

ANTHROPOLOGY

Primitive Customs Live

Many of the customs observed by the modern bride and groom are carry-overs from primitive times and can be traced to ancient wedding rituals—By Elizabeth Mirel

► MODERN MARRIAGE ceremonies keep the primitive world alive.

In June, and all the year round, the solemn "I do" of today's American bride and groom is innocently mixed with customs and beliefs that have survived from ancient times.

For all the world loves lovers. And all the world enriches their wedding days with ritual. Special observances and ceremonies make the day memorable for the couple, their families and their society.

Wedding day ritual in the United States begins with the sunrise. We say: "Happy is the bride on whom the sun shines." Although no one really believes a rainy-day marriage is doomed to failure, marriage on a sunny day carries an extra blessing.

Other peoples show their concern with sunshine more explicitly. In Central Asia bride and groom greet the rising sun together on their wedding day. The bride, in parts of India, has to look at the sun on the day before her marriage.

Such customs may have their roots in an early belief that the sun was responsible for impregnating mother earth. The sun's blessing on the wedding day may thus be one of fertility for the bride and groom.

Throughout the wedding day in the United States, we have decreed, bride and groom are not allowed to see each other. They are kept apart until the wedding ceremony itself begins.

The superstition, which many modern brides and grooms still obey, may be a hangover from a widespread primitive practice of secluding the bride and bridegroom before the wedding. In some African tribes, isolation may last several days or weeks before the wedding.

Seclusion may be enforced to mark a break in the old boy-girl relationship. When the bride and groom see each other at the ceremony, it is then the beginning of a new husband-wife relationship. Seclusion may also be prescribed out of respect to shyness between the sexes, accentuated at the wedding time.

Accompanying the bride and groom is a party of ushers, bridesmaids, best man and maid of honor. In some ceremonies, as in those of parts of Africa, Greece or Russia, the members of the wedding party are there to stand by for their own sex. They are supposed to protect the couple from the pranks of others, or, in some cases, to wait on their every whim during and after the wedding.

The maid of honor takes the bride's place in U.S. wedding rehearsals. She may be acting according to old belief to keep the evil eye off the bride, highly susceptible to magical influences at this time.

Exchanging rings, a worldwide practice,

cements the union of the bride and groom. In ancient Rome and often during the Middle Ages, only the man gave a ring to his bride. It is believed, however, that exchanging rings is now the most common.

Gift-giving, in primitive thought, is giving part of the self. It is binding. Ringing the finger, clapping hands or kissing after the wedding ceremony also mark the bond. They are held to be ceremonial rehearsals of the actual marital union.

No U.S. couple can get away from their wedding without a shower of rice. Some peoples believe the rice is food to keep evil influences away from the bride and groom. Some say it assures the couple fertility. Others, including the ancient Greeks and Romans, poured sweetmeats or nuts over the bridegroom to keep his soul from flying away, as it was inclined to do on his wedding day.

These parallels of primitive and modern ceremonies are more than mere coincidence. Although historical relationships cannot always be shown, ancient customs are woven into modern weddings, making tradition rich and the wedding day special.

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International Business Machines

FIRST TUNNEL DIODE—The *STRETCH* computer, a high-speed memory, contains 1,258 tiny tunnel diode circuits, used for the first time in computers, encased in plastic, like the two shown in the man's hand. In the background, one of two printed-circuit cards which hold the memory is being inserted into the computer at the Poughkeepsie development laboratories of the International Business Machines Corporation.

PSYCHIATRY

Wives of "Normal" Men Are "Normal" Too

► "NORMAL" men marry "normal" women.

And they live happily but dully ever after, investigators reported to the 119th annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in St. Louis, Mo.

An early study sifted out from a ninth grade high school class a group of 50 "normal" males—men free from any sign of severe personality disorder. Follow-up investigations showed the women they married were also well-adjusted and contented persons.

Nearly all the "normal" men and their wives, tests and interviews indicated, led narrow, confined lives. Their lack of outside interests and sparse sense of imagination placed limits on their capacity for emotional experience.

Drs. Jules S. Golden and Reuben J. Silver of Albany (N. Y.) Medical College, and Dr. Nathan Mandel of the State of Minnesota department of correction reported that these men and their wives provide a standard of "normal" personal and marital adjustment in our society, to which other groups may be compared.

The investigators said they hoped the dull, unimaginative lives of these "normal" couples could be offset by more stimulating educational experiences and more enlightened mass communications. Thus their lives could be enriched without sacrificing their adjustment.

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Mythology Still Persists Among Sia Indians

► "IN THE BEGINNING" were Tsiyostinako and her daughters. . . . There were clouds and fog . . . everywhere. There were four worlds. The bottom world was yellow. Above this was a blue-green world. Above that was a red world. On top was the white world" known to man.

This is the account of creation which has persisted among Indians of the Sia pueblo in New Mexico, Dr. Leslie A. White of the University of Michigan said in a report on this little-known people published by the Smithsonian Institution's bureau of American ethnology.

Throughout the Sia mythology, it is related, the supreme being is Tsiyostinako, the "prophesying woman," who lives in the yellow world, sometimes pictured in the form of a gigantic spider, who knows everything and who created everything.

There are many other supernatural or semisupernatural beings in the Sia belief, Dr. White said. The sun is an important deity, as is also naiyahaatsi, or Mother Earth. Virtually everything significant in the life of the Sia is a spiritual being of some sort.

Ostensibly the people of the pueblo are Christians, but into the Christian theology they have incorporated nearly all their aboriginal beliefs.

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