

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS FE 4176

SIDE 1

Band 1 — #1, Shaman Chant (6:20)
Band 2 — #2, Shaman Chant (2:00)
Band 3 — #3, Shaman Chant (6:10)
Band 4 — #4, Shaman Chant (1:20)
Band 5 — #5, Shaman Chant (2:20)
Band 6 — #6, Shaman Chant (2:40)
Band 7 — #7, Shaman Chant (2:10)

SIDE 2

Band 1 — #8, Shaman Chant (5:45)
Band 2 — #9, Shaman Chant (1:30)
#10, Shaman Chant (1:30)
Band 3 — #11, Shaman Chant (1:38)
#12, Shaman Chant (2:10)
Band 4 — #13, Shaman Chant (3:50)
Band 5 — #14, Shaman Chant (1:15)
Band 6 — #15, Shaman Chant (4:40)
Band 7 — #16, Shaman Chant (2:30)

SIDE 3

Band 1 — #17, Shaman Chant (1:47)
#18, Shaman Chant (1:00)
Band 2 — #19, Shaman Chant (2:03)
#20, Shaman Chant (1:00)
Band 3 — #21, Shaman Chant (2:17)
#22, Shaman Chant (2:25)
Band 4 — #23, Shaman Chant (1:23)
#24, Shaman Chant (2:58)
Band 5 — #25, War Chant (1:13)
#26, Shaman Chant (2:01)
Band 6 — #27, Shaman Chant (1:41)
#28, Shaman Chant (2:25)
Band 7 — #29, Shaman Chant (3:38)
Band 8 — #30, Shaman Chant (1:07)

SIDE 4

Band 1 — #31, Shaman Chant (3:25)
#32, Women's Chant (:50)
Band 2 — #33, Lament (1:15)
#34, Shaman Chant (1:30)
#35, Shaman Chant (1:53)
Band 3 — #36, Lament (2:48)
#37, Lament (1:30)
Band 4 — #38, Lament (1:08)
#39, Lament (1:10)
#40, Lament (1:43)
Band 5 — #41, Lament (1:00)
#42, Lament (2:17)
Band 6 — #43, Lament (:55)
#44, Lament (:50)
Band 7 — #45, Lullaby (1:10)
Band 8 — #46, Chant (1:30)
#47, Chant (2:15)

SELK'NAM CHANTS OF TIERRA DEL FUEGO, ARGENTINA

47 SHAMANISTIC
CHANTS AND LAMENTS

RECORDED BY ANNE CHAPMAN

COVER PHOTOGRAPH OF LOLA KIEPJA BY ANNE CHAPMAN

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS FE 4176

SELK'NAM (ONA) CHANTS of TIERRA del FUEGO, ARGENTINA

47 Shaman Chants and Laments

Descriptive notes and translations of texts by Anne Chapman

Cantometric Analysis by Alan Lomax

PRODUCED WITH THE COOPERATION OF:
The MUSEE DE L'HOMME, PARIS and THE WENNER-GREN FOUNDATION N. Y.

INTRODUCTION

These records comprise 47 chants sung by the last true Indian of the Selk'nam (Ona) (1) group, Lola Kiepja. The Selk'nam had no musical instruments. These chants are sung without any sort of accompaniment.

The Selk'nam were the former inhabitants of the largest island of Tierra del Fuego which is located just south of the Straits of Magellan (2). When these recordings were taped in 1966, Lola was the only one of ten surviving people of Indian descent who was still a Selk'nam. She was the eldest of the ten. About ninety years old, she was born just before the aboriginal culture was shattered. She died on October 9, 1966 four months after the tapes had been made. Psychologically and emotionally she was identified with her culture and never became assimilated as the others did. She expressed herself poorly in Spanish and preferred to speak her native language. She was the last shaman (medicine-woman) of her group and thus she possessed a profound knowledge of its mystical traditions. Despite her tragic life, she laughed easily and was, I believe, happiest when singing.

Lola learned the last two chants on these records when she lived for about a year in a Salesian mission on the island. But they are radically transformed variants of the originals. The other 45 chants are purely indigenous, except for occasional Spanish words of some of the recitations. These chants are the expression of a people who lived exclusively by hunting, gathering and fishing, the most archaic tradition of mankind. An art of a paleolithic culture, they represent the most primitive type of music known.

1. Although the designation Ona may be more commonly employed in the ethnographic literature than Selk'nam; following Professor M. Gusinde, we prefer to refer to them with the latter term, their real name.
2. These recordings were made in Lola's hut on the Indian reservation near Lake Fagnano, Argentina from March to June, 1966. An UHER recorder was employed at 19 speed. These records are a selection of the best renderings of the shamanistic and mourning chants from the some 20 tapes. Each chant was recorded from 4 to 8 times. There remain some 45 chants of the initiation rite which are to be issued sometime in the future. This field study was made possible through the support given by Professor Claude Levi-Strauss of the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, College de France, Gilbert Rouget, head of the Departement d'Ethnomusicologie du Musee de l'Homme and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Special recognition is due to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, New York, for having so quickly responded to our request for a subsidy.

Among the few recordings made of the chants of the Ona (Selk'nam) and their neighbors the Yahganes (Yamana) or Alacaluf (Halakwulup) are those of Colonel C. Wellington Furlong. These were among the first two groups made in 1907-1908 using Edison cylinders and are among the earliest recordings made among a primitive people. They were re-recorded in 1948 by Colonel Furlong in the Library of Congress. They comprise over a dozen songs of the Selk'nam and the Yamana and are sung by a number of singers, men as well as women. Professors M. Gusinde and W. Koppers made a number of recordings in 1923-24, also using cylinders, when there were still about 279 Selk'nam alive. These were stored in the Berlin Archives and were subsequently analyzed together with Colonel Furlong's recordings by Erich M. Von Hornbostel. These analyses are invaluable for an understanding of this music. They comprise two articles: "Fuegian Songs" in *American Anthropologist*, vol. 38, no. 3, 1936, pp. 357-67 and "The Music of the Fuegians" in *Ethnos*, vol. 13, nos. 3-4, 1948, pp. 61-97. A few years ago a few chants were taped among the Selk'nam by Rodolfo Casamiquela, a paleontologist of the Museo de la Plata, Buenos Aires. Several of these, with the voice of the late Santiago Rupañini were issued on a record of Indian music of Argentina by the Instituto de Etnomusicologia of Buenos Aires in 1966. Rupañini died in March, 1967.

A part of the "Shaman curing song" (record I, B, no. 6) has been analyzed by G. Rouget. Cf. his two articles "Transcrire ou decrir? A propos de chants malinke et fuegien" and "Sonagramme d'un chant fuegien", to appear in the volumes in honor of Claude Levi-Strauss and Marius Schneider respectively.

The population of the Selk'nam has been estimated to be about 3500 or at most 4000(1) in late aboriginal times, that is to the eighteen seventies when the island began to be occupied systematically by the Whites. During the decades which followed, most of the Indians were slaughtered, died from "White diseases" and other results of white occupation. In 1919 Professor Martin Gusinde counted 279 Selk'nams. Ten years later there were less than 100. Two years ago there were still ten, including four whose fathers were of European descent. Now, as of 1968, there are eight. Nothing of the living culture remains. All of these Indians speak Spanish although several also speak some Selk'nam. They are all over the age of 50 and their descendants, of which there are very few, are completely assimilated to modern culture.

The Selk'nam were a strictly land-bound people. They hunted mainly the guanaco, one

1. Gusinde, Martin, *Die Feuerland-Indianer I. Band Die Selk'nam*, Modling bei Wien, 1931, pp. 146-148. This great work comprising 1176 pages is by far the most important ethnography of this group.

of the "American camels" related to the llama, vicuna and alpaca of the Andes. They also hunted fox and a great variety of birds. The Indians living in the northern part of the island hunted several types of rodents. Fishing was less vital than the gathering of mollusks. They occasionally harpooned seals. When a whale became stranded, the Indians near-by signaled by fire so that all could come and partake. The women gathered certain roots, seeds and berries as well as eggs. The Selk'nam therefore had a varied diet and apparently rarely suffered from hunger. Their main hunting instrument and weapon was the bow and arrow.

The climate of this area of Tierra del Fuego is usually not as severe as it has been reputed to be despite the constant winds of the summer months. The mean summer temperature is 50° F. and for winter, 25° F.

As they were more or less constantly on the move they used guanaco skins lashed to poles and trees for shelter. The women were the porters, carrying the household gear and sometimes an infant wrapped tightly on a cradle board similar to that which the Indians of the Great Plains used. The men led the way from one camp site to another. Armed with bows and arrows, they were constantly on the alert to track down near-by game. They all dressed exclusively in animal skins, mainly guanaco though sometimes fox and rodent. Besides the capes made of several skins sewn together, the women wore a wrap-round skirt and both sexes wore a kind of legging and moccasin in the winter.



A Selk'nam family. Photograph taken in February, 1919. Courtesy of Professor Martin Gusinde.

The Selk'nam had divided their land into a number of units called harwin (meaning earth as well). These units were occupied by patrilinear and patrilocal kin group. Each harwin group was associated with one of the four cardinal points, called shoon (also the word for sky). The "skys" were the exogamic units, that is, marriage was forbidden between two people who were associated to the same "sky".

The boundaries of each harwin were fixed by tradition although they were not always respected. Trespassing was one of the main causes of "war" among the Selk'nam.

These wars were actually squirmishes involving 10 to 30 men on the attacking side and usually lasting only a few hours. Another cause of war was vengeance for the death of a kin alleged to have been killed by the supernatural power of a shaman (medicine-man) of some other harwin.

There were usually several shamans called xoon(s) in each local kin group. They were often feared as it was believed that they could inflict mortal sickness on anyone against whom they had a grievance. At the same time they were respected for their spiritual power and the contacts they could establish with the sources of power, the same four "skys" mentioned above which were thought to exist beyond the world. The shamans were considered capable of curing almost any illness. Too they were responsible to their group in the hunt, in war, to clear up the weather, to bring a whale ashore in times of hunger, etc.

Another focus of the Selk'nam culture was the boy's initiation ceremony, called Hain, a term also designating the hut in which the rituals took place. The youths who were being or had recently been initiated were called Kloketen(s). The ceremony customarily took place when an abundance of food was available; in autumn (March to June) when the game was fat or when a whale became stranded on the shore. Several or more kin groups would participate in this rite which sometimes lasted two or three months. Part of it consisted in the re-enactment of certain mythological traditions. The men disguised themselves by painting their bodies and donning tall masks made of guanaco skin or bark and pantomiming certain spirits which terrified the women and instilled fear in the young men being initiated. At a certain moment of the ceremony the secret of the Hain (that the spirits were only men) was revealed to the latter, but never to the women.

Several groups would meet occasionally for bartering as well as for competitive racing, wrestling and dodging blunted arrows. Shamans from different groups would also compete to determine who possessed the greatest supernatural power (cf. p. 20).

Although there were no chiefs, there was usually in each local group a highly respected individual called k'mal whose advice was sought on different occasions. The shamans also had great prestige as did men who were known by honorific titles such as champion hunter, racer, wrestler, warrior, expert arrow-maker.

The language of the Selk'nam is related to that of the Tehuelche Indians who inhabited Patagonia on the mainland. The two groups shared many other culture traits as well and in all likelihood, the Selk'nam stemmed from the Tehuelches.

Although the Selk'nam occupied most of the "Great Island" of Tierra del Fuego, another group called the Haush inhabited the southeastern extreme of the island. There is one chant in this collection, which according to my information belonged to this group (cf. p. 21). A canoe people, "nomads of the sea", the Yamana (also called Yahgan) and the Hala-kwulup (or Alacalufs) lived along the western coast of the island. The former occupied islands throughout the southwestern part of the archipelago and part of the mainland bordering the Straits of Magellan. All these groups inhabited an area which now forms part of Chile and Argentina.

THE SINGER, LOLA KIEPJA

Lola did not know the year of her birth.

I judge she was born in the eighteen seventies and was over 90 when she died. She bore 12 children, 7 by her first husband, an Indian by the name of Anik and the others after his death, with a Chilian. All of her children had died. For the last two she sang the mourning chant no. 36. As a child and through the early years of her marriage she lived as an Indian. This was the time however when the Indians were being attacked and slaughtered by professional killers hired by the owners of the newly founded estancias, sheep ranches. Two Salesian missions were established in the area before the turn of the century. However most of the Indians were very reluctant to take refuge in the missions because the drastic change from nomade to sedentary ways of life caused much suffering. Those who did not die there usually left or escaped after a short period of residence.

Since 1869 an Anglican missionary, Thomas Bridges, had been working among the Yahgan Indians on the west coast of the island. Shortly after the turn of the century a group of Selk'nam Indians asked the sons of Thomas Bridges to settle on their land, on the east coast so that they might come there when being pursued by other Whites. With the labor of the Indians, the Bridges family built the first road across the island and established a sheep ranch on the Atlantic coast called Viamonte.



Lu bella Kiappa.

Lola Kiepja circa 1905*

But by that time, the beginning of this century, so many of the Indians had died that the killings had ceased.

Through the decades which followed, Indian families lived in shacks and tents on the Viamonte farm and on other farms where the men worked as sheep-hands during the summer months. During the winter they would revert to their traditional nomadic way of life. The final epidemic in 1924 decimated so many of the older people that the culture all but ceased to exist. A few families held the last Hain celebration in 1937.

When I first met Lola late in 1964 she was fully aware that she was much more Indian than any of the nine other survivors. Although she was a shaman she did not possess full shamanistic power, as women rarely did among her group. She could cure with her power but she could not kill with it. She had received it from the spirit of a maternal uncle some few years after his death in the twenties. His power or spirit, called waiuwín, came to her in a dream. As was customary, she had been training to become

*This photograph was taken by Carlos R. Gallardo and reproduced in his book Los Onas, Buenos Aires, Cabaut y Cia, Editores, 1910.

a shaman for years. Her mother, two of her mother's brothers as well as one of her father's brothers and two of her maternal grandfather's brothers had been shamans. However her own chants had all belonged to one or another of the shamans in her maternal line. This situation is not typical of aboriginal times when shamanistic power and the chants were usually inherited through the paternal line.

In native times she would not have had the right to sing the greater part of the chants which are recorded here, nor to claim so many as her own. Had they not died prematurely, others of her kin would undoubtedly have become shamans and would have had rights to many of the chants she possessed. The war chants presented here were, according to my information, sung by any shaman who had great power. In any event, most of the shaman chants like the laments were owned individually, acquired by inheritance or composed by a first owner. No one could sing someone else's chants without permission. Therefore it is not surprising that Lola was very exact about the identity of the owners of the chants.

Lola delighted to sing for the tape recorder, "la maquina" as she called it. Invariably she would insist that I play back immediately when she had stopped singing. While listening she often laughed, smiled and seemed very pleased and would comment olichen (lovely). But sometimes she would say yippen (ugly), scowl and looking worried say that she wanted to record the same chant again, right away. (1). She sang some of the chants again and again, mainly two of the laments (number 36 and 38) for her last two sons and her mother. She sang these so frequently that often I would not record them, especially during the last few weeks when I was low on tapes and it was so cold that the batteries had to be taken out of the recorder every minute or so to be heated on the stove. But she wanted to be recorded every time she sang and when I did not do so she became visibly irritated. In vain I tried to explain that I could not record the same chant indefinitely.

Sometimes when I would greet her in the morning, she would smile widely saying, "I found another", meaning that during the night she had recalled the chant of a certain person which she had heard sometimes fifty years earlier. She would ask me excitedly to hurry, as if she were holding a hot potato, and get the machine ready lest the chant disappear from her memory before we could record it. Once recorded, I would play it back to her and then ask her to sing it again, in order to get the best possible rendition. She did not always comply with my request. There were times she preferred to sing another chant and some chants she did not like at all. Once in a while she would become irritated when I tried to insist, but she would usually laugh and ask me why I wanted to record it in view of the fact that it was so ugly. At other times, however, she seemed to understand that her voice was being recorded in order to preserve the chants. Of the 92 chants we recorded in 1966, 38 had been recorded the year before. The rest she recalled gradually as we worked together near the end of her life.

She made me promise never to play the tapes for anyone on the island, except for Angela and another Indian friend. In 1965, during the three weeks we recorded, whenever anyone approached the house she became nervous and would ask me to hide the recorder. The following year we had very few visitors and too she seemed less timid about it. She explained to me that the "others" (the Whites as well as

1. Once I played some tapes of Bach, jazz and Marian Anderson. She listened politely for a little while and then became disinterested.

some of the other Indians) would laugh if they heard her singing, that they did not understand. Once in a while she said that she was singing for the Indians to the North.

THE STYLE

Eric von Hornbostel who was the best authority on this music summarized its style as follows:

(1) its "dynamic trochee" rhythm which, contrary to our Western tendencies, avoids the upbeat; (2) a peculiar "emphatic" manner of singing which results from such factors as a certain voice-quality, strong accents on every time-unit, pulsation, slow and constant time; (3) a downward step-by-step shift of the main theme (stair-pattern) and a collapsing tendency of the melody, which from start to end continually decreases in pitch, intensity, and tonal range.

He further points out that:

This style prevails among the Indians of both Americas, including the Eskimo (also in Greenland), and among Siberian tribes who are related to the Indians, both somatically and culturally, as, e.g. the "paleo-asiatic" Chukchee and the Keto (Ostyak) on the Jenissei River, and among the semi-Tungus Orochtee on the lower Amur River, and in Korean folk-songs. (1)

Eighteen of the chants presented here have some text, however, the greater part consist of meaningless syllables. (2) I have the impression that in aboriginal times the singer would recite, sing with words, at some moment during the chant. Moreover it seems that the words were not stereotyped although the esoteric vocabulary would always have been employed by the shamans. And the social function of each chant would necessarily have determined the content of the verbal evocations.

A partially esoteric language was employed by the shaman singers consisting of the following characteristics:

1. Considerable distortion of the words of common usage.
2. Use of cryptonyms such as *ha* (bow) to mean shamanistic power... *tin* (eat) meaning to sing...
3. The name of a dead person is never used. Instead circumlocutions and kin terms (sometimes corresponding, sometimes not) were substituted for it, as for example: *han k'win saik*, literally—those who have departed—referring in these chants usually to the singer's two maternal uncles, both of whom were shamans; *ain*, father, referring to an uncle or a son of the singer.

1. Von Hornbostel, 1936, p. 363.
2. Von Hornbostel (1936, p. 360 and 1948 p. 83) was therefore mistaken when he stated that the Fuegian songs consisted only of meaningless syllables. M. Gusinde (p. 754) points out that the shaman would sometimes sing about a recent happening or would express some personal impression or opinion, quite regardless of the type of chant he was singing. This however was probably only at the beginning of a chant, as the singer was "warming up" preparatory to achieving a state of trance. Lola also, in chant number 8, relates that she is now all alone, and that she has no one to talk to—about shamanistic matters. Gusinde also states that sometimes the singer would make some reference to mythological beings (*op. cit.* p. 754).

4. Sometimes negations are employed instead of affirmations.
5. Frequently only isolated words are sung. Apparently they sufficed to evoke the mythological context the singer had in mind.

CULTURAL CONTEXTS OF THE CHANTS

In order to set these chants in their cultural context certain aspects of shamanism and of mourning rites among the Selk'nam should be described. Before beginning his chant the shaman would don a special head gear, a band made of guanaco skin, adorned with feathers of certain birds. His face was decorated with various designs daubed on with red and white clay. His supernatural power came to him when he was possessed by his spirit (*waiuwín*) and this was possibly only in trance. Trance seems to have been induced by self-hypnosis, brought on by the shaman concentrating all his energies in his chant. He would sing until changes in his voice indicated that his *waiuwín* had taken possession of him. Then his singing and body movements would become automatic. From Gusinde we have a description of the onset of a trance:

Upon beginning to sing a melody he would usually sit on his pallet with his legs crossed and the upper part of his body somewhat inclined forward, swaying from side to side like a pendulum. At the same time he would stare down, his arms hanging loose on either side. This entire affair of singing and dreaming was part of an enormous effort of the concentration of all his spiritual forces and was realized in order that the *xon* (i.e. shaman) achieve the state of auto suggestion, referred to above. (1)

An old experienced shaman would usually take 30 to 40 minutes to produce this state of mind. (2)

It is remarkable that trance was induced exclusively by the will, the power of concentration of the shaman himself. No stimulants were employed. The Selk'nam were unfamiliar with tobacco as well as hallucinatory plant derivatives. They drank only cold water and blood of the guanaco.

At some time during the seance he would jump and leap about, pounding his feet and even his fists on the ground. At times he would also vigorously shake his fur cape to increase his excitement or as a kind of accompaniment. This sort of extreme tension however did not last for the whole period of trance. For instance in a curing ceremony, a shaman had to pay strict attention to the sick person.

He had to be in a state of trance in order to cure and usually in order "to work" for his group. Also a shaman would induce a trance to keep in training, "for his health," as I was told. Furthermore the shamans had to be in trance during the public competitions, as will be briefly described below.

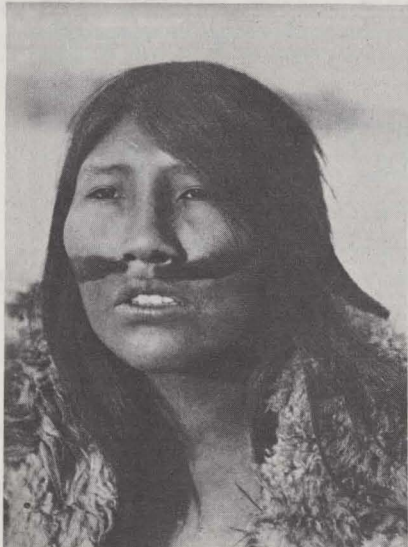
The Curing Seances

The curing seances were referred to as *kwaki-kaachin* literally "to draw out sickness". It appears that in most instances in order to cure the shaman had to enter into a trance.

Most of the shaman chants presented here were sung upon such occasions although they were also sung simply to keep in training or perhaps too for the satisfaction singing afforded.

1. M. Gusinde, *op. cit.*, p. 755
2. *ibid.* p. 753

For the Selk'nam the cause of disease was spiritual power and hence the cure had to counteract it by employing the same sort of power. So far as we know, they did not use medicinal plants. They used what might be described as a sort of psychotherapy. Diseases (kwaki) were thought to exist in the world outside of human bodies. Sicknesses were conceived as an object, now tangible, now almost intangible. In the latter instance they might be all but invisible and were perhaps optical illusions rather than objects. For instance Gusinde related that an Indian once pointed to a speck on the ground, saying that it was a kwaki. The author describes it as having the appearance of a piece of down. A shaman could "shoot" a kwaki like an arrow at his proposed victim and a shaman was thought to make someone ill at will by simply staring at him. Once lodged in the victim's body however, the kwaki took on a tangible form, that of a small animal or bird, of a long glimmering strand, etc. etc.



A young Selk'nam woman.
Courtesy of Professor Martin Gusinde

When anyone, excepting children (1) became ill, a shaman was summoned "to find the face" of the shaman who had caused the illness. When possible this shaman would be called to attend the sick person. If he was notified and refused to come, this was tantamount to an admission that he was responsible for the sickness. If he did attend the patient and the patient died, he was held equally responsible. Only if he were successful in the cure would the matter be settled. It was the shaman's job to extract—to draw out—the sickness, the kwaki, from the body of the ailing person. Having induced a state of trance through chanting, he was ready to locate the kwaki. Part of the treatment consisted also in sucking out the "bad blood". This was also accomplished by the supernatural power. It was often remarked that the bad blood was extracted by the shaman without piercing the skin of the patient. When he finally succeeded in drawing out the kwaki he would hold it up and comment its form, whether it was a rodent, a lizard, some kind of bird, etc. Part of the belief concerning the kwaki was that it was invisible to the aiuka (the non-shamans), therefore those present who were not shamans would not expect to see it.

Competition among Shamans

Chants number 6 and 24 were not sung during the curing seances and apparently only sung

1. The illnesses of children were attributed to Temaukel, the great "power" of the Eastern sky and the shamans did not intervene in curing them (cf. Gusinde, op. cit. p. 802)

during the competitions among shamans. This type of chant was called or described as kash-waiuwin-jir literally "to internalize the spirit by singing" and was sung whenever shamans met in competition to determine who had the greatest power. A shaman would challenge another with the intention of exhibiting his power. An older shaman challenges a younger one to test the younger's power, his ability to achieve and prolong a state of trance and his knowledge of the shamanistic mythology evoked in the recitations of the chants. While competing during the trance the shaman's spirit would attempt to undertake long voyages to the mythological cordilleras associated with each of the four "skys", especially that of the East. If it succeeded in traversing an exceedingly rough sea, the only access to that cordillera, it strove to ascend the very steep slippery cordillera.

The Peshere rite

This rite or ceremony has been described as typical of the Selk'nam however Lola as well as Angela Louij insisted that it was not performed among their people but that it was a Haush ceremony. The Haush spoke a different language. They inhabited the extreme southeastern part of the same island where the Selk'nam lived. Although the cultures of these two groups were similar they were not identical. The Haush arrived on the island before the Selk'nam and were apparently confined to their known habitat by the more warlike Selk'nam. The area the Haush inhabited was less rich fauna and flora than other parts of the island.

Lola first heard the Peshere chant (number 31) when, as a young woman she was camping with her family among the Haush on the Atlantic coast. Several of her in-laws were Haush and they were celebrating a Peshere when she and her family were present. The Peshere was conducted by shamans and it resembles the kash-waiuwin-jir competition in that different shamans vied with one another by demonstrating their power in a state of trance. Part of this competition included walking over burning coals. My informants said the Selk'nam shamans could not perform this feat. Women, children and novice shamans also participated in this ceremony, the novices in the hope of absorbing some of the supernatural power which emitted from the shamans while in trance. (1)

The ordeal of the arrow

Chant number 22 was sung by a shaman while performing the test or ordeal of the arrow, called kuash-mitchen. This was the most difficult, "the most powerful" as one informant said, of all the shamanistic ordeals. Only the most expert or the most daring shaman would venture it. It was performed in public in the context of a competition between two shamans. He who successfully performed this feat, without a losing blood or only very little, demonstrated that he was capable of becoming imbued with the greatest power. Among the three shamans whom my informants had seen or heard about performing it, one died from the wounds shortly afterwards.

The shaman would begin by achieving a state of trance during which this chant was sung. He concentrated on his own body, on "preparing" the canal through which he was to insert an arrow. Sometime during the preparation he would massage himself. When he felt ready, he would sit, completely naked and insert a specially made arrow with a very sharp wooden point

1. Cf. Gusinde, op. cit., pp. 786-801 for the detailed account of this ceremony.

I cannot speak well. (meaning the opposite as usual). I am astray (to the contrary) (on my way to) Ham-nia of my mother (her mother was affiliated to the West "sky"). The Hain of Ham-nia (where are) the sons, the Klokotens. repetition... vocalization... I am astray on the trail to Ham-nia of the guanaco women. I am in the Hain of infinity...repetition... I am on the trail to the house of the Wind, to the "hill" (place of origin) of the Wind. I speak of those who departed, of Ham-nia. I return from the Hain. My "arm" (power) is strong now. I am in Klulamen (name of a hill and camp on the Atlantic coast as well as a "hill" in the West "sky"). I am "seated" here (on the "hill" of the West "sky") singing, speaking with the masters (of the "hill"), they who departed of infinity...vocalization... I am singing in the house of the Wind, of Ham-nia, of them who departed. Here are the tracks of which they who departed told me...vocalization...

Band 2:

9. Shaman Chant (Lola), V.O.
10. Shaman Chant (Lola)
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12: Shaman Chant (Lola)
Toward the beginning. Sacarle para sangre todo eso (Lola speaking in broken Spanish with reference to drawing blood during a curing seance)...vocalization...Woman (Lola herself) power is "short". I am "seated" beside one who was killed in a war, (meaning not clear) the one who departed.

Band 4:

- 13: Shaman Chant (Lola)
I have my "bow" here. They who departed gave it to me. ...vocalization... I acquired enough (power) to "sacar" (the latter word is Spanish, meaning to withdraw, cf. above) to cure (by my power) alone. The one who departed "ate" (sang) alone. Those who departed (evocation). My two "fathers" (uncles) gave it to me. They who departed died of sickness...vocalization... I say, I can "sacar" sickness from the person who comes to me. ...vocalization... repetition. I see not the "hand" (power to cure) of the "koliot" (the latter word is Selk'nam for red-capes, meaning the Whites) shaman (doctor). The spirit of my two "fathers", they who departed. (evocation). The woman (Lola) here, has the "bow". The "bow" is within me, the "bow" of the two who died of sickness, they who departed...vocalization... The woman does not go astray (with reference to the trail to the West "sky"). I have the "dog" of Ham-nia. ...vocalizing... The "arm" of the Koliot shaman does not cure...vocalization...

Band 5:

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Vocalization... The song of the canary, "pajaro" k'mai-u (the next to last word is Spanish for bird: the canary is associated with the West "sky": the last word is the name of a certain type of chant which the women whose sons were being initiated sang during the Hain ceremony)...vocalization...

Band 6:

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Vocalization...It (the power) is coming toward me. It came to me the first day (meaning she did not have to wait to receive her shamanistic power from her uncle, once she had been trained as a shaman) like a sharpness (in all its acuteness) Where are you my "daughter"? (as in chant number 10, here the spirit of the deceased uncle is seeking her in a dream in order to endow her with his power)...vocalization... The (power) of them whom departed, returned to me...vocalization... repetition. It (the power) of the house of Ham-nia... vocalization.

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Record II, Side A, Band 1:

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Tael, as Lola's maternal grandfather's brother's son and a fully powered shaman.
18: Shaman Chant ("the uncle without a name"). V.O. Also, her maternal grandfather's brother. He died in his youth and Lola had never known or did not recall his name. He sang this chant when he was a novice shaman, before he might have received power, had he lived.

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Band 4:

23. Shaman Chant (Tilshik) V.O.
24. Shaman Chant (Lola) This chant was sung, at least on one occasion while she engaged in a competition with Ishton, whose shaman's name was Jashkit-xoon. He died in the late forties. Vocalization... recitation toward the end. The woman's (Lola) (power) is "short," (that of) those who departed. It (the power) is not "short". I am rustling (guanaco skin clothing, as the shamans did either to heighten the excitement while entering a state of trance, or while in a trance). I am walking with Jashkit-xoon to the Cordillera of Ai-maako (mythical locality of the East "sky" whose slippery cordillera represented the most formidable challenge to the shamans' spirit in their attempt to ascend it)...vocalization... I am "seated" on a (tree) trunk there (each "sky" has a special tree which is associated with it) repetition. I am singing in Ai-maako, in the house of Ai-maako.

just below his collar bone, drawing it slowly diagonally across his chest to his waist where he would withdraw it. Another manner, considered even more difficult, was to insert it at one side of the waist, draw it along and pull it out on the other side of the waist. It was said that the arrow lighted its path through the body of the shaman.

The Spirit of War

Hahmen was the spirit of war. When materialized, it had the form of a guanaco, visible only to the shaman. Chant number 25 could be sung only by a highly proficient male shaman, before his group was to attack an enemy. If, during his trance, the shaman neighed like a guanaco, this meant that there were to be casualties among his group. Allegedly he was responsible for assuring the victory of his group. However, even if he predicted casualties, this would not deter the group from engaging in battle.



A Selk'nam man.
Courtesy of Professor Martin Gusinde

Bewitching a Whale

The chant, number 29, was sung by Kaisiya, an ochermaten, "he kills a whale with arrows" (magical arrows, that is, shamanistic power). Very few shamans had such power. My informants knew of only two.

It may be assumed that when a stranded or dead whale was sighted, the shaman would begin his performance. If dead, it could be sighted far at sea because of the large numbers of sea gulls hovering over the carcass. The Selk'nam had no seacraft and only the simplest fishing gear and therefore depended on the tide to bring a dead whale ashore.

The ochermaten was known to sing for three or four days to bring in a whale. While he was in a trance, someone would periodically be sent to the shore line to see if the whale was coming in. If it came ashore the shaman was given credit for carrying the whale ashore on his back. At intervals during his trance he would fear that he was drowning under the colossal weight of the whale. Whale grease was said to spurt from the shaman's mouth, as the whale approached the shore.

Professor Gusinde relates that in times of famine the shaman would be asked by his people to bring a whale ashore, such was their faith in his power.

When the whale came within reach, the first people to arrive on the scene lighted a large fire as a signal to everyone to participate. Traditionally all had the right to partake of a whale. Enemy groups would abstain from fighting when they met on such occasions. The shaman credited with bringing the whale in was given the "best cuts," that is, part of the rib meat. The meat and fat which could not be consumed before it would rot, was wrapped in animal skins and stored in salt water lagoons.

The Eclipse of the Moon

The shamans were thought to know by means of their dreams, when an eclipse of the moon was to occur. Two chants in this collection were sung when the moon was in eclipse: one (number 32) was sung by the women in chorus and the other (number 5) by the shamans.

According to the Selk'nam, the moon eclipses when red with the flush of anger against human beings, red also with the blood of those who were to die in the coming wars. The people met to placate the moon's anger. The spirits of the shaman soared in the sky to visit her to discover upon whom her wrath was to fall.

Moon was the great female shaman. When she inhabited the earth, women ruled in full dominion over men and she was the most powerful of all women. The great initiation rite, Hain, was performed exclusively for young women while the older women disguised themselves as spirits who rose from the earth and descended from the sky to initiate their young and to taunt and humiliate their men so that they would never dare to rise in rebellion knowing that the spirits favored the dominion of women.

But once a sparrow of the prairie spied on the women before the Hain was to begin and he saw them disguising themselves as the Hain spirits. He flew to Moon's husband, Sun, and told him of the hoax. He revealed the secret of the Hain, that the dreaded spirits were only women. Then Sun in a rage struck Moon and pushed her into the hearth. The streaks of black on Moon's face are the scars of those burns. She fled in anger away from the earth. Sun pursued her but he has never been able to overtake her. Like Sun, all the men were furious against their women. They massacred all but the very young girls, those too young to have been initiated and hence innocent of the women's perfidy. It was then that the dominion of men began for in revenge they adopted the Hain, disguised themselves as the very same spirits in order to terrorize the women. The secret was said to have been guarded ever since mythological times.

Any woman who revealed she knew the secret was put to death.

Whenever an eclipse occurred, the women painted themselves with red earth and sang (number 32) to them to placate her wrath. While singing they would beat the earth with a pole or with a rolled up guanaco skin in order to admonish Moon and to let her know that their patience and indulgence had its limits. The shamans would sing (number 5) in order to take flight to the moon, so that their spirits would soar like the eagle they imitated in the beginning of the chant. When their spirits arrived they found Moon seated waiting for them. If Moon directed a shaman's spirit to take a seat in her shadow it was a sign that he would soon die, that he would be killed soon in a

I cannot speak well. (meaning the opposite as usual). I am astray (to the contrary) (on my way to) Ham-nia of my mother (her mother was affiliated to the West "sky"). The Hain of Ham-nia (where are) the sons, the Kloketens. repetition... vocalization... I am astray on the trail to Ham-nia of the guanaco women. I am in the Hain of infinity...repetition... I am on the trail to the house of the Wind, to the "hill" (place of origin) of the Wind. I speak of those who departed, of Ham-nia. I return from the Hain. My "arm" (power) is strong now. I am in Kluiamen (name of a hill and camp on the Atlantic coast as well as a "hill" in the West "sky"). I am "seated" here (on the "hill" of the West "sky") singing, speaking with the masters (of the "hill"), they who departed of infinity...vocalization... I am singing in the house of the Wind, of Ham-nia, of them who departed. Here are the tracks of which they who departed told me...vocalization...

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the earth, leave my head and shoulders free. After I die you will perform tachira (the mourning rite) and as you go away singing of your grief, a man will approach you. He will look exactly like me but, he will not be me. He will ask to make love to you. Do as he says.'

And when he died his daughters did just as their father had ordered. As they walked away and while they were still singing the chant of death, the Old Guanaco (now metamorphosized) jumped out of his grave, hot with desire for his daughters. He sniffed their tracks, chasing wildly after them, urinating as he ran. When he caught up to them he said:

'I am the one your father told you about. Come let us make love;'

One ran on and escaped from her father but he made love to the other. She too then became a guanaco."

Lullaby

Probably all mothers sang this lullaby (number 45). Lola told me that she would sing it while carrying her babies on her back when she would go to the coast to fish.

Chants learned in the mission

The two chants (number 46 and 47) are Lola's versions of the litanies in Latin which the nuns tried to teach the Indian women. Lola would say that she liked to sing these to make God ("Dios") happy.

In the late thirties she had spend about a year in the Salesian Mission, near Rio Grande on the island. However she disliked the constraint she was forced to endure there and left.

INDEX TO CHANTS AND TRANSLATIONS.

Index and paraphrased versions of the recitations (1)

Record I, Side A, Band 1:

1. Shaman Chant (Lola):

Vocalizing of meaningless syllables... I (am in that) place (Ham-nia, in the West "sky"). I (have) not arrived (negation in lieu of affirmation). Those of the house of Ham-nia, (the house) of those who departed (the deceased kin in the maternal line, particularly her mother's brothers, both of whom were shamans) shout to me from afar. The ear of the guanaco perks up (meaning the day is calm) at Ham-nia of the Wind (the Wind being associated with the West "sky"). repetitions. Two Klokotens (youths being or having been initiated in Hain, the ceremonial hut), sons of Kneneka (West "sky") have departed (according to shamanistic mythology, the Hain rite takes place in the "skys" as well as on earth)... vocalizing ... I am "steated" (on) the trail, the trail of those who departed. I am walking on the trail toward the Hain of Ham-nia. I am (now) "seated" on the "bed" (nest, place, abode) there. I am singing. I am singing (in the place of) the guanaco mothers (the guanaco is also associated with the West "sky"), of those who departed, in the house of Ham-nia...vocalizing... I am astray (on my way) to Ham-nia, (meaning, she did not go astray). I follow the trail of the two "fathers" (her two uncles who were shamans), (the trail) of those who departed (in order to)

sing in the Hain (ceremonial hut of the West "sky") ...repetition... vocalizing...

I am (now) "seated" (present in) on the "bed" of the Hain. I believe I have arrived. I am walking toward the house of Ham-nia, of those who departed. ...vocalization ... The tracks of those who departed are not here (negation for affirmation). I am walking toward the Hain of Ham-nia.

1. The recitations were not stereotyped for any given chant. It is not possible at present to classify all of the shaman chants presented here. Most of them were probably sung during the curing seances; certain of them were sung for the waiwin (shamanistic spirit), that is by the shaman for himself alone, while others were sung during a competition with another shaman. However the distinction between the shaman chants and the laments is clear.

The singer would recite during the chant whenever he chose to do so. It is my impression that if the singer were a shaman he would recite when he was nearing or in a state of trance. The quality of Lola's voice in some of these chants, especially number 8, gives the impression that she was almost in a trance. As she was a shaman the recitations which she sings evoke the mythical context of a journey to another world, one of the four "skys" and the symbols of shamanistic power. Through her father she belonged to the South "sky" although she sings of the West "sky" in most of the recitations, the "sky" of her maternal line. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that she inherited her shamanistic power from her mother's brother and that she learned a great deal from her mother who was also a shaman. Just how typical her situation was of aboriginal times is hard to say. Twelve of the 35 shaman chants are noted as belonging to her. She inherited them from shamans in her maternal line, her mother, two of her mother's brothers and her maternal grandmother. In aboriginal times she probably would not have had the right to sing all of these chants in so far as some of them would have been inherited by other members of her kin group. But as she was the last surviving shaman she considered them her own. Before singing a chant which had not belonged to her kin group or which she did not consider her own, she always mentioned the name of the man or woman to whom it had belonged, even when the person had died long ago.

It was not possible to present all of the recitations taped as some were too long to be included. And the translations which follow are incomplete and subject to corrections in the future. As mentioned in the article, Lola died four months after these recordings were made. The translations were done the following year in 1967 with Angela Louij. Although she speaks Spanish and her native tongue, she is not a shaman and therefore had considerable difficulty in understanding the texts of the songs, mainly because of the vocal distortions, the style and the esoteric words. Therefore there are undoubted errors in these translations. I hope to check them in the future with Angela and eventually to publish all of the recitations which were taped in Selk'nam with interlinear translations.

Band 2:

2. Shaman Chant (Lola): vocalization only. (henceforth indicated as V.O.)

Band 3:

3. Shaman Chant (Koin-xoon+) (1) V.O. Aim-shoink. Chanem Koin. (evocations of a mythological cordillera and Chanem, a symbol of shamanistic power associated with the North "sky" to which Koin-xoon was affiliated). I was not "given" (permitted to go to) Koin of Aim-shoink (negation signifying affirmation, the reference here is to another, more beautiful cordillera of the same name, also in the North "sky").

I came here alone (by means of) the "bow" (power) of the Koin (cordilleras). I am "seated" there in Aim-shoink. repetition Chanwin (a prophet) gave me a place in the cordillera. I want to speak of the cordillera. I am "seated" there. I was taken to the cordillera of Aim-shoink.

I am "seated" in the place of the Chanem, singing. repetition. A xoon (shaman) of Aim-shoink gave me it (power). I ask my brother-in-law, the Wind, for the "arrow of the guanaco" (shamanistic power associated with the West "sky", as is the Wind) but he denies it to me. The "arrow of the guanaco" of Ham-nia, (evocation). Two men, not my kin (as mentioned above Koin-xoon was affiliated with the North "sky" and here his spirit is visiting the West "sky", that of his two wives' family) were "seated" with a guanaco and a dog, (the dog is also a symbol of shamanistic power). They do not give me the guanaco. (again negation signifying affirmation). I want (perhaps sought) it (the power). I am alone. I am astray (meaning he, Koin-xoon, did

not go astray). They of infinity give it (power) to me. I receive it. They of infinity speak to me of the "dog of the Wind". I follow the trail alone. I am called from afar by the two "fathers", the shamans of the guanaco. I, woman (here Lola evokes herself, instead of continuing to sing as if she were the owner of the chant, Koin-xoon, a man) am arriving, alone. I am "working" (activating, being imbued with) the "arrow" (power) of the two men, they of infinity, of Ham-nia. I am "seated" in the other Hain (meaning the one of the West "sky", not that of the North "sky"). I am singing. I am talking in the other Hain of Pe-nia (another locality of the West "sky") to the mothers of the Kloketens. The two "fathers", they who departed (Lola's maternal uncles) give me the substance (power) I who am speaking, I myself am "seated" on the heights of the Cordillera of Aim-shoink (it is not clear here whether Lola is singing as herself or as Koin-xoon, in any event the reference is to the North "sky") (here follows a reference to the Kloketens which I do not understand)...vocalizing... Two "mothers" give me (power), women of the guanaco, they who departed, women not of my kin. (here obviously Lola is again singing as Koin-xoon, because her mother was a guanaco West woman) They denied it to me (meaning they give the power), they who departed. They speak beautifully. They of infinity of Ham-nia...repetition... I, a woman Kloketen, enter the Hain of Ham-nia. (this last phrase is significant because women were strictly forbidden from entering the real Hain, and there were no women Kloketens, cf. p. 25 for the mythological context)...vocalization...

1. Koin signifies cordillera and it is also a

place name for one of the camps on the Atlantic coast of Tierra del Fuego. It was customary for the shamans to be named after the place of their birth and suffix xoon, the word for shaman.

Band 4:

4. Shaman Chant (Koin-xoon): V.O.

Band 5:

5. Shaman Chant sung during an eclipse of the Moon:
Vocalization... (Imitation of the cry of an eagle, probably Buteo polyosoma, which soars high out of sight, as do the "wauwin", the spirit of the shaman when it visits the Moon during an eclipse) ...vocalization... Moon has my head-dress under her knees. (although my two informants said that only the spirit of the shamans visit the Moon, that their bodies remain on earth, yet the spirit has a corporal form; and is in some sense doubled, as exemplified by this text in which a shaman sees what his spirit is doing. Mrs. Louij explained this phrase as follows. As the spirit of the shaman is in the shadow of the Moon, it is so dark that only his head-dress which is made of feathers can be seen. The shaman who recognizes his own head-dress as being in the shadow of the Moon knows that he will die soon.) Moon has now taken my head-dress. (meaning his life, that he is soon to die)...vocalizing... I am certain that Moon has taken me. I am under her knees. Repetition...vocalization...

Band 6:

6. Shaman Chant (Nonen). V.O. The owner of this chant was Lola's maternal grandfather's brother, a shaman. It was sung to demonstrate the shaman's power on the occasion of a competition between two shamans. Such chants were apparently never sung during the curing seances.

Band 7:

7. Shaman Chant (Nonen). V.O. Lola did not claim either of these chants.

'Record I, Side B, Band 1:

8. Shaman Chant (Lola): recitation, very little vocalizing. I am astray (meaning the contrary) (on my way to the) "bed" (house) (of) Ham-nia. They who departed. They of infinity. (evocations) repetition. The "bed" of Kneneka (the West "sky"), of infinity. repetition. Two Kloketens arrived walking toward the Hain of Ham-nia. I am astray. repetition... The guanaco mothers. (evocation). The dog of Ham-nia (evocation) The Kloketens of the Hain of Ham-nia (evocation). The sons of Kneneka (evocation). I do not speak well. I am astray. (both phrases meaning the contrary) ...repetition... Shorti (the name of a mythical personage of the initiation rite) of Ham-nia. repetition. The weather is calm now. The Wind is carrying me. In my hand I have the "arrow". They who departed (evocation). I am following the trail. I am speaking of those who departed, they of infinity. I am astray of the trail of those who departed. Repetition of above. (follows a part which was not translated) The "hill" (place of origin) of the Wind of Ham-nia (evocation). I want to speak with another shaman (here she refers to the fact that she was the last living shaman) I am lost. I am alone.

war. And again he would know he was doomed if upon his departure Moon gave him an object soaked with blood, a piece of guanaco skin or a handful of grass, or in recent times, a piece of police uniform or shoe leather likewise soaked with blood. Moon gave those she favored a round object—a small pebble, a piece of hide or wood and, in recent times, a spoon or button. She would pass these favors to the shaman from her mouth to his. Upon returning to earth each shaman would show the others the object which Moon had given him.

Clearing the Sky

It was believed that the shaman could bring on clear weather by sending the snow or rain "home". This was called "cut the sky," that is cut away the clouds. Lola would often do this in my presence and if her behavior was typical of that of her forefathers, the shaman did not have to be in a state of trance on this occasion. Often when rain was threatening she would take her walking stick or a broom, go outside near her hut and holding the stick with her two hands she would make wide sweeping movements as if to push the clouds towards the west, the mythological land of rain. Meanwhile she would insult the clouds in the fashion recorded here (number 30). She might do this several times during the day. When the weather cleared, she would be satisfied that her efforts had not been in vain, even if it had rained in the interval.

The Laments

There was Time, Hoowin, Time of no beginning in the mythological past, prior to life and to death as we know them. This was the heroic epoch when the great Kwanyip fought and defeated the cannibal Chaskels. Then three great monsters, the Chanem, perched on high rocks along the coast, and would kill from a great distance until Kakach, a powerful shaman, defeated them. It was Time when Temaukel, power without limit, inhabited the earth. When "he" departed to the East, he pushed the sky farther up from the earth, plunging it into infiniteness. Animals and birds could speak. The guanaco was so fearless that he would approach the huts of the hunters and let himself be killed. And because Sun was earthbound, there was no night.

The "people" of that Time no longer exist. They were all transformed—some into the birds, the guanaco and other animals which now inhabit the island, others into whales and fish, others into the rocks, hills and mountains of the island. When Death appeared, the gods fled from the earth. The great woman shaman became the moon and her husband, the sun, Kwanyip and his family, the Southern Cross. Death came from the North. A Birch, (Nothofagus antarctica) whose native name was Kualchink, was the first to die. When it died, the other trees lacerated themselves with horizontal cuts to express their grief. This is why the bark of these trees is shredded. The bark still bears the scars of these primordial wounds.

When a Selk'nam died, everyone of the camp, would cover their faces, arms and breasts with charcoal dust from the fire mixed with red clay to which a few drops of whale grease had been added. They would shave their hair with a knife made of shell leaving only a narrow fringe of long hair circling the head. Moaning and wailing they approached the corpse, which was wrapped in guanaco skins, tightly lashed with cords of guanaco nerves. It was buried not far from the camp site, usually in the ground, though sometimes in a crevice among the rocks. When anyone over the age of about twelve died, the nearest of kin lacerated themselves as Kualchink, the Birch, had taught their forefathers to do. With a stone knife or shell they would make

incisions on the lower arms, the fingers, breasts and chest, the shins and even the inner part of the thighs. According to Gusinde the men lacerated themselves more than the women while the women were more prone to wail and sing of their loss than were the men. The mortifications and lamenting might continue for a year or even two years following the death of one of the family. (1) Lola told me that her mother, during the last years of her life, was always in mourning, that her wounds never healed.

When a renowned hunter or shaman died, the land of his birth—part of his harwin (territory) would be set afire. This was to show, I was told, that the land too was in mourning. The fires were also intended to notify the people in distant camps that someone important had died. These were probably the fires that Magellan sighted when he made his way through the straits in 1522.

Lola described how she had mourned for her dead; the upper part of the body blackened, the hair tonsured and the remaining long hair hacked at, the bleeding cuts irritated by the charcoal and clay. Then she would demonstrate how the women would slowly lift their arms above their head and slowly lower them, while chanting their grief.

Apparently everyone had his own lament, inherited from someone in his family. All that are recorded here belonged to women: numbers 33 and 36 to 44. Only one, number 36, has words. In it Lola sings of her last two sons and their father, Anik, her Indian husband who died about 1915. Both of these sons had reached manhood. As noted above, among the Selk'nam, the children were affiliated to their father's "sky", the exogamic unit. The four "skys" were also the residence of the "souls" (kashpi) of the dead. As Anik was affiliated to the North "sky" (Kamuka) so were his children. It so happens that Death (symbolized by the Birch) was conceived as having originally come from the North. Thus Lola also sings of the Birch here. I had the impression she would sing this chant to evoke the presence of her sons and husband by means of a trance in which she felt that she transcended her living condition and that her spirit partook of their company.

Another rendition of chant number 40 (not reproduced on these records because it was technically deficient) also has a meaningful text. It is a chant of the people of Knaneka, the "sky" of the West, and was the property of a woman shaman, named Amilkin, whom Lola had known. It had belonged to Amilkin's husband, Askilton. When he died, she claimed it as her own. In aboriginal times Amilkin would not have had the right to sing it as she did not belong to the same "sky" (exogamic unit) as her husband. She could acquire it when he died because by then the native culture had disintegrated. The words of this chant relate a myth which explains the origin of the prohibition against incest. The "event" occurred during the time of Hoowin, the mythological past, and concerns a man who conspired to make love to his daughters. As he was about to succeed in his aims he and they were all transformed into guanacos. Ra ra ra ra Lola would sing, imitating the guanaco as she began the chant. Then she sang the text of the myth, which we have translated as follows: (1)

"Old Guanaco (when he was still a man) said to his daughters:

'I am about to die. Bury me in the white earth but do not bury me deep in

1. Gusinde, op.cit., pp. 554-555

Band 5:

25. War Chant. V.O. This chant was probably sung by any male shaman who had the power to predict the outcome of a "war", cf. text p. 23.
26. Shaman Chant (Kuautl-tlal) V.O. "The son of Kuautl", both of whom are mythological personages. However this name was apparently given to someone who became a renowned shaman.

Band 6:

27. Shaman Chant (Kunyol) V.O.
28. Shaman Chant (Ashkilton) V.O.

Band 7:

29. Shaman Chant to bewitch a whale (Kaisiya)

(Imitation of the dying whale, which has just been bewitched) The whale is mounted on me. It is "seated" on me.
I am waiting for it (the shaman is supposed to draw it ashore). I am speaking in Aim-shoink (mythical locality of the North "sky", which is associated with the whale, just as the West "sky" is associated with the guanaco.) The male whale (evocation) The whale, my "father", is about to drown me (because the shaman's spirit is thought to bring the whale in on his back) The following phrase not clear. ...vocalization... (follows imitation of sea gulls, hovering over a dead whale to peck at it when it is ... vocalization... I wait. I am talking of the blubber which soon will make glisten the black pebbles of Kasten (a bay on the Atlantic coast).

Band 8:

30. Shaman chant to clear the sky of rain or snow.
That it (the sky) be cut (that the clouds be "cut", disappear) of the stormy sky. repetition. That they not drench me with rain. Why is it raining so much?
That it (the rain) return to its house in Aim-shoink (North "sky" associated with rain,) repetition. (blowing rather than vocalization, in order to drive the clouds away). As she told me afterwards Lola laughs here as she recalled the Indian Kausel who was well known for his pranks and while trying to clear the sky would pretend he was farting at the clouds and show his anus to them to insult them so that they would go home, back to the Cor-dillera of Aim-shoink.

Record II, Side B, Band 1:

31. Shaman Chant of the Peshere rite. This is the only chant of this collection which is of the Haush group who inhabited the southern extreme of the same island as the Selk'nam, cf. text p. 21.

Peshere, kaiyire (the latter word is Selk'nam, untranslated) Eso si, todo el dia, toda la noche (Spanish, "yes, indeed, all day, all night; meaning the shamans would sing this chant day and night)... vocalization...

32. Chant sung by women, who were not necessarily shamans, during an eclipse of the moon, when the spirits of the shamans took flight to visit the moon, V.O.

Band 2:

33. Lament (no. 1 Otrich) Lola's maternal grandmother. V.O. (1)
34. Shaman Chant (Anik) Lola's husband sang

this chant when he was preparing to become a shaman but he never succeeded. V.O.

35. Shaman Chant (Anien) another who like Anik never became a shaman and he sang this chant in the hope of acquiring power. V.O.

1. This chant should have been placed after no. 35 with the other laments. This is my error.

Band 3:

36. Lament (Lola) cf. text pp. 27-28, sung in mourning for her last two sons, who as her husband, were associated with the North "sky".
Vocalization... In the heights (reference to the North "sky") my "father" (son) was "wounded" (died). Kualchink (evocation of Birch and the origin of death). Aim-shoink (evocation, locality of the North "sky") (He was) killed by "hautre" (sickness inflicted by a shaman). His father took my son to Aim-shoink...
vocalization... I am grieving for my son, who died of "hautre". Repetition... vocalization... The beautiful one (her son) repetition I have no one... vocalization... In the heights (evocation) My two sons "wounded" (dead, evocation) I am there in Aim-shoink. My husband. (evocation)... vocalization... The beautiful one I am there in Aim-shoink. My "father" "wounded" by "hautre".
37. Lament (Lola) for her other children. V.O.

Band 4:

38. Lament (Ejich) Lola's mother, which she sang mourning for her mother. V.C.
39. Lament (no. 2 Otrich) her maternal grandmother. V.O.
40. Lament (Amilken), chant which in another of the original tapes recites the myth of the incestuous guanaco, cf. text p. 31-32. V.C.

Band 5:

41. Lament (Noshitin) This person as all the following were women. V.O.
42. Lament (Hakenpar) V.O.

Band 6:

43. Lament (Hortil) V.O.
44. Lament (Shiker) V.O.

Band 7:

45. Lullaby
The recitation consists of the repetition of the word ala, meaning baby.

Band 8:

46. Chant learned in a Salesian Mission.
Cerca Diosi (Spanish meaning "cerca de Dios", near to God).
Soki (Selk'nam word meaning two, evocation of God and Christ) repetitions.
47. id.
This recitation may have originally been "sae culos sae colrum", the end of the Catholic prayer.

Alan Lomax

Cantometrics on Ona Song Style

The Cantometric system is a way of consistently rating recorded song performances in terms of a series of pre-defined descriptive measures. These measures deal, for example, with:

1. the degree of repetitiousness in the text;
2. the type of meter, either regular, irregular or free, running through the whole performance;
3. the song form type, whether litany or strophe;
4. the number of phrases in the form, whether 1, 2, 3, 4 or more;
5. the average size of intervals most prominent in the song;
6. whether diatonic or more narrow than diatonic, whether larger;
7. the prominence of nasality, of rasp, and other qualities in the singing performance.

The reader is referred to "The Good and the Beautiful in Folksong" and "Special Features of the Sung Communication" for fuller exposition of this rating system. The coding book is published in Folk Song Style and Culture (in press, American Association for the Advancement of Science).

A large number of songs from 300-plus cultures were analyzed in terms of 37 such scales. The information was fed into the computer and song performance profiles for cultures and culture areas were compiled. Sets of songs from two Fuegian cultures, the Ona and Yaghan, came into this data bank from the collections that Charles W. Furlong had made in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. No detailed study has been made of Lola's songs. When Victor Grauer and I first listened to Dr. Chapman's collection, we found the songs were so similar to those we had studied in the Furlong set, that analysis was unnecessary for a first statement.

A computer program is available for comparing the complex profiles, such as those that Cantometrics establishes for a song style, and estimating the similarities between them. When this program compares the performance profiles of 56 world areas, the following cluster is the result. This list includes all those areas most similar to Tierra del Fuego above the level of 70%--approximately 1/5 of the total of 56.

| | |
|-----|-------------------|
| 74% | Arctic America |
| | Australia |
| 72% | Interior Amazonia |
| | Mexico |
| | Southwest Hunters |
| 71% | Caribbean |
| | Central American |
| | California |
| | Northwest Coast |
| | Arctic Asia |
| 70% | Eastern Woodlands |
| | Plains |

We note that Fuegian song style excludes similarities to other areas of the world in preference for the primitive people of North America, South America, Siberia and Australia. It seems possible though that Tierra del Fuego is a member of a very old Circumpacific style family found exclusively among primitive peoples on the rim of the Pacific, from Australia to Siberia, in South America, but especially in North America. We believe that more similarities with South American styles would have emerged from our study if our South American sample had been more complete. The culture areas to which Fuegian style shows its strongest affinities are characterized by such primitive modes of production as hunting, fishing, collecting and reindeer herding. This is confirmed in another computer run in which Tierra del Fuego's similarity to the six main world regions is calculated. Here the Ona and Yaghan pair is characterized as being most similar to more cultures in South America and North America than elsewhere. In other words, the Fuegian performance style seems to be a proto-typical Amerindian type.

We turn now to the similarity scores for the Ona song profile. The following is a list of the top 5% of the similarity ratings for Ona style. Here its resemblance to a sample of 233 other cultures from all over the world has been calculated.

Rank Order of Ona Similarities

| | |
|-----|------------|
| 83% | Yaghan |
| 79% | Chukchee |
| | Yukaghir |
| 78% | Tarahumara |
| 77% | Tungus |
| | Cuna |
| | Samoyede |
| | Ostiak |
| 76% | Lacandon |
| 75% | Yaqui |
| 74% | Lapps |
| | Goajiro |

The Ona and Yaghan style profiles are very similar to each other and far less so to any other culture, indicating that the Fuegian musical style has developed for a considerable time in a state of considerable isolation. Otherwise Ona style bears an astonishing similarity to a song style found among the primitive reindeer herders and hunters of Siberia all along the Arctic Circle from the Chukchee to the Lapps of Northern Norway. This is, perhaps, evidence of its considerable antiquity. The other members of the Ona similarity cluster are simple producers, band organized and possessors of a simple and conservative social structure. Perhaps in the Ona-Fuegian performance style we have the communication model that accompanied migrants across the Bering Strait on their long track south through the whole of the Western Hemisphere.

Another program enables us to take a look at the main characteristics of this Siberian-American song style. We compare the performance profiles of Tierra del Fuego and Arctic Asia to determine which traits are responsible for their extraordinary similarity. What we find corresponds in good measure to what one hears on Dr. Chapman's tapes and to remarks that Hornbostel and others have made about Ona songs.

Most songs are in solo, the singers performing in a strongly glottal, harsh and nasal manner. However, their style is nowhere near as forceful or as loud as much other American Indian singing. In fact, the vocal attack is rather moderate, neither extremely high nor low in register, loud nor soft in volume, tense nor de-tense. As among most Amerindians, the singers generally employ an irregular meter, strictly maintained. In chorus they sing in rhythmic unison with medium to poor concert. The song form is a simple litany of one or two phrases, with little or no embellishment. Other comments, such as gliss and melisma, are modestly used, if at all. The text consists largely of repetition, with a characteristic Amerindian use of a great deal of nonsense song words or syllables.

Summing up this description, this old song style, rooted in Siberia, occurring in conservative hunting bands, in various parts of the Americas, and perhaps best preserved among the Ona and Yaghan of Tierra del Fuego, is a strongly glottal solo performance set to a regular meter. Repetitious texts are carried by brief one or two phrase melodies, confined within a narrow range and lacking other outstanding stylistic features. This modest style, rather subdued in tone, has been apparently employed by the medicine men or shamans of the primitive hunter, fisher and herder bands of Siberia and America for many thousands of years. It is our great good fortune that Dr. Chapman's study of Lola's songs gives us a rich view of the ideas, the concepts and the aims of this ancient form of human communication.