

In Part 2 of this essay, forthcoming soon, I document the American Anthropological Association (AAA) Ethics Committee’s failure to investigate and adjudicate allegations of ethical misconduct made against Peter Furst by me, Professor Phil Weigand, and Juan Negrín. Censuring Furst then (in 1992) might have rekindled my academic career, but the AAA preferred providing Furst with immunity from investigation of our complaints. In a future publication, Mark Hoffman and I will provide details about Peter T. Furst, including specifics about his campaign to defame me and thereby sabotage my academic career in the United States.

Some people who read this know me as a critic of Carlos Castaneda and his academic allies (Fikes 1993, 2008a, 2021c). Others know me as a lifelong student of *Wixarika* (Huichol) shamanism (Fikes 1985, 2011a, 2021a, 2021b, 2024). This autobiographical essay examines what sparked each of these passions, clarifying the events that led me, the son of two “mainstream” Anglo-American teachers, to embark on my lifelong research into Huichol shamanism and ritual. To do so, I will candidly discuss a few momentous childhood events, such as getting caught for cheating in a high school biology class and killing a large rattlesnake, whose spirit prompted me to take its skin back to the exact spot where I shot it. Such ‘confessions’ should enable readers to see how certain crucial events ultimately led me to my four Huichol shaman mentors.

My commitment to exposing Carlos Castaneda’s fraudulent anthropology began when my parents’ fell victim to a real estate scam in 1974. On behalf of my parents, I won a lawsuit against Diego Delgado, who had defrauded my parents and several other investors in a Guadalajara condominium that Delgado never built. The documents left behind when Delgado, a Mexican architect and U.C.L.A. anthropology colleague of Peter Furst and Carlos Castaneda, escaped arrest by fleeing to the United States. When the judge ruled that the Guadalajara house he abandoned was my parents’ property, I gained access to Delgado’s books and documents.

Among those documents were some claims that Delgado made about having been Castaneda's mentor (Fikes 1993). Other documents exposed Delgado's adventures in illegal archaeology, including aiding Peter Furst in excavating a shaft tomb in Mexico without a legal permit.

CRUCIAL CHILDHOOD EVENTS SEEN AS STEPPING-STONES TO THE HUICHOL

My family home and my elementary school were about a mile away from the Orange County, California, airport (aka John Wayne Airport). After school and on weekends, I often played softball with friends on our calm residential street, or walked around the Upper Newport Bay, which we locals affectionately called the Back Bay. Because both sides of the Back Bay were relatively undeveloped circa 1956, it was a wonderful place to observe plants and animals. As a child, I was especially interested in snakes, how some species laid eggs while others bore live young... how they were able to capture their prey, shed their skins, and hibernate. My mother and grandmother allowed me to keep California King snakes (and other non-venomous snakes), lizards, frogs, turtles, Congo eels, and salamanders for pets. I came across many of these creatures during my hikes around the Back Bay, and other animals were supplied by Dr. Burt.

My mother is the reason I was never afraid of snakes. To earn money while attending Southwestern College in Kansas, my mother worked for Dr. Burt, a biology professor who had a mail-order business. To help him with his business, my mother regularly handled amphibians, snakes, and other reptiles, so she wasn't afraid of them either. In my family, we just didn't have the phobia many Americans have about snakes. When I was in elementary school, some of our neighbors discovered that I was fascinated by snakes. One of them, an artist who lived across the street, made me a small coffee cup that portrayed me as a "snake-charmer" with this caption: "Come See Courtney the Snake Man." I became better known in our neighborhood after being summoned to identify a snake found on a neighbor's property, four or five houses away from my grandma's house. I immediately knew it was a harmless snake. I don't remember now if it was a king or a gopher snake. I do remember not understanding why some adults were so terrified of a harmless snake. After I told them it was harmless, they left it alone. I suppose my recognition that some adults were ignorant about and scared of creatures my friends and I were keeping as pets made me feel special.

As a five and six-year-old child who regularly attended Sunday school at the Methodist Church in Costa Mesa, I was, of course, not yet aware of animism. I did have a deep connection with animals: mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. My fascination with animals continued unabated throughout high school. In addition to keeping animals as pets, I began hunting rabbits, doves, and quail after receiving my first rifle at age ten. This comfortable suburban lifestyle changed drastically as a result of my contemplating what caused me to cheat on a biology assignment in 1967. (Note 1)

Such contemplation of my misdeed soon prompted me to read Aldous Huxley's book, *The Doors of Perception*. During my junior year at Corona del Mar High School, my interests began to broaden, as I learned more about psychedelics, pop, and anti-war music, and as I started thinking about options to avoid being drafted for combat in Vietnam. I prepared to become a conscientious objector and fantasized about living in Mexico if I were denied such status. Fortunately, my birthday was number 356 in President Nixon's 1969 draft lottery.

In hindsight, I recognize that *The Doors of Perception* inspired me to eat peyote, some eight years later, during my solo all-night vision quest at Grandfather Fire's shrine, in a remote canyon in the Western Sierra Madre in the center of traditional Huichol territory. By the time I made my solo pilgrimage to this shrine in 1976, Carlos Castaneda's first four books had captivated me enough that I hoped I could become a shaman (Fikes 2011a: 13-16, 2024). The same day, or the next day after I toured *Te'akata* with a Huichol guide, I decided I must return to Grandfather Fire's shrine. It was one of several shrines in *Te'akata* dedicated to ancestor-deities. These shrines, along with others nearby, comprise the most significant *Wixarika* pilgrimage site within the remaining territory of their Chapalagana River valley (see maps). To facilitate my all-night vigil, a Huichol man gave me two peyotes to eat, without my asking. I believe eating those peyotes at Grandfather Fire's shrine enabled me to gain insights into *Wixarika* healing and spirituality, as indicated below in my 1979 conversation with the premier *Kawiteru*—or ritual specialist—at Santa Catarina.

Because that all-night vigil went well, I continued making pilgrimages to other Huichol sacred sites, including my 1986 all-night vigil at a female *Kieri*, supervised by another *Kawiteru* (Fikes 2021a, 2021b). During that vigil I also ingested peyote, as recommended by that *Kawiteru*. Having first-hand, numinous experiences at *Wixarika* rituals and sacred sites—facilitated by ingesting peyote—was an integral part of my strategy of “enhanced participation,” inspired by reading Castaneda's first two books (which exalted peyote). Unlike Castaneda, I also applied traditional methods of collecting “ethnographic data,” such as taking photographs, writing daily field notes, and recording, translating, and interpreting the songs and sacred narratives that shamans recited during rituals. I am certain that this strategy of supplementing orthodox anthropological research methods with “enhanced participation” allowed me to accurately interpret Huichol shamanic initiation as well as the nuances embedded in their annual native temple (*Tuki*) ritual cycle (Fikes 1985, 1993, 2011a, 2021a, 2021b, 2024).

The journey that gradually brought me to the *Wixarika* ceremonial center of Santa Catarina (aka *Tuapuri*) and Grandfather Fire's shrine was unique. I deduce that the first steps on that path began in 1961, when my parents gave me a .22 caliber rifle on my tenth birthday. I soon passed the National Rifle Association's “hunter safety exam.” With that done, my parents allowed me to hunt rabbits, doves, and quail. During some 14 years of hunting, often alone, I remember shooting as many as eight rattlesnakes, without ever questioning why I so mindlessly killed them. In 1975, I killed my last rattlesnake (Fikes 2002, 2011a: 25-26). After shooting that large red rattlesnake, I began having recurrent nightmares, wherein snakes attacked me. Having two or three such nightmares convinced me to take that rattlesnake's skin back to the very same place where I shot it. My most compelling snake-centered dream unfolded in my grandma's backyard, which was bounded on one side by a tall cement block wall. I sometimes crawled over that wall to begin hiking around the Back Bay to observe animals, or occasionally to catch them to feed to my non-venomous snakes. In that dream, the rattlesnake suddenly appeared right in front of me. I was about to crush it with my shoe...when it suddenly turned into a man. Seeing that transformation, I knew intuitively that the red rattlesnake had a spirit akin to my own. That revelation prompted me to take that rattlesnake's skin, which I had saved in the freezer, back to the place where I killed it. My nightmares soon disappeared.

On February 14, 1979, I discussed my nightmare experiences with the premier ritual specialist of Santa Catarina, i.e., their *Kawiteru*. He stated that the transformation from rattlesnake to human, which I had witnessed in my dream, was a revelation from an ancestor deity. He declared that because I was not at all frightened by the many snakes which had become visible during my all-night vigil in 1976 at Grandfather Fire's shrine, I ought to make an additional pilgrimage there, because it would enable me to learn songs useful in healing (Fikes 2002, 2011a: 26).

EXPOSING ILLEGAL ARCHAEOLOGY & ILLEGITIMATE ETHNOGRAPHY

My first visit to Santa Catarina in 1976 was arranged by Alfonso Manzanilla, a Mexican federal official responsible for implementing bilingual education and economic development programs for the traditional Chapalagana Huichol (Fikes 1985: 1, 1993: xxii). When I met him in Tepic, Nayarit, I had already decided that the Huichol aboriginal temple ritual cycle was more intact than that of any other Mexican indigenous "tribe," e.g., Seri, Lacandon, or Tarahumara. (Note 2) After I finished explaining to Manzanilla my reasons for wanting to complete field research, at whichever of several *Wixarika* ceremonial centers he felt had preserved the most complete annual native ritual cycle, he arranged for me to get on a small cargo airplane he was sending to the dirt landing strip closest to the ceremonial center at Santa Catarina (*Tuapuri*).

By the time I met Manzanilla in 1976, I had built a network of people who resided in Guadalajara and nearby towns. This network included archaeologists Drs. Betty Bell and Otto Schondube (more about them below), as well as certain Mexicans I had bonded with while tending to my parents' failed investment. The impact that this momentous failure had on them, and on me, merits further explanation.

To increase their income, my parents began investing in rental properties in San Diego County. By 1968, my father was earning an income as a consultant working with others to create more bilingual (Spanish-English) curriculum and qualified bilingual educators. My parents took me on my first trip to Guadalajara, a lovely Mexican city far from the border with San Diego, during the summer of 1968. I immediately loved Guadalajara, Jalisco's capital, and nearby Lake Chapala! This first trip to Guadalajara in 1968 occurred primarily because my parents were considering a real estate investment proposed by a bilingual educator, Diego Delgado, whom my father had met in California. Delgado was also a Mexican architect and a collector of pre-Columbian artifacts.

I first met Diego Delgado in Guadalajara in 1973. By then, Delgado was living in Guadalajara, after his teaching at Cal State University, Sacramento was abruptly ended by scandal (Fikes 1993: 52, 95). Delgado had persuaded my parents and several of their friends and relatives to invest their money with him before he began building the condominium, which he promised would contain multiple apartments. Each investor, including my parents, contributed money in advance to architect Delgado, based solely on his claim that their money would build their respective units in a Guadalajara condominium complex. Delgado defrauded my parents and the other eight or ten investors by keeping all their money, instead of constructing condos for them. In 1974, when I realized Delgado had no intention or funds left to construct their condominiums, I found a Guadalajara attorney who started both a criminal and a civil lawsuit against Delgado,

on behalf of my parents. I had no idea then that taking on that lawsuit on behalf of my parents would have such a profound impact on my life!

Diego Delgado lost that lawsuit by default. He didn't show up to defend himself. To evade going to court, Delgado and his family fled from "their" new house, i.e., the house he had purchased with the money from all the investors he defrauded. After winning the lawsuit, the court granted my parents possession of the house in Guadalajara. This allowed me to go inside that house, where I discovered fifty-five pre-Columbian artifacts, some of which had been obtained illegally (Fikes 1993: 95). (An inventory of those fifty-five artifacts is contained in Appendix A.)

In his haste to flee from the arrest warrant issued for him, Delgado also left behind many of his books and essays about Mexican archaeology and anthropology (including some written about the Huichol by Fernando Benítez (1968a, 1968b) and Peter T. Furst (Furst 1965, 1968, Furst and Myerhoff 1966). I also discovered Delgado's professional correspondence pertaining to his involvement in Mexican archaeology. After skimming some of Delgado's abandoned books, essays, and letters, it was obvious that he had been involved in illegal archaeology. Documents I "inherited" from Delgado mentioned Dr. Betty Bell and included her letters, which asserted that Delgado was trafficking in illegal artifacts, shipping some of them to buyers while he was staying in Dr. Bell's house during her absence. Some of Delgado's documents indicated that Peter T. Furst's excavation of the shaft tomb, whose contents Furst described in his 1966 doctoral dissertation, was done illegally, without him having any valid permit to excavate anywhere in Mexico. By the time I met Dr. Bell in 1974 at her home in Ajijic (a small town on Lake Chapala), she had witnessed enough archaeological misconduct that she voluntarily went with me by train to Mexico City to introduce me to José Luis Lorenzo. He was then the top-ranking official in charge of Mexico's Department of Prehispanic Monuments. She also introduced me to Professor Otto Schondube, a curator of West Mexican archaeology at the government's Regional Museum in Guadalajara. It was Schondube who collected the 55 artifacts listed in Appendix A.

Another document Delgado left behind was his 1970 interview with Alan Morotti, one of his students at Sacramento State College (Fikes 1993: 63-65). In that interview, Delgado proclaimed himself to be a mentor of Carlos Castaneda. Reading these documents Delgado abandoned (i.e., Morotti 1970, Hernandez 1972, as cited in Fikes 1993) I discovered some spectacular claims Delgado had made: "a) that he introduced don Juan Matus to Carlos Castaneda; b) that he had become a greater shaman than don Juan; c) that Carlos Castaneda was a pupil of his; and d) that he talked Castaneda out of his fears about publishing his experiences among the Yaquis" (Fikes 1993: 65).

Although the money I recovered after selling the house Delgado abandoned was not nearly enough to repay all the condominium investors Delgado had defrauded, my parents repaid all the money Delgado stole from their fellow investors. To repay them, my mother continued her full-time teaching of junior-high school students in Santa Ana, CA, and my father quickly obtained a nine-to-five job in Bakersfield, teaching special education. To enable them to repay all their fellow investors quickly, they lived separately during weekdays. However, the blow of being conned by Diego Delgado had a profound impact on my father.

While living and working in Bakersfield, my father began associating with a group of Evangelical Christians. I met a few of them and promptly recognized that they were super fundamentalists, into “speaking in tongues” and believing that the only guarantee of avoiding hell and Satan’s call was being baptized and proclaiming Jesus Christ as their lord and savior. I realize now that the ordeal triggered after being conned by Delgado was so severe that it prompted my father to become an evangelical Christian. At that time, I was a liberal Christian because my parents regularly took me to the Sunday school at the Methodist Church in Costa Mesa. By the time I was thirteen years old, I was tolerant of other faiths, but my desire to attend Sunday school or church services was disappearing. Unlike faith-oriented evangelical Christians, I deeply believed in the more action-oriented gospel of James, which declares that faith by itself—if it does not have good works—is dead.

I learned more about the scope of Delgado’s misconduct by listening to other victims, among them Dr. Betty Bell, as well as Jesús and Elba Equihua. They were a Catholic couple with four children dedicated to managing their textile business in Guadalajara. They were also committed to doing charitable works for people living in a nearby rural village, San Miguel Cuyutlán. The sordid stories about Delgado that they told me added to the tarnished image of him that emerged after I read the incriminating documents Delgado left in the Guadalajara house. Thus, I wondered more than once if perhaps the misconduct they described resulted from contact with spirits Delgado might have had while excavating shaft tombs or handling other pre-Columbian artifacts. My father eventually decided that the Devil was Delgado’s partner, a conclusion my father’s evangelical Christians probably endorsed. We never heard anything more from Diego Delgado.

My friendly relationships with Dr. Bell and Jesús and Elba Equihua continued and deepened. I attended a few worship services with the Equihuas, in Catholic churches, and at their charismatic worship services (which were held without priests). In one momentous, charismatic ritual I attended with them, one worshipper washed my feet just before the whole group prayed for me. Later, as I stood up to speak impromptu to the group about Saint Michael, I was unable to talk as a wave of warm energy entered the crown of my head and traveled throughout my body. Those charismatic Catholics had been praying for me to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. As a result of my numinous experience of baptism, I began praying daily in Spanish a prayer dedicated to the Holy Spirit. I continued praying to the Holy Spirit daily until the Supreme Court of New Mexico dismissed my lawsuit against Peter Furst in 2003. Their decision to deny me the right to a trial by jury shook my faith in the God monotheists adore.

In 1977, I began attending Quaker worship meetings in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and by 1982, I became an official member of the Religious Society of Friends (also known as Quakers) meeting in Vista, California. Quaker meetings for “unprogrammed” worship emphasize having direct experiences with God (or Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or the “inner light”). The Quaker emphasis on having first-hand experiences was also valued by my Huichol shaman-mentors and by Native American Church members and Roadmen (see *Reuben Snake, Your Humble Serpent*). The spiritual kinship I felt with my Huichol shaman-mentors was renewed as soon as I began attending Native American Church peyote meetings in 1990 (Fikes 1996, 2016). I remained a member of the Religious Society of Friends meeting in Reno until 2010, because I valued our egalitarian form of worship, which occurs without paid clergy or pledging allegiance to dogmatic creeds.

The lawsuit I initiated against Peter T. Furst in 1996 was dismissed by New Mexico's Supreme Court in 2003, without my being afforded a trial by jury. I filed that lawsuit against Furst after suffering through several years of devastating loss of career support from certain American anthropologists, including Professors Marcus and Rappaport. Praying with Native American Church members was my primary source of comfort during the depressing years I dealt with the abuse of power that academic anthropologists were unleashing against me. But in 2003, I ceased making daily prayers in Spanish to the Holy Spirit. I also had to cope with the tragic death of my brother-in-law during the civil war in Bosnia in December of 1992. These twin shocks made me increasingly skeptical about the value of praying to the God worshipped by monotheists. After taking this decision to free myself from monotheistic dogma, I moved steadily down the path toward accepting NAC, *Wixarika* and *Haudenosaunee* (Iroquois) teachings as my spiritual foundation.

I was fifteen or sixteen years old when I first read Aldous Huxley's book, *The Doors of Perception*. In high school, I began playing football in order to become more popular, a need I felt after being regularly insulted and called a "teacher's pet" by some of my classmates. Reading Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* and attending rock concerts and counterculture events, such as a sitar performance by Ravi Shankar and a lecture by Timothy Leary, marked the beginning of my journey beyond the confines of mainstream America.

That journey led me to quit playing football at the end of the summer of 1968, about the time of the chaotic Democratic National Convention held in Chicago. I soon decided I must graduate from high school one semester early. Those two decisions were prompted by several events: a) my best friend told our football coach I was smoking marijuana, b) I turned in a "borrowed" insect collection for my biology class (described in Note 1), and c) I was disturbed by the tragic news of assassinations (e.g., of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy) and the police brutality we witnessed during the Chicago Democratic Convention.

I realize now that Huxley's positive experience with mescaline, the chief psychoactive ingredient in peyote, aroused my interest in trying peyote. Of course, during high school, my experiences were limited to smoking marijuana and hashish with some of my high school friends. One of those friends, Kent Feyerabend, extolled the use of LSD, but I didn't try that until college (see below). My father suspected I was using marijuana because he had taught briefly in a continuation high school, which was a place frequented by many so-called juvenile delinquents. My father knew that many of his continuation high school students were using marijuana. He knew marijuana smoking was becoming more widespread, so he didn't want his son using it.

During my childhood, my father had taught "special needs" children and given therapy to several children who were emotionally "disturbed." He felt that therapy for them was necessary, frequently because their abnormal behavior was a result of their parents' saying and doing things that disturbed them. In addition to his part-time clinical psychology practice, he was busy with part-time teaching at Santa Ana Community College. Moreover, my father and mother began investing in real estate in San Diego County, primarily in Encinitas and Cardiff, around 1964. Watching their investments meant that during many weekends, we stayed overnight in Cardiff so my parents could maintain the property they owned and/or buy or sell real estate. Both my

parents were involved in making repairs, cleaning up when tenants left an apartment, and finding replacements for them. Their real estate work on weekends provided me with an opportunity to go hunting with Reynolds Johnson, who was a resident of Cardiff, CA.

After I quit playing football, I made time to aid my father by tutoring Marines at the Marine Corps Air Station in El Toro, CA. They were taking courses required to obtain their high school diplomas. Some of them were not much older than I was. A few of them told me about their tragic experiences during combat in Vietnam. I noticed that my father was assisting Marines in avoiding fighting on Vietnam's front lines, especially those who were enrolled in Chapman College courses. My father worked to get some of them assigned to perform other kinds of military service. Bill Bauer, one of the college students who was aided by my father, worked diligently in 2022 to obtain approval for a memorial honoring my father. The memorial to JC Fikes is located at the United States Marine Corps Museum in Triangle, Virginia.

Although *The Doors of Perception* was essential to my journey away from the mainstream, I didn't feel in 1967-68 that the "silent majority" was willing to change direction by taking a different path. What I saw and heard in "Reefer Madness" seemed representative of how marijuana was still perceived by my parents and other mainstream Americans. Aldous Huxley's vision of expanding consciousness through psychedelics, "stronger" than marijuana, was extolled by a minority at that time. Remember that California outlawed LSD on October 6, 1966, when Ronald Reagan was Governor). Four years later, on October 27, 1970, President Nixon started the drug war by signing into law the Controlled Substances Act. In hindsight, Nixon's "drug war," i.e., his use of federally branded "controlled substances," seems like a clever way to get rid of political opponents ("enemies"). These included members of the counterculture, among them Vietnam War veterans (including many war protestors), as well as African Americans and Hispanics.

My father knew LSD was being used in therapy and among counter-culture advocates, but I presume that he didn't take it. At least he did not talk to me about taking it. I remember clearly that in 1970, Dr. Robert Levy (see below) told me privately that "LSD is a poison." The first time I tried LSD was during the fall semester of 1971, while I was traveling around the world as a student aboard Chapman College's World Campus Afloat. A classmate on that world study voyage gave me a dose of "windowpane" on blotter paper, which allowed me to notice something strange happening while listening to a Chapman College professor's lecture. I was able to see each particle of the chalk he used to write notes on the blackboard leave the chalk and reappear on the blackboard. Observing each particle of chalk as it stuck to the blackboard was unusual but not remarkable enough to be life-changing. The second and last time I took LSD was in 1972, when a University of California at Irvine classmate and I stayed overnight in the desert at Joshua Tree National Monument. Although we had pleasant experiences there, it was not life-changing enough to warrant taking LSD again. For me, the Fall 1971 voyage around the world proved to be more mind-expanding than either of those two quick trips on LSD.

I was very fortunate to have had the opportunity to travel around the world. Taking this four-month voyage was affordable because my father received a significant discount for me while he taught part-time at Chapman College, the sponsor of my world study tour, "Semester at Sea." I knew about the Semester at Sea (it was called "World Campus Afloat" in 1971) because my

father was teaching part-time at Chapman College. During the late 1960s, my father befriended Dr. M.A. Griffiths, a Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at Chapman. Dr. Griffiths was also in charge of the World Campus Afloat. I remember taking Scott Griffiths, his son, rabbit hunting with me on a weekend when my parents and I were staying in Cardiff, CA. It was a blessing that my parents had a substantial discount from Chapman, as it would have been too expensive for them to send me around the world on that study tour otherwise. So when my parents asked me, “Do you want to do this?” I immediately said, “Yes, I want to do this!”

When my voyage departed from San Pedro, CA, in September of 1971, I had already taken two classes in 1970 with Dr. Robert Levy, a former psychiatrist, teaching social anthropology classes at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), and two classes with Dr. Anthony Wilden in 1971. Dr. Levy was an admirer of Gregory Bateson, known by many as Margaret Mead’s third husband. Taking classes from Professors Robert Levy and Anthony Wilden made me appreciate Gregory Bateson’s accomplishments as a brilliant anthropologist, naturalist, and pioneer in interpreting pathological family communication (Bateson 1972, Laing 1967: 118-19, Watzlawick, Beavin, Jackson 1967, Wilden 1972). Many years later, in approximately 2012, I discovered that my guru, Gregory Bateson, wrote the policy plan essential to creating the Central Intelligence Agency (Price 1998).

The two classes I took with Dr. Levy in 1970, one on Psychological Anthropology and another, my independent study on shamanism, made me eager to attend Bateson’s lecture at UCSD. To gain knowledge of shamanism Dr. Levy required that I read Carlos Castaneda’s first book, *The Teachings of Don Juan* (1968), two or three of Mircea Eliade’s books, including *Shamanism* (1964), several essays written by well-known anthropologists such as Malinowski and authors (e.g., Knud Rasmussen) of essays included in Lessa and Vogt’s *Reader in Comparative Religion*. I also read several of Gregory Bateson’s essays in classes taught by Drs. Levy and Wilden in 1970-71. I clearly recall some of Bateson’s UCSD lecture, delivered on October 26, 1970, particularly his insight that nature itself deserves to be treated as sacred (Fikes 2011a:162-63). Bateson encouraged us to venerate nature as an expression of information processing. He helped me learn to see a divine mind in nature, a mind visible in patterns like radial or bilateral symmetry, as well as markings such as stripes, diamonds, and bands on different species of snakes. All these phenotypical patterns visible in our “external mind” (nature) are created by genetic coding, which Bateson recognized as a manifestation of mind working inside each of us as well as throughout the natural world.

Hearing him lecture made me eager to meet him. The first stop during my four-month journey around the world was in Honolulu, Hawaii. I don’t remember whether I already had Bateson’s phone number or if I got it after we arrived in Honolulu. When he answered my call, I told him that I would really love to meet him during my stay in Honolulu. I was excited when he invited me to his house! I enjoyed having lunch with him and his family, as well as three or four hours of conversation with Bateson. That remarkable chat in 1971 motivated me to have two more private conversations with Bateson. Our second meeting, in 1972, occurred when I got funding for Bateson to offer seminars at U.C.I. Our third meeting, in 1974, was crucial to my decision to earn my doctorate in social anthropology at the University of Michigan (Fikes 2011a: 220-21).

The day after having that life-changing chat with Bateson, I toured the Pearl Harbor War Memorial in Honolulu. At other ports where our ship docked, I had more remarkable experiences, some of which are summarized below. (Note 3)

CONCLUSION

Aldous Huxley's experiences with mescaline, as described in *The Doors of Perception*, sparked my interest in peyote. However, my first encounter with an entheogen, aside from marijuana and hashish, took place in the summer of 1970 when I tried psilocybin mushrooms. At the time, my Spanish was nearly fluent, so I traveled alone to Oaxaca, Mexico, to a village called San José del Pacifico. Situated in the mountains at about 2,500 meters above sea level, this tiny village was becoming a popular destination for psilocybin mushroom enthusiasts, mainly inspired by Gordon Wasson's reports on Maria Sabina's Mazatec mushroom rituals. After getting off the bus in San José, I quickly found an elderly indigenous Mexican woman. She brought me into her house, and I bought two large, fresh psilocybin mushrooms. I ate them raw and then started walking through a beautiful forest. It was nighttime, and I was alone. Just before entering the forest, I saw a black jaguar about 75 meters away, but I wasn't afraid. Next, I met an American man with whom I spoke briefly. Then, after walking for a while, I sat down beneath a tall tree and experienced what Mircea Eliade might call an "ecstatic experience" or "magical flight." For several hours afterward, I had positive experiences (Fikes 2002: 82). Consuming those psilocybin mushrooms helped me feel a profound connection to trees and nature.

My love of nature and my years as a hunter in southern California, along with a positive mushroom experience in 1970, led me to conduct fieldwork with the Huichol of Santa Catarina. My dedication to understanding their indigenous ritual cycle began with my doctorate (Fikes 1985) and continued through my firsthand research on shamanic initiation. My four Wixarika shaman-mentors showed me how to honor two plant entheogens—peyote and Kieri (Fikes 1996, 2011a, 2011b, 2021a, 2021b, 2024). I feel fortunate to have had four Huichol shaman-mentors and Reuben Snake guide me during nearly forty years of study. They helped me recognize the presence of a divine mind in nature and within each of us. My mentors encouraged me to practice what Carlos Castaneda only preached about in his first two books—that is, the importance of having firsthand experiences with peyote.

Starting that lawsuit in 1974 against Diego Delgado gradually entangled me in a confrontation with illegal archaeology, academic fraud, and abuse of power. In Part 2 of "Confessions of a Recovering Anthropologist," I will examine how this confrontation led to the AAA's failure to adjudicate three complaints about Peter Furst's misconduct, as described in 1992 by me, Professor Phil Weigand, and Juan Negrín. After thirty years of avoiding discussion of my experiences as a victim of academic abuse, I am finally sharing my traumatic experiences to provide evidence of misconduct that many American anthropologists have refused to acknowledge. I know that I am not the only one who has experienced academic misconduct, and that those of us who have suffered it must be honest in sharing details about our own experiences if we want to help prevent it in the future.

ENDNOTES

1) During the first semester of my junior year in high school, in the fall of 1967, I submitted a collection of insects that had previously been observed and graded by my biology teacher. I had been too busy playing on the football team and earning money as a “box boy” at a nearby grocery store to spare any time for searching and catching butterflies and other insects. I imagine that such an assignment might be viewed today as killing innocent creatures for no good reason. Be that as it may, this was my first attempt at “cheating.” I got caught because I was too naïve to remove all the “borrowed” insects from their large, lovely glass case and then put them all inside another case or container. My biology teacher, who was also one of my football coaches, easily recognized this particularly impressive insect collection. He told me privately that he would allow me to complete some “extra credit” assignments to compensate for my first and only attempt to cheat in school. Although he spared me from public humiliation by keeping news of my infraction private, admitting my dishonesty soon led me to question my priorities. As a result, some eighteen months later, I quit playing football and working as a box boy. That decision freed me to make learning my highest priority.

2) My fieldwork had to yield sufficient new information, based on doing “original research,” to merit earning my doctoral dissertation. In 1974, I was aware of three “tribal” societies in Mexico, other than the Huichol, that might be suitable for my field research. One such society, the Seri (aka “Konkaak”), had survived for millennia by fishing, hunting, and gathering. When I first visited the Seri in 1974, they were living in two tiny settlements in the state of Sonora, Mexico. Diego Delgado had encouraged me to do my fieldwork among the Seri. But after briefly staying twice with them in their desert-ocean homeland, it became clear that they were too acculturated for me to complete dissertation research by living among them. This was due to missionary success in converting them to Christianity, a process aided by the fact that the Seri had been confined to a tiny fraction of their ancestral homeland. I decided I needed to select another society, one in which I could still observe, record, and interpret subsistence-oriented rituals uncontaminated by Evangelical Christian missionization. I briefly considered studying the Lacandon, a tiny group of Mayan speakers living in southern Mexico. I quickly concluded that they also were too acculturated. The third society I considered was the Tarahumara (aka “Raramuri”), a group who lived some 300 miles north of the Huichol, in the same mountain range, the Western Sierra Madre.

In 1975, after speaking with a Tarahumara fieldworker and U.C.L.A. anthropologist, Dr. John Kennedy, I decided their ad hoc peyote use, involving only small groups of Tarahumara, was far less remarkable than the complex annual peyote rituals still practiced by traditional Huichol. I

made this decision in the second half of 1975, after reading Barbara Myerhoff's *Peyote Hunt* (1974), which was required reading in one of my graduate anthropology classes during my first semester at the University of Michigan. Myerhoff's book made it obvious that the Wixarika annual temple ritual cycle, including deer hunting, maize horticulture and their arduous peyote hunt—followed by the Peyote Dance (Fikes 1985, 2011a)—were integral aspects of a more intact and comprehensive annual ritual cycle than annual rituals surviving among the other three indigenous Mexican societies I had been considering for my fieldwork.

My decision to focus my field research on the Wixarika annual ritual cycle at Santa Catarina proved to be justified. My doctoral dissertation interpreted both the underlying patterns and the scheduling of Wixarika annual rituals, clarifying what Professor Roy Rappaport referred to as the simultaneous and sequential aspects of liturgical order (Fikes 1985). Understanding the unity of these complementary aspects of “liturgical order” was essential to shed light on their pre-Columbian adaptation to their environment, facilitated by their annual aboriginal ritual cycle.

The deer hunting symbolism discernible in Huichol peyote hunts, especially their remarkable ritualized shooting of arrows around peyote to be “harvested,” fascinated me. After hunting for fourteen years, I wanted to learn why Huichol equated peyote with deer. Moreover, after reading Carlos Castaneda's first two books, I was eager to learn, possibly by eating peyote with Huichol shamans during rituals and at sacred sites, how peyote enabled them to become shamans and why they venerated deer and peyote as incarnations of their tribal deity, Elder Brother (Tamatsi). With the wisdom of hindsight, I realize that doing fieldwork and research among the Huichol appealed to me because it allowed me to unite my lifelong fascination with animals with my recently found passion: having first-hand experiences with peyote (and later *Kieri*) as a method essential to fully comprehending shamanic initiation, subsistence-oriented rituals, and sacred sites.

After completing nearly four decades of research with four Huichol shamans, two of whom were esteemed elderly ritual specialists known as Kawiterutsixi, I believe I have developed an empathetic appreciation for their reverence for peyote and *Kieri*, two unique entheogenic plants they equate with Tamatsi (Fikes 2021a, 2021b). To accomplish that, I combined “radical empiricism” or “enhanced participation” inspired by Carlos Castaneda (Fikes 2011a, 2021a, 2021b, 2024) with orthodox anthropological research methods (Fikes 1993, 2011a, 2021a, 2024). I am indebted to those Huichol shamans and Kawiterutsixi who mentored me, as well as to members of the Native American Church (Fikes 1996). Having such mentors enabled me to acquire a profound reverence for what Gregory Bateson perceived as the divine mind in nature. They also deepened my understanding of the crucial role entheogens have played in aiding shamans in many societies to heal and lead rituals that aid their people to adapt sustainably to their habitats. Because I was seeking a supervised and traditional context in which to have firsthand experiences of veneration of peyote and *Kieri*, my involvement with marijuana, hashish, and psychoactive chemicals was relatively infrequent and brief.

3) After leaving Hawaii, we landed at the port of Pago Pago in American Samoa. It was a lovely, lush tropical island where Margaret Mead did her research on adolescent females (Fikes 2008b). Our next stop was Port Moresby in New Guinea. I took a tour that flew me and a few classmates from Port Moresby into the New Guinea Highlands. The tribal people we met in those still remote Highlands were members of the first “primitive” society I had ever visited. Some of them still wore traditional (or at least non-Western) clothes. The bows and arrows I bought directly from them still adorn our walls. I like to imagine they were people similar to the Iatmul that

Gregory Bateson studied and the Tsembaga that Roy Rappaport studied. After departing New Guinea, we landed in Bali, Indonesia. Bali's landscape was beautiful and its people friendly. In 1971 it hadn't been inundated with tourists. For decades, I dreamed of returning to Bali, but never did. In Darwin, Australia (our next stop), I enjoyed drinking warm beer and visiting the small town of Alice Springs. Our next stop, Singapore, offered me unique experiences. I remember an English colonist telling us, probably at the Raffles Hotel, about earning his livelihood by growing tea on his colonial plantation. Upon leaving that famous hotel, a classmate and I boarded a rickshaw. The driver immediately asked if we wanted to try smoking opium. We naively agreed, and he took us somewhere nearby to meet a man from India who lived in a very tiny place, perhaps because he was an opium addict. We both smoked opium with him there, but neither of us enjoyed it. We just lay down in bed, being too "spaced out" to move, scarcely talking, and mostly daydreaming. It was all rather boring. After leaving Singapore, we docked at Bombay (now Mumbai), India. I remember meeting a hospitable Zoroastrian man at his home. I was fascinated with what he explained, especially his revelations about how and why Zoroastrians allowed buzzards or vultures to feed on the corpses of deceased people. Their ancient custom of allowing scavenger birds to eat rotting human flesh, thereby keeping nature free from embalming chemicals or fancy coffins, struck me as ecologically friendly. The vegetarian meals in Bombay were delicious, but the prevalence of beggars on the streets saddened me. During an overnight stay in Matheran, a charming small town in the mountains near Mumbai, I was fascinated by seeing many monkeys roaming freely and awed by an Indian magician who "materialized" something (perhaps a snake). At our next stop, Colombo in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) I intended to visit a Buddhist pilgrimage site, Adam's Peak. When I arrived by train in Hatton, the watchmaker I met and his friends soon persuaded me not to undertake the climb to Adam's Peak because they believed I would likely not have enough time to do so and then get back on the ship before it left Colombo. I remember enjoying the orange robes worn by Buddhist monks and discussing the socialist views of the watchmakers in Hatton. After arriving at the port of Mombasa, Kenya, I took an amazing safari tour of Tanzania with several classmates. It was not only the African animals that impressed me. Our safari driver was a veteran of the Mau Mau rebellion against British colonists occupying their homeland. I sat right next to him in the front seat so I could talk to him instead of my classmates. He showed me a scar on his leg and explained that "this scar came from our fight to kick the British out of our country." When I asked him if his tribe, the Kikuyu, used entheogenic or mind-expanding plants, he said yes and mentioned a powerful plant, Kajickijicki (or so it sounded). We also stopped briefly at Olduvai Gorge to listen to Dr. Richard Leakey discuss his archaeological research. The next port we landed at, Lourenco Marques, was part of the Portuguese colony in Mozambique. Two somewhat older Portuguese women showed me around their town. They were very hospitable, and I understood much of what they were telling me because I was almost fluent in Spanish. I vaguely remember them taking me to a restaurant which featured a female singer of Fado. When we docked again, in Cape Town, South Africa, we found ourselves in what was still an apartheid state. I remember that some classmates and I were taken to meet with a group of White university students in Cape Town. With them, we discussed the politics of apartheid in what was a cocktail party-like setting with Black servers. A far more memorable event occurred as I was walking alone down a main street in Cape Town. I was approached by a somewhat older Black man, a native of South Africa. I briefly spoke with him, and then he asked if I would accompany him to go inside a whites-only restaurant. Without hesitation, I consented to enter that restaurant with him. I was convinced that such Jim Crow-style discrimination should not be

tolerated. We went inside and sat down at a table covered in white linen. Almost immediately, we were confronted by a waiter, or perhaps a bouncer, who emphatically declared, “You can’t sit here with this African.” So we left after making our point that such unfair treatment of people was wrong. That experience of confronting racial injustice is still vivid. What I remember best about our stopover in the next port, Freetown in Sierra Leone, is the beauty of the ocean and the beach, where I went hiking by myself. I did not take advantage of any of the tours, so there isn't much more to tell, except that our ship was docked near a Russian ship. I was able to go inside and chat with a few Russians for the first time in my life. Our final stop before returning to New York was on one of the Canary Islands where I was able to speak Spanish with the inhabitants on that island.

The crew, as well as the ship's owner, were all Taiwanese, and everyone was very pleasant and polite: it was a very positive experience for me! Exercising my memory enough to help me recall my most remarkable experiences during this four-month world study-voyage makes me grateful, as well as mindful that these were stepping-stones on my path toward becoming a social anthropologist.

LINK TO APPENDIX A: www.jayfikes.com

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