

Review of Wikipedia Articles

The review is meant to facilitate further improvement of Wikipedia articles. Suggestions about the quality of a

Wikipedia articles can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Featured_article_criteria.

Please send your review in pdf and .doc format to Erica Litrenta: erica.litrenta@supsi.ch and Marta Pucciarelli: pucciarelli.marta@gmail.com

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Title of the article

1. Quality of the Summary

Is the summary of the article a complete, thorough, and concise introduction to the topic? How do you think

the summary could be improved? Which meaningful data are missing? Is there something that you find too

much detailed for a general overview of the topic?

I find the article uneven and not terribly accurate. A few pointers below for the introduction:

There are estimated to be 113,000 San, or Bushmen. The San are indigenous people who share strong cultural, linguistic and physical similarities and are known by a number of different names, including Naro, G/wi, Hai//om, ≠Khomani, //Ani, Ju/'hoansi (!Kung), Khwe, //Gana, Tshua, //Xekgwi !Xun and !Ui. They live across six different countries in Southern Africa. Many of the San were, until very recent times, hunter-gatherers. Studies of the 'trance' or rather, 'healing' dance amongst the Ju/'hoansi, from the northern Kalahari, have dominated accounts of San healing although this is just one part of their varied traditional healing repertoire. Other strategies include herbal and animal based remedies drunk in warm water, cuts made in the body into which animal and plant material is rubbed, the wearing of healing necklaces, waist, arm and leg ties, the inhalation of smoke from animal and plant matter and very common massage practices. Much of the healing revolves around the idea of the transference of 'essence' or 'potency' (2008,).

There are a number of scholars who have researched the San trance dance. The highly influential account of Richard Katz only represents his findings amongst the Ju/'hoansi and his findings have been revised by other scholars.

San healing dances used to go on through the night but evidence suggests they may be becoming shorter..

Very unusual to tie offerings to trees and they do not use drums to contact animal and ancestor spirits – this is distorting what they do and pushing them into inappropriate universalised pan-shamanic pigeon holes. I would omit this.

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Section 1. typo: energy to will sing. I would not reference Rupert Isaacson or Sandy Gall – they have virtually no experience of this – far better Marshall, Lee, Biesele, Katz, Barnard, Low, Keeney.

2. Structure and style of the article

Is the article properly presenting the topic for a general public? Does the article provide a complete and easy-to-navigate structure? Which paragraph would you add, unify or split into different parts? Please provide a list of suggestions. Is the article well written and understandable at a high school level?

I find the structure a bit awkward. The introduction is fine. A section on the healing dance is fine I would put becoming a healer and section 2 together. A subsection on shamanism and healing potency would work.

3. Content

Is the article comprehensive of major facts related to the topic? Is the article adequately placing the subject in context? What does it miss? Please provide a list of topics you think should be included in the article (suggestions must be related to bibliography). Do you find that some arguments are not meaningful or representative of the topic for a general public. What should be deleted? Please explain why.

2/2

The article seems just about the healing dance. I think the article does not fit together terribly well. After the introduction it is just about the healing dance which is not surprising, as it is the most sensational aspect of their healing and the most famous – but maybe this is okay?

I think the article would benefit from placing the dance in relation to shamanism. Perhaps:

The San healing dance is often thought of as the only evidence of traditional shamanism in Africa. Although there are aspects of the dance and the wider San beliefs and practices in which it sits that fit ideas of shamanism, recent work on shamanism and ‘New Animism’ suggests that it is not a precise fit (Low 2015, Guenther forthcoming).

[ref (Low, Chris (2014) ‘KhoeSan ethnography, ‘New Animism’ and the interpretation of Southern African rock art . *South African Archaeological Bulletin*)

I think it would be worth stating that the healing dance circulates healing potency, known as n/om amongst the Ju/'hoansi. Healers detect illness by seeing into the body, which they often compare to an Xray, or smelling sickness. They will attend to everyone gathered at the dance but focus especially on the sick. By doing so they not only treat sickness but bind the community together in ways that are intimately related to their egalitarian social structure.

Section 3 Becoming a healer.

This information is out of date. Becoming a healer is something that god instils in a person. You do not have a choice. Fewer and fewer people are becoming healers these days. Whilst Katz describes becoming a healer as a long a painful process this is not necessarily the case.

I suggest removing section 2 and for section 3. I would not reference Dowson who is just quoting Katz, and it needs to be noted that things have changed amongst the Ju/'hoansi since Katz wrote this.

I suggest the authors also looks at the work of Bradford Keeney.

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