

A Response to Giesler

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We have never pretended to be anthropologists carrying out an in—depth study of Senoi culture. We are psychologist/authors who had frequently, and in good faith, quoted Kilton Stewart's Ph.D. thesis on Senoi dream control practices. Our first doubts about its authenticity arose at our meeting with Peter Bloch in 1977, and were later confirmed by extensive correspondence with anthropologists formerly and currently in the field. So when we dropped into Malaysia in 1982 on our way from India to Australia, our intention was merely to spend a couple of months tying up loose ends by rummaging in the archives for Pat Noone's missing papers, interviewing some of his old friends, and generally gathering clues as to why Kilton Stewart had invented this extraordinary story.

But we reckoned without the bounteous Senoi hospitality which drew us into numerous Jungle villages to meet family, friends and elders, some of whom had actually given their dreams to Kilton Stewart fifty years ago. Typical of our new—found Senoi friends and interpreters was a jungle—born Senoi with English high school matriculation who asked, as we celebrated the Festival of the First Rice in his uncle's jungle home, "What do you think of the works of Carlos Castaneda?" He is currently preparing a Ph.D. thesis on Senoi religion, based on personal experience of his grandfather's shamanism. We guess that he understands the concepts and how to convey them cross culturally — better, in fact, than even the best informed anthropologist who must necessarily remain an outsider even after the most intensive fieldwork.

As to the brevity of our one—year 'fieldwork', we can only point out that it compares favorably with the five months (at the most) spent by Stewart with the Senoi. Our rummagings revealed a hasty demographic survey through the Kelantan jungles with Noone in early 1935, followed by a seven—week stay in a jungle resthouse outside Jalong in 1937. It appears that beer, liquer, cigars, goronzola cheese and other goodies were tarried by elephants and native bearers into the jungle, where they were served by Malay servants in starched white coats (Noone's personal servant, Che Puteh, has become our very good friend) to the sound of Noone's portable gramophone. As Stewart himself remarks in an unpublished paper, "the British live well in the colonies!" Our own trips were not nearly so comfortable, and yes, we did get malaria.

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