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# ANTHROPOLOGICA

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# Call for Papers

The Lake St. Louis Historical Society will be hosting the 1985 North American Fur Trade Conference to be held at McGill University, May 29th to June 2nd, 1985.

We are looking for researchers currently engaged in or contemplating fur trade related projects. The sessions planned will focus on:

a) the emergent or early fur trade and its significance for Native People throughout North America.

b) The Montreal based fur trade

c) Jacques Cartier, this being the 450th anniversary of his arrival at the present site of Montreal

d) wide-ranging aspects of the North American fur trade.

We hope that archaelogists, ethnologists, historians and others interested in the fur trade will participate to ensure that several perspectives be represented within each geographical region. All researchers are invited to submit a title and Abstract of 100 words to the Programme Committee by May 15, 1984 to:

Dr. Bruce G. Trigger
Chairman,
5th North American Fur Trade Conference,
Box 1023, Station A
Montreal, Quebec,
H3C 2W9

The Programme Committee will make a selection of papers to be presented at the Conference and notification of the acceptance of papers for the Conference will be made by September 15, 1984.

# The Bicephalic Monster
# in Classic Maya Sculpture*

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**University of British Columbia**

RÉSUMÉ

Par le rite inaugural de transformation, les gouvernants maya renais-saient comme dieu du soleil – mais pour réclamer l'autorité surnaturelle qui légitimait leur pouvoir temporel. Dans les monuments l'image artistique dominante de cette renaissance est un monstre bicéphale avec une tête de serpent et une tête de crocodile. L'image du monstre bicéphale est aussi liée à des représentations de femmes maya qui perfoment des rites d'auto-saignée sacrificielle. Même si le monstre bicéphale est ordinairement considéré comme une divinité mâle, il semble plutôt représenter la déesse terre qui apporte les pluies quand elle est enceinte du nouveau soleil, et qui, comme toutes les déesses-mères de l'Amérique centrale, meurt quand le soleil sort, rené, de son sein.

## INTRODUCTION

Multiple approaches are necessary to synthesize the vast information on Maya supernatural images. The approach followed here and in previous papers is concerned with interpreting the sacred and ritual meaning of images employed for dynastic aggrandizement. These meanings are inter-preted contextually, according to the underlying spatio-temporal structure of

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Maya cosmology. This structure is both cyclic and dualistic, with the opposition of death and rebirth imagery employed in monumental art to proclaim the ruler's transformation from human to divinity. The bicephalic monster appears to be the dominant artistic expression of the ruler's divine rebirth. Through its (fig. 1) components parts and companion images, the bicephalic monster complex represents a synthesis of Maya rebirth-associated images, distinct from such death-associated images as the jaguar god and *bacabs.*

FIGURE 1
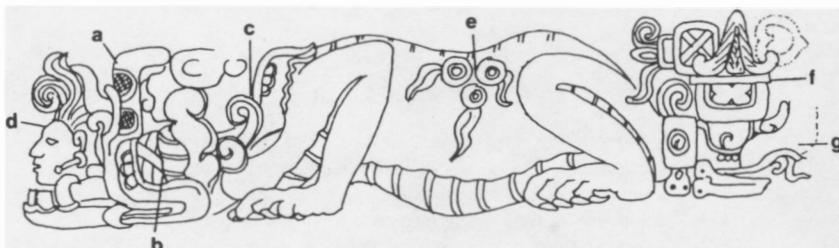


Bicephalic monster (slightly restored) (Copan altar O', after Spinden 1913: fig. 52).

This study will be organized according to the component parts and contexts of the bicephalic monster image. In each section, selected components will be analyzed according to their context in monumental art, including analyses of closely related images. Analogy with Aztec and Post-conquest sources will be used sparingly since, as Kubler (1973) suggests, disjunctions between the form and meaning of a motif often occur through time. This synchronic and normative study will be limited to the monumental arts, erected at the height of the Maya dynastic cult in the Late Classic period, since these offer an abundant and relatively conservative (in contrast with the funerary arts) sample of supernatural images for comparison. Innovative manipulations of these images do characterize major monuments, especially at Copan and Palenque, but space limitations prevent mention of all but a few such variants.

1. THE TWO CATEGORIES OF ZOOMORPHIC IMAGES

Both heads of the bicephalic monster share the stylized characteristics employed in Maya art for a variety of zoomorphic and especially reptilian

images. These include large eyes, supraorbital plate, curl dangling from the corner of the mouth, small nose often with bead ornaments inserted through the septum, foliage emerging from the side of the head, and frequent beard (fig. 2). These zoomorphic images fall into two broad categories: one is

FIGURE 2
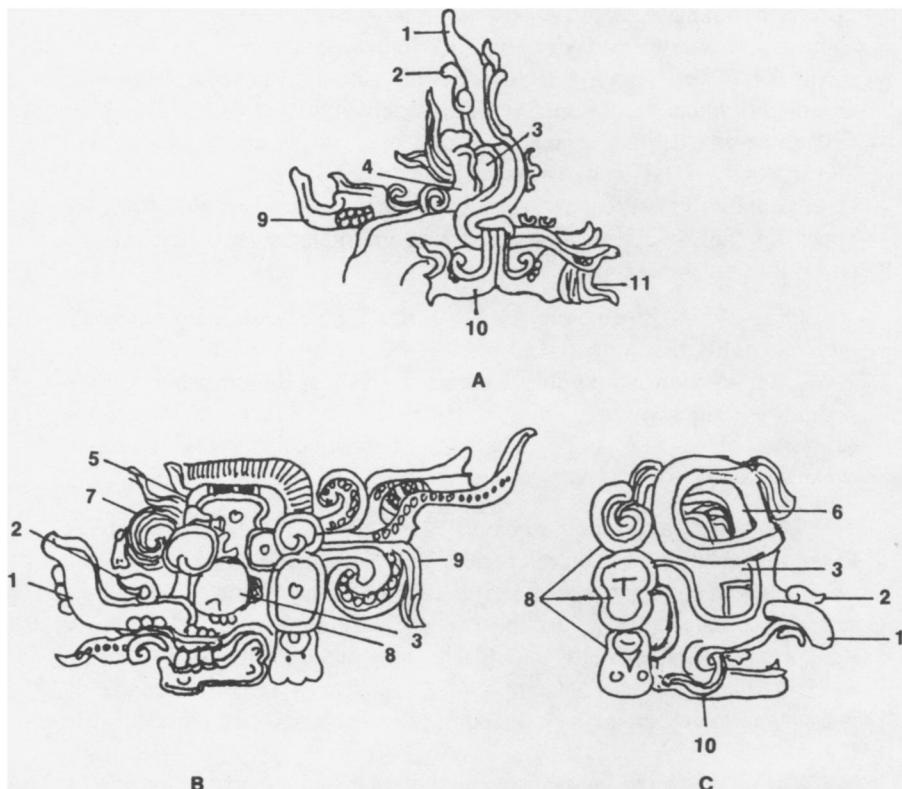


Comparaison of Ophidian and Saurian Heads
A. Ophidian head (Yaxchilan lintel 15, after Spinden 1913: fig. 24).
B. Saurian head with infix (Tikal Temple IV, lintel 3, after Jones 1977: fig. 11).
C. Saurian Head with cavity (Palenque, House D, after Spinden 1913: fig. 115).
Legend: 1. snout; 2. nose; 3. eye; 4. supraorbital plate; 5. infix; 6. cavity; 7. hair;
        8. three-part earplug; 9. foliage element; 10. curl from corner of mouth;
        11. beard.

ophidian and completely animalistic, appearing as the front head of the monster: the other is an animal-human composite with a saurian emphasis, appearing both as the rear head of the monster and as deities which emerge from the ophidian front head.

The generalized serpent head (fig. 2A) is differentiated from the saurian by the elongated proportion which results in an extended snout and narrow, U-shaped supraorbital plate. Corresponding to ophidians in nature are the general lack of earplugs, since snakes lack external ears, and the mouths open at right angles, which snakes accomplish by unhinging their jaws. In contrast, the saurian category (figs. 2A-B) is distinguished by the super-imposition of the zoomorphic characteristics (snout, nose beads, large eyes, mouth curl, foliate scroll) on a vertically-oriented humanoid face, complete with three-part earplug arrangement and often with hair, headband, and human body. This contrast is evident when rulers wear masks of supernaturals: the serpent mask is worn horizontally, extending from the upper lip (fig. 4c-d); the saurian-anthropomorphic mask is vertical and covers the entire face (fig. 20d).

Other animals are subjected to this Maya stylization. Jaguars, monkeys, birds, fish, rodents, and possibly amphibians are depicted with the same saurian-anthropomorphic features as well as in naturalistic form, without the large eyes and snout (fig. 16). The association of this second category with saurians is in fact based more on supposition than on sound evidence, since none of these heads is shown with a saurian body.

The saurian-anthropomorphic category may be subdivided according to the treatment of the forehead region. This elongated area may be infixed with hieroglyphs or other devices (fig. 2B), or it may be surmounted by a ruff and contain a cavity, occupied by the T617a glyph (fig. 2C). While these saurians are generally shown with horizontal or upturned snouts, a specialized category, associated primarily with death and destruction, (fig 5) is distinguished by the pendulous snout, extended tongue, and absent lower jaw.

The ophidian and saurian supernatural images are treated differently by the Maya artist. The serpent head is more commonly shown in profile, while the saurian type may be either frontal or in profile. Frequently a hierarchic grouping is formed by flanking the frontal saurian-anthro-pomorphic image with two profile serpent heads, as in the ruler's loincloth (fig. 13c), and in the headdress, where inverted serpent wing elements flank the central saurian deity (fig 3). Ophidian heads rarely function as the main headdress element, sometimes with the lower jaw and bifurcated tongue

appearing beneath the ruler's chin. Only saurian heads appear to function as independent compositions in disembodied form, as on altars and the basal panels of stelae, and the saurian head is also the most common architectural decoration. The composite nature of the bicephalic monster image is shown by the unrealistic joining of these two contrasting head types. Although the body is usually that of a four-legged saurian, the front head is ophidian, while the saurian head type is appended onto the monster's posterior, and is frequently inverted or on its side.

## 2. THE FRONT HEAD AND SERPENT IMAGERY

This typical ophidian head, identical to both heads of the more common two-headed serpent,[1] is distinguished only by occasional depictions

FIGURE 3
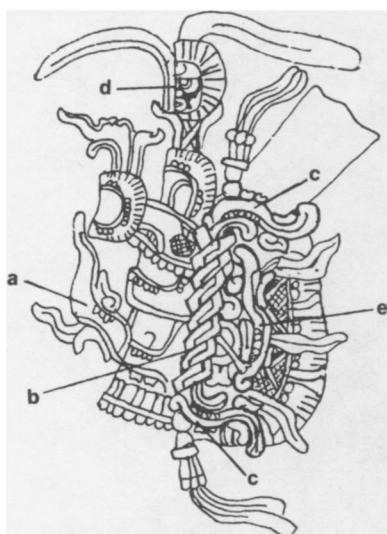


Headdress (La Pasadita lintel 2, after Simpson 1976: fig. 4).
*Legend:* a. main saurian head; b. braided mat; c. downturned serpents with pendants; d. sun face; e. serpent wing element with crossed bands and water lily motifs.

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[1] For the sake of clarity, the term "two-headed" will be reserved for the serpent with two identical ophidian heads. The term "bicephalic" will refer to the monster with an ophidian front head and an appended saurian rear head.

FIGURE 4
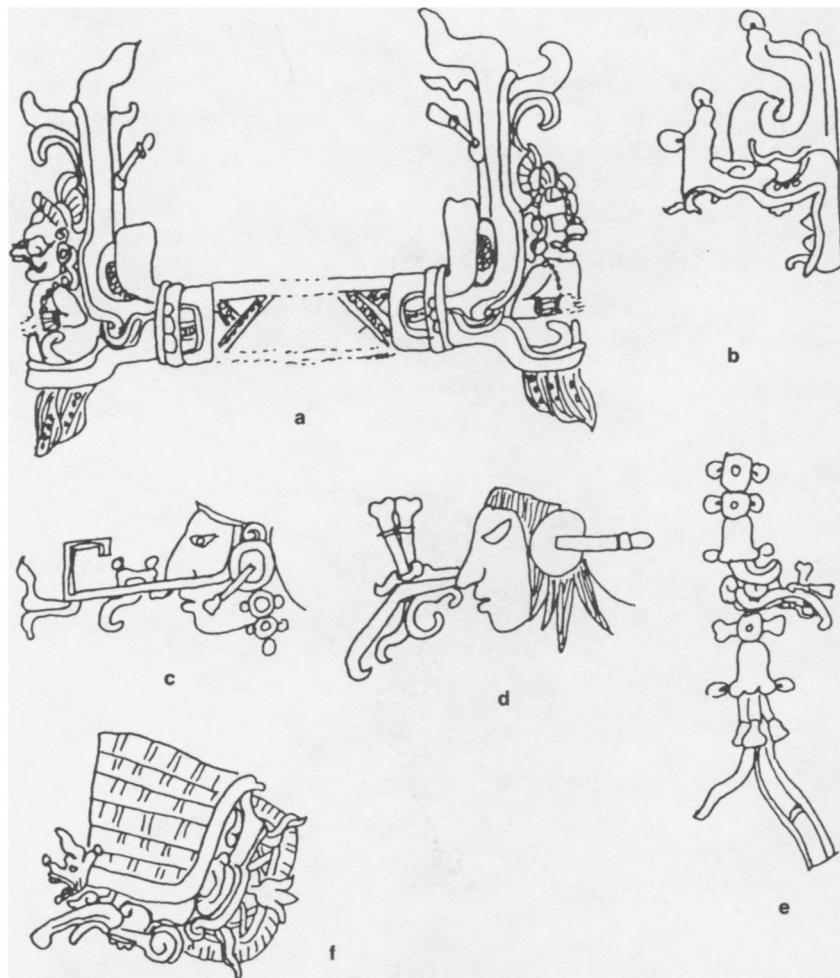


Ophidian types

a. Two headed serpent, ceremonial bar (Copan stela N, after Spinden 1913: fig. 46).

b. Jester god, headdress decoration (Palenque, Slaves tablet, after Schele 1974: fig. 10).

c. Fret-snouted serpent mask (Tikal stela 16, after Jones 1977: fig. 7).

d. Downturned serpent mask (Machaquila stela 4, after Graham 1969: fig. 51).

e. Downturned serpent loincloth (Foliated Cross Panel, after Schele 1976: fig. 10).

f. Downturned serpent as main headdress element, with jester and serpent-wing attachments (Yaxchilan lintel 2, after Graham and von Euw 1977: 15).

of crossed bands in the eyes,[2] ear coverings, and venus or star glyphs behind the head. In both contexts, serpents heads are characterized by the emergence of deities or rulers from the open jaws, suggesting an association with birth-giving. The standard depiction[3] of the ruler holding the two-headed serpent with emerging deities (the ceremonial bar, fig. 4a) may refer to his symbolic transformation and rebirth, by which divine authority he rules. The association with rebirth is supported by the depictions of the sun god head on the serpent's snout (e.g. Copan altar O) and of maize foliage,

FIGURE 5



a                          b                          c
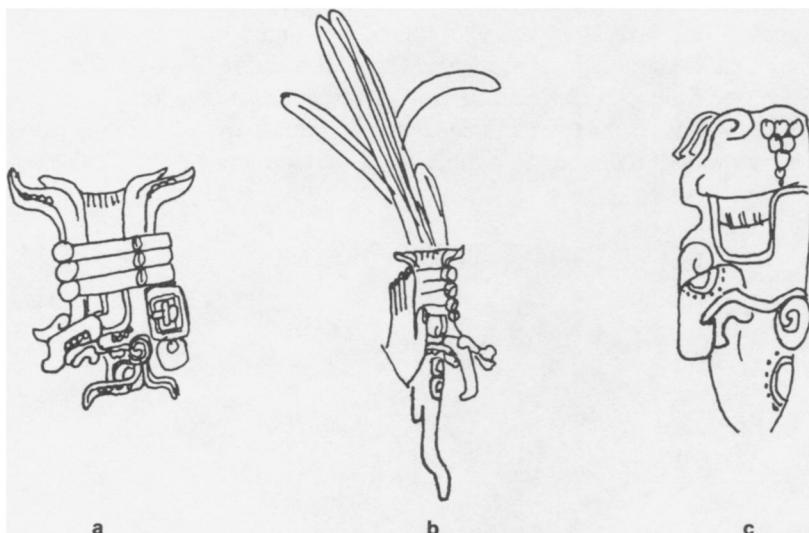
Jawless saurians with blade-tongue

a. Perforator god as anklet (Tikal stela 21, after Jones 1977: fig. 2).

b. Perforator god blood-letting implement (inverted) (Foliated Cross Panel, after Schele 1976: fig. 10).

c. Cauac monster (Sun jamb, after Schele 1976: fig. 12).

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2 The eyes will then be shown with lids, possibly related to avian or amphibian imagery.

3 At Tikal and Copan, death images will also frequently emerge from serpent bars.

4 Innovative Usumacinta artists combined the disembodied serpent form of the jester with the anthropomorphic-saurian flare god, placing it in the headdress or providing it with a human body (fig. 10d).

or streams of water emerging from bicephalic monster heads, shown as stylized serpents (Spinden 1913: 43, 84; Kubler 1969: fig. 59). The image of the open-mouthed serpent becomes a frequent head ornament (fig. 4b). Dubbed the "jester god" by Schele (1974: 50), its U-shaped supraorbital plate is elongated to a query-mark shape and decorated with bone baubles.

A more problematic form of the serpent head is distinguished by a long, angular, downturned snout and absent lower jaw. Like the fret-snouted serpent (fig. 4c), it may be worn as a mask (fig. 4d) or appear as a costume decoration. As a loincloth ornament (fig. 4e), shells, braided mats, and jades are pendant from its mouth. In the headdress (fig. 3c), pairs of downturned serpent heads, each joined by a braided mat, flank the ruler's face or saurian head. Unlike most serpent forms, the downturned type may appear as the main headdress element (fig. 4f), and it may be transformed into a quasi-saurian image by the addition of descriptive forehead elements. Such transformed heads occur as wristlet and anklet decorations. With the addition of the characteristic triple knotted headband and protruding blade-tongue, these become (fig. 5a) images of the perforator god (Joralemon

FIGURE 6
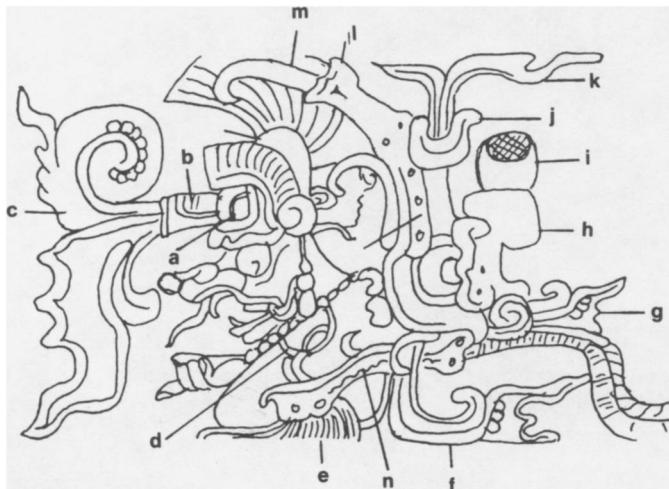


Flare God emerging from Skeletal Serpent (Yaxchilan lintel 39, after Graham 1979: 87).
*Legend:* a. cavity; b. tube; c. flare; d. "god-marking"; e. beard; f. curl from corner of mouth; g. foliage element; h. supraorbital plate; i. gouged eye; j. skeletal nose; k. nasal extrusion; l. bony sockets; m. stubby fangs; n. skeletal jaws.

1974), more commonly shown as a hand-held instrument of blood-letting (fig. 5b) and closely related to the more saurian *cauac* monster (fig. 5c). The downturned snout, absence of lower jaw, and frequent appearance as the deified blood-letter suggest that the downturned serpent type may carry associations of sacrifice and death, in contrast to the birth-giving association of the open-jawed ophidian. At Copan, the standard stela form seems to depict the ruler wearing the perforator god anklets and wristlets, and holding the two-headed serpent bar with emerging deities (e.g. stela N), suggesting that this contrast of death and rebirth imagery is designed to demonstrate the ruler's supernatural transformation.

## 3. EMERGING DEITIES: THE FLARE GOD AND RELATED IMAGES

The flare god, analyzed by Robertson (1979: 129-30) and Robiscek (1978: 73-82) is most commonly shown emerging from the ophidian head of the bicephalic monster and the two heads of the ceremonial bar (fig. 4a). It is shown with a human body, with a ruff of hair and longer strands of protruding from a skull cap (fig. 6). The image of the flare god emerging from the serpent maw appears to have been abstracted for the purposes of ceremonial regalia in the form of the manikin sceptre (fig. 7a), in which one of its legs is transformed into a snake to function as a handle.[5] The ruler holds this sceptre in his right hand, while wearing a shield on the left wrist. The shield is almost invariably decorated with the face of the jaguar god, who carries the opposite meanings of war, sacrifice, and death. Together these two attributes encapsulate the death-rebirth inaugural transformation (Cohodas 1979: 222). The flare god head is also characterized by the forehead cavity. Frequently an axe blade is hafted through the cavity (fig. 7a) or a tube protrudes from the hollow, from which in turn emerges a bifurcated scroll (fig. 6) that gives the flare god its name. The bifurcated scroll distinguishes the name glyph of the codical god K (fig. 7b),[6] suggesting that the Classic flare god may be ancestral to this Postclassic deity.[7]

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[5] At Palenque, the manikin may be shown as a bodiless sceptre, or as a complete antropomorphic deity held in the hands or lap.

[6] The disjunction in form and meaning of images which seems to occur between the Classic and Postclassic periods is less evident in the codical name glyphs, which retain the archaic meanings of the associated deities.

[7] On the basis of Landa's description of the year-bearer ceremonies, Seler, Thompson, and others have identified god K as *Bolon Dz'acab*, and this appellation has been applied to the Classic flare god as well.

Coe (1973: 116) interprets the bifurcated scroll as smoke, and the cavity as a mirror, thus equating the flare god with the Aztec jaguar deity *Tezcatlipoca*, or Smoking Mirror. In his treatise on tobacco and smoking among the Maya, Robiscek (1978: 60) identifies the tube from which the flare emerges as a lit cigar. This identification is not supported by representations of *Tezcatlipoca* at Chichen Itza, which are closer to the Classic Maya in time and space than is Aztec art. There, *Tezcatlipoca* is a human-faced warrior with his leg severed above the knee, and with the

FIGURE 7
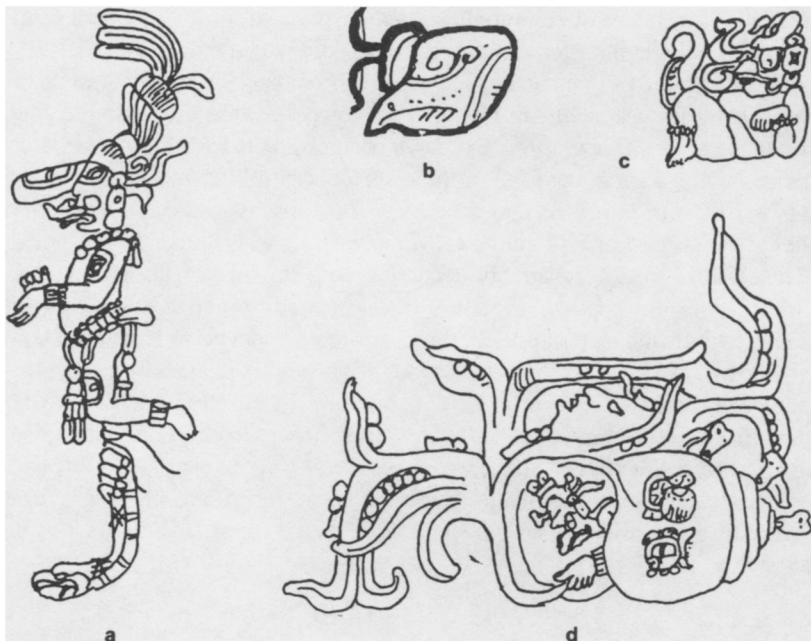


Flare God imagery
a. Manikin sceptre (Yaxchilan lintel 3, after Graham and von Euw 1977: 17).
b. Glyph of codical God K (Dresden Codex).
c. G II of the Palenque Triad (after Schele 1979: fig. 13).
d. Flare God emerging from shell (Foliated Cross Panel, after Schele 1976: fig. 10).

circular smoking mirror in his headdress (fig. 9a).[8] In contrast, Maya dignitaries are shown in the same Chichen Itza temples wearing a saurian mask, with the shield on the left wrist and a snake-handled, axe-like sceptre in the right hand (fig. 9b), a direct parallel to the Classic motif of the Maya ruler with wrist shield and manikin sceptre.

Thompson (1970: 226) interprets the scroll of the flare god as vegetation, and the cavity as the seed or soil from which it emerges. Kelley (1976: 98) identifies the flare god with G II of the Palenque triad (fig. 7c) who is associated with the Foliated Cross Panel. There (fig. 7d) the flare god holds a ripened maize plant as he emerges from a shell, suggesting an analogy to the representations of his emergence from a serpent maw, and supporting Thompson's association with vegetation.

FIGURE 8
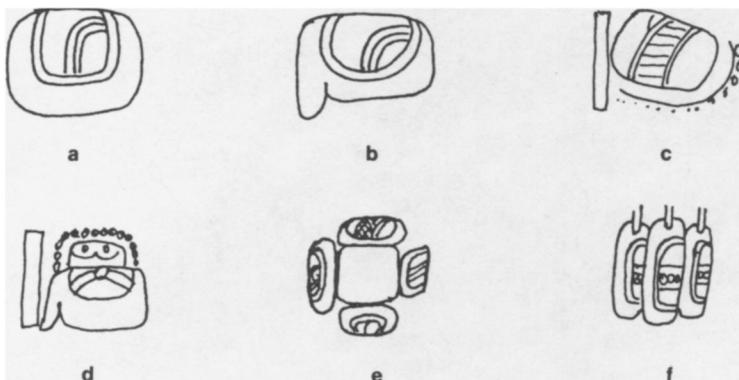


Hieroglyphs associated with the cavity
a. T617a.
b. T712.
c. Fifth of Night (After Thompson 1960: fig. 34, 25).
d. Fifth Lord of Night (After Thompson 1960: fig. 34, 30).
e. T24.
f. Shell tinklers, after Spinden 1913: fig. 111).

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8 *Tezcatlipoca's* mirror is round with a raised rim, as also appears in Classic Maya funerary ceramics, and distinct from the T617a glyph.

Thompson's interpretation of the flare is supported by analysis of the T617a glyph (fig. 8a) that forms the cavity and which appears to be an aquatic symbol rather than a mirror. For example, it (fig. 21d) replaces the fish head (fig. 21e) as the main sign of the month *Mac*. Another alternate main sign for *Mac* is *imix* (T501), known to carry aquatic associations.[9]

FIGURE 9



a.                                                    b.
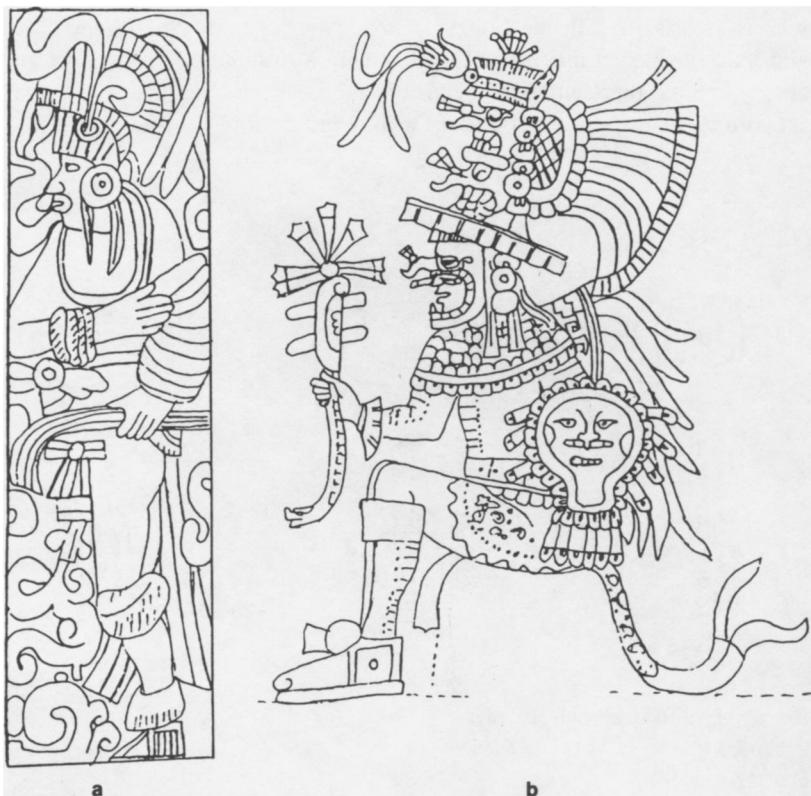
Temple of the Chac Mool, Chichen Itza
a. "Tezcatlipoca" (Colum 3s, after Morris *et al.* 1932, vol. 2, pl. 31).
b. "Dignitary" (South bench, after Morris *et al.* 1932, vol. 1, fig. 305).

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9 Although Thompson (1960: 72) identified the *imix* glyph as a water lily bud, it is closer to representations of fish fins in art and hieroglyphics.

FIGURE 10 117
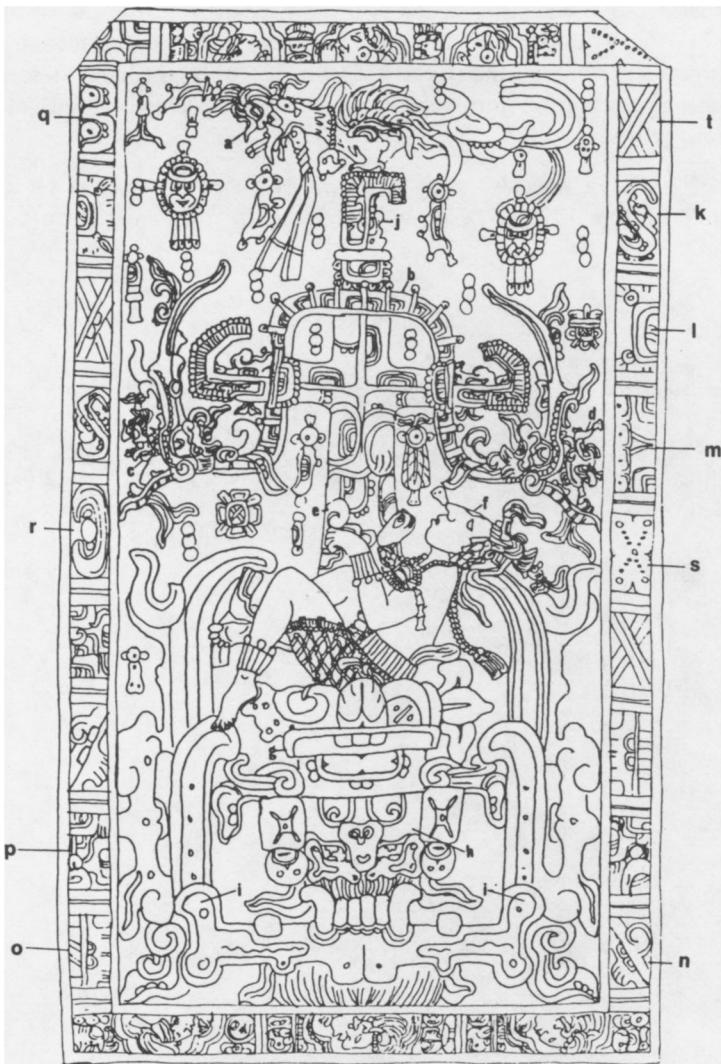


Palenque Sarcophagus lid (after Robiscek 1978: fig. 74).

*Legend:* a. serpent-winged bird; b. skeletal-fleshed serpent composite; c. flare god; d. flare god with jester attributes; e. sun god; f. Pacal as maize god with flare god attributes; g. quadripartite badge; h. rear head; i. skeletal serpent heads; j. beaded serpent; k. fret-snouted serpent; l. shield; m. *akbal;* n. *caan* (diagonal); o. *caan* (horizontal); p. sun god; q. venus; r. moon; s. *kin*; t. crossed bands.

Similar substitutions occur in the primary standard ceramic text, in which T617a occurs in the introductory glyph, but may be replaced by an anthropomorphic fish head (Coe 1978: No. 12), or by the lunar crescent, a vessel-shape which in turn replaces shell signs in representations of the number 20.

The T617a sign also takes the form of a shallow dish, as on Tikal altar 7 (Schele 1979: 49), or in more stylized, rectilinear form as the

FIGURE 11
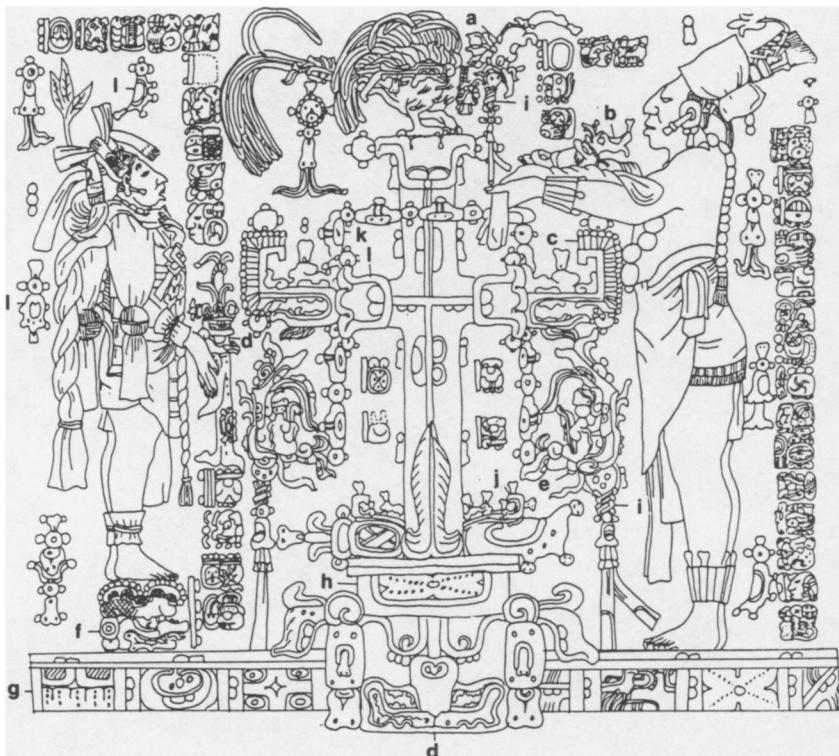


Cross Panel (after Schele 1976: fig. 6).

*Legend:* a. serpent-winged bird with downturned serpent attributes; b. flare god with jester attributes; c. beaded serpent; d. rear head; e. two-headed serpent with skeletal and downturned serpent attributes; f. rear head emblem; g. sky band; h. quadripartite badge; i. loincloth type pendants; j. fret-snouted serpent; k. *yax* (shell); l. other shell motifs.

termination of ceremonial bars (Naranjo stela 22) and headdress constructions of jade beads (Tikal, Temple IV, lintel 3). On crossshaped trees at Palenque, this vessel (fig. 10) replaces bivalve shells (fig. 11), while on lintel 3 of Tikal Temple I, it appears as the ruler's wristlet instead of the fish-head wristlet worn by the Jaguar, revealing similar aquatic substitutions.

A hand-form of this sign, T712 (fig. 8d) replaces T617a in the glyph of the fifth lord of the night (fig. 8c-d), associated with the month *Mac*. As a glyph for sacrificial blood-letting (Proskouriakoff 1973) T712 may replace the hand-grasping-fish glyph (fig. 21b), or another glyph (T672) that combines hand and shell elements.

An alternate form employed for the month *Mac* is similar to the T24 affix (fig. 8e) which Kelley (1976: 133-35) identifies as a shell tinkler from a ruler's costume. The same glyph forms the flare god's blade and frequently the tube, which like the costume pendant are just as likely to have been made of jade (e.g. Ruz 1973: 169), a material whose liquid green surface would also be associated with vegetation and moisture. The T617a glyph is thus repeatedly associated with aquatic symbols; it forms a vessel; and it may replace shells, which combine the concepts of water and vessel in a single form. Similarly, the month *Mac* with which it is most closely associated has a fish patron and may be translated as "to enclose" (Thompson 1960: 113) or a "flat shell" (Victoria Bricker: p.c.). If the flare emerges from an aquatic vessel as these associations indicate, then the concepts of fire and smoking are not likely to be involved.

The maize god, a youthful male deity with high-piled cornsilk hair (fig. 12a) is closely related to the flare god in the associations of water, vegetation, and renewal. The glyph of the corresponding codical god E (fig. 12b) shows the youthful face superimposed on an emarginated, fish-like body, with the T24 affix mentioned above. The maize god is further characterized by the gesture of extending the forearms, raising one hand and lowering the other with both palms facing outward (e.g. Copan Temple 22).[10] The flare god shares the same gesture (fig. 7a), while the maize god may instead emerge from the ophidian head (fig. 1). Another example of their similarity is the sarcophagus lid (fig. 10) where Pacal appears as the maize god, but with the tube and flare of the flare god.

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[10] In funerary arts, the maize god often uses the gestures of raising one hand, with the sharply bent wrist held to the face, shared by other passengers as well on the boat scenes from the Tikal bones.

However, while the flare god is more closely associated with Maya ruling authority and is more restricted to contexts of rebirth, the less commonly shown maize god is more passive and may appear in all stages of the transformation cycle.

The image of the reborn sun (fig. 13a) is related in form and meaning to both the flare and maize gods. Like the flare god, the sun face is usually shown with the forehead cavity, but lacking the snout. The cavity design may be shown with or replaced by fin-like elements emerging from the cheek and forehead (fig. 10p), which also appear in the humanized version (fig. 13b). The sun god face is also distinguished by the square, squinting pupils (another form of the T617a vessel glyph?), a ruff of close-cropped hair, T-shaped filed upper incisors, a wide, continuous lip band creating a round or (sometimes abbreviated) quatrefoil mouth, and flanking mustache-like elements identified as fish barbels (Schele 1979: 58). The fins and barbels suggest a piscine association which relates the sun and maize deities.

The zoomorphic counterpart of the sun god image, sharing the barbels and ruff but distinguished by the more naturalistic small, round eyes and larger, toothless mouth, is the Classic form of God C (fig. 14a), the deity associated with the north, water, and the nadir of the underworld (Cohodas 1974). God C has been conventionally identified as a monkey, although its head bears no relationship to the monkey deities identified by Coe (1977). Instead, the barbels and general facial type are most similar to hieroglyphic representations of fish (fig. 14b-c), and shell and fish symbols may substitute for God C in various contexts. The codical glyph of god C

FIGURE 12



a                                        b
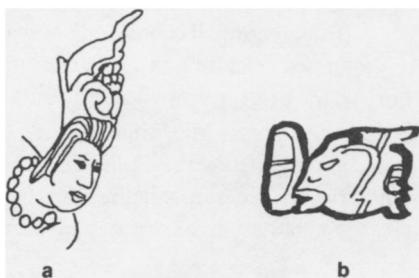
Maize god comparison
a. Maize god (Copan stela H, after Spinden 1913: fig. 123).
b. Glyph of codical god E, (Dresden Codex).

(fig. 14d) shares with the god E glyph the band along the cranium which, if the glyph is a simultaneous image of the face and complete body, would represent the fish's lateral nerve line. While the sun god, like the flare god, is most closely associated with imagery of the ruler's rebirth (as in the loincloth, fig. 13c), God C like the maize god appears to be more versatile in his much rarer appearances. All four of these interrelated deities are nevertheless primarily associated with emergence, maize, water, and fish imagery, recalling the Popol Vuh story in which the hero twins are first reborn out of water as fish-men.

Finally, the serpent-winged bird may be related to this group of deities through the similar saurian face with forehead cavity (fig. 15a), but is distinguished by the avian body and the serpent heads (fig. 15b) from which wing feathers emerge. Although Bardawil (1976) follows previous authors in identifying it as an owl, the derivation from anthropomorphic images (in

FIGURE  13
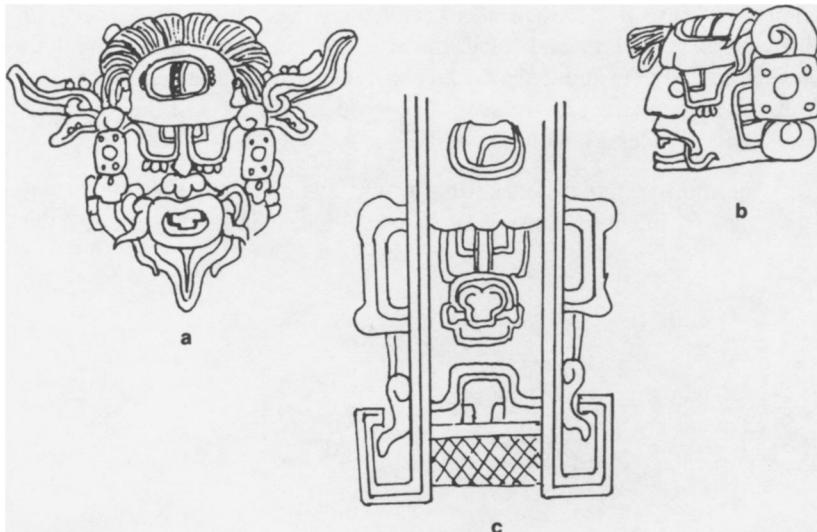


Sun god imagery
a. Sun God (Foliated Cross panel, after Schele 1976: fig. 10).
b. Roman-nosed type of sun god head (Sun panel, after Schele 1976: fig. 10).
c. Loincloth with sun god and fret-snouted serpents (Naranjo stela 6, after Graham and von Euw 1975: 23).

the Pre- and Early Classic phases) and the virtual absence of bird heads (Tikal Temple IV, lintel 3 is the single example) makes species identification impossible. Nor is there any evidence that it is to be equated with the stylized raptorial bird heads which decorate planetary bands (fig. 16a) or the naturalistic form (probably a Harpy eagle) which appears in the headdress of god L (fig. 16b). Instead, the serpent-winged bird appears to be a composite of stylized supernatural images grafted onto a generalized avian body, just as the bicephalic monster (on which it perches) is a composite of similar images grafted onto a reptilian body.

## 4. THE REAR HEAD AND SKELETAL IMAGERY

The rear head is of the saurian type with forehead infix, further distinguished by the fleshless lower jaw. Furst (1978: 318) has shown that skeletal imagery may not always be associated with death, but also with germination. Skeletal imagery actually suggests the point of transformation, the liminal phase after the old state of being has been destroyed by stripping off the old flesh, and before the new state of being has been created by adding on new flesh. Such skeletal imagery has clear counterparts in shamanistic mythology and ritual, but it is relevant to any transformation, and particularly (in monumental art) the ruler's inaugural transformation from the human to the divine state. The frequent inversion of the rear head may likewise refer to the animal state.

The most common skeletal image in Maya art is the skeletal serpent head (fig. 6), identified not only by the fleshless jaws but also by the

FIGURE 14
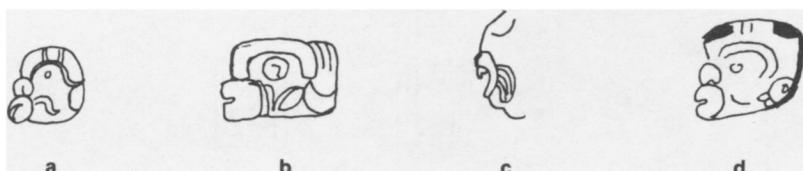


God C imagery
a. Classic inscriptional version of God C.
b. Fish glyph (after Kelley 1976: fig. 45).
c. Fish glyph (Palenque, Temple IV tablet).
d. Codical glyph of God C (Dresden Codex).

attached baubles (bones and gouged eyes), the hollow nose emitting some kind of extrusion, and the two short, stubby fangs which emerge from bony sockets at the tip of the snout. The two-headed skeletal serpent appears in contexts of death and rebirth as well as the liminal phase, suggesting relevance to the entire transformation cycle. As a death image, spear blades emerge from its jaws, while in contexts of rebirth it is associated with the bicephalic monster: four skeletal serpent heads emerge from medallions framing the rear head in Tikal ruler's capes, two skeletal serpent heads frame the rear head on the sarcophagus (fig. 10), and two skeletal serpent heads frame the figures who hold bicephalic monster emblems on the Palenque style onyx vase from Jaina (Cohodas 1976: fig. 6).

A standardized variant of the skeletal serpent is further characterized by circlets or sequins along its facial bones, and finned ornaments on the brow, nose, snout, and lower jaw (fig. 17). Like the more common skeletal serpent, this finned serpent may be associated with all phases of the transformation cycle. It is a death image when worn by warrior-rulers with prisoners, as on stelae at Naranjo, Bonampak, and Piedras Negras. It appears as a rebirth image on lintel 2 of Tikal Temple I, while its circlets are superimposed on the skeletal saurian and fret-snouted serpent heads worn by the ruler on lintel 3 of Tikal Temple IV. The association of the finned skeletal serpent with liminality as well as rebirth is shown on Yaxchilan lintel 25 (fig. 17), where the ruler emerges from the two-headed finned serpent, wearing a skeletal (sun god?) mask, while his consort both wears and holds skeletal versions of the bicephalic monster. The emphasis on skeletal imagery combines with the reversal of the inscription to create a powerful image of the liminal state.

FIGURE 15
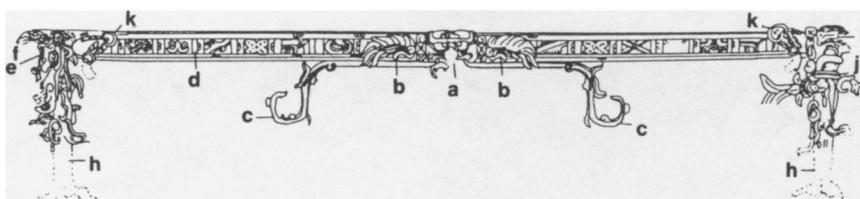


Bicephalic Monster over doorway (House E, after Schele 1976: fig. 9).
*Legend:* a. Head of serpent-winged bird with forehead cavity; b. serpent wing element; c. fret-snouted serpent; d. sky band; e. front head; f. venus sign; g. lidded eye with crossed bands; h. water stream; i. rear head; j. quadripartite badge; k. shell joint.

Skeletal images of the saurian-anthropomorphic category are less common. The skeletal saurian appears in basal panels (Palenque), on altars (Copan), in headdresses, and as a pectoral. The skeletal form of the raptorial bird (fig. 16c), with forehead infix, downcurving beak (similar to the downturned serpent snout), hollow nose, and comb-like device attached to the nasal extrusion, is particularly associated with the rear head of the bicephalic monster, as on the Cross jamb. Although the context of skeletal serpent and saurian images is clearly related to transformation and the liminal state, the nasal extrusion which they share remains unexplained.

## 5. GLYPHIC INFIXES OF THE REAR HEAD

The most complex of these glyphic devices, studied primarily by Kubler (1969), and termed the quadripartite badge by Robertson (1974), appears to represent a sacrificial dish containing blood-letting paraphernalia (fig. 18a). In monumental art, women frequently hold these dishes, which contain blood-spattered bark paper with the cord, stingray spine, and blade-tongued perforator sceptre use for blood-letting (fig. 17). In two examples (Yaxchilan lintels 13-14) the T712 glyph for blood-letting (fig. 8b) also appears in the vessel. The lowest section of the quadripartite badge is the stylized sacrificial dish, elsewhere decorated with the T617a vessel glyph,

FIGURE 16
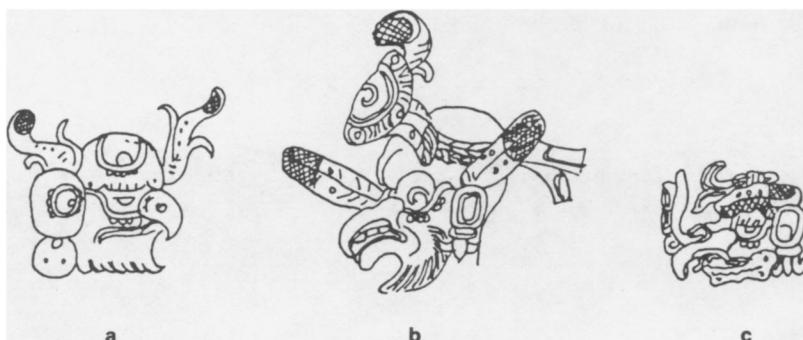


Raptorial bird heads
a. Stylized type (Naranjo stela 32, after Graham 1978: 86).
b. Naturalistic type (Cross jamb, after Schele 1976: fig. 6).
c. Skeletal type (Cross jamb, after Schele 1976: fig. 6).

FIGURE 17
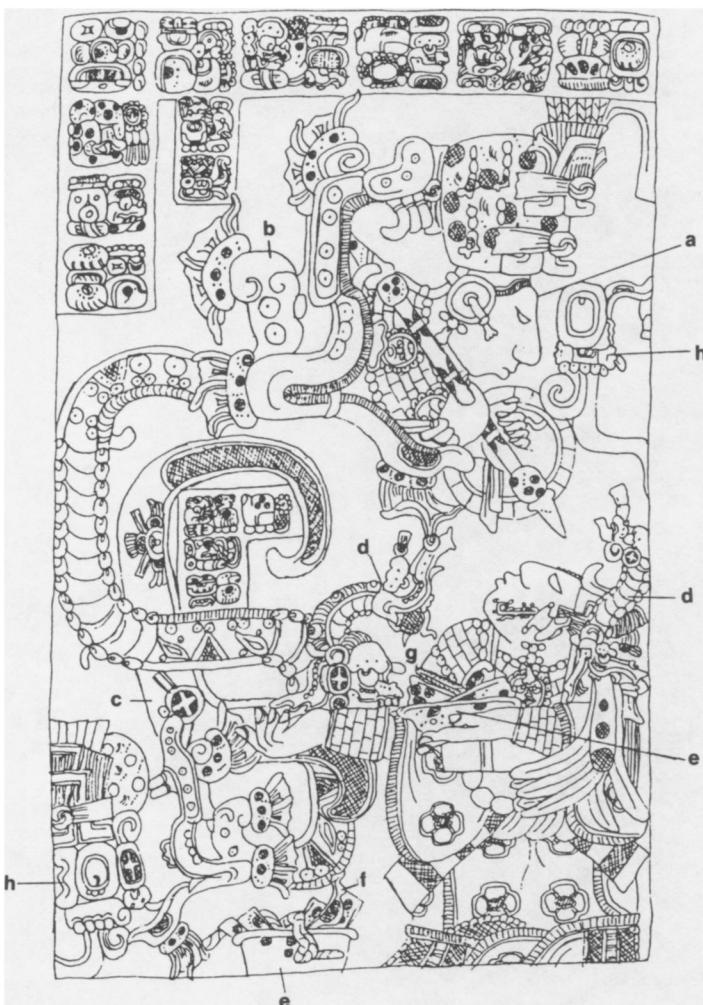


Yaxchilan linten 25 (after Graham and von Euw 1977: 55).
*Legend:* a. Shield Jaguar emerging; b. finned serpent; c. water scrool; d. skeletal
     bicephalic monster; e. sacrificial plate with bark paper; f. perforator blade;
     g. stingray spine; h. skeletal sun god?

FIGURE 18
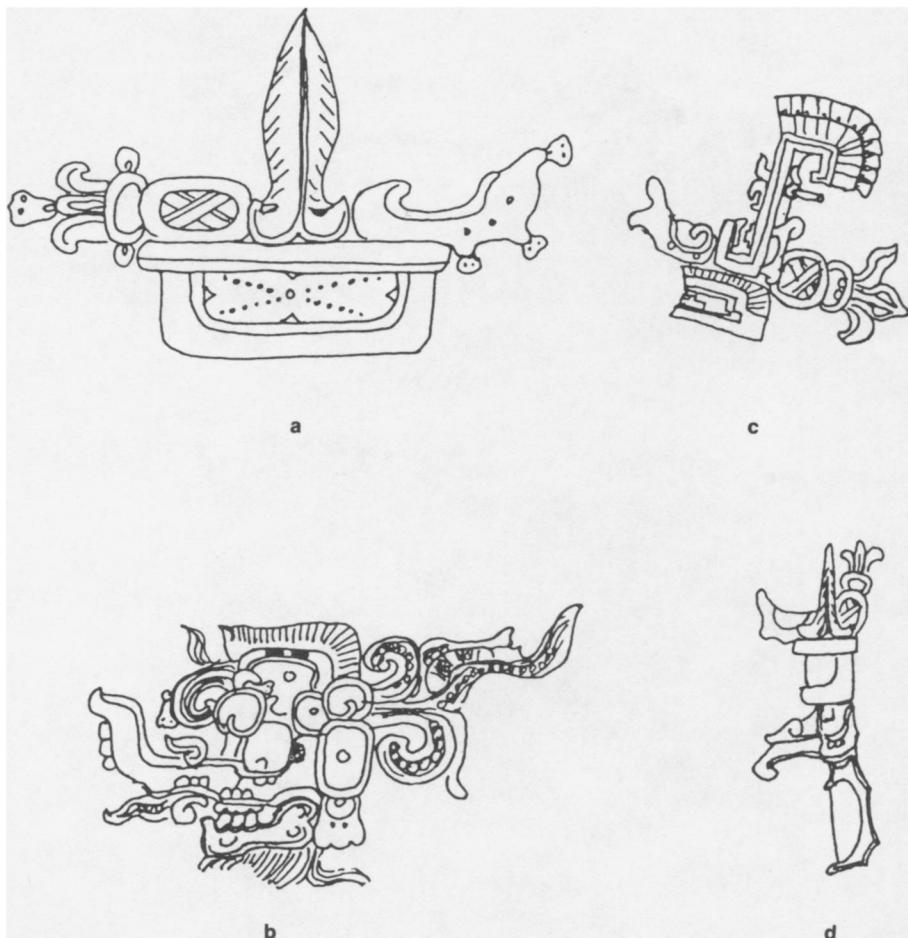


Rear Head infixes

a. Quadripartite badge (Cross panel, after Robertson 1974: fig. 1).

b. Rear head with God C infix (Tikal Temple IV, lintel 3, after Jones 1977: fig. 11).

c. Modified badge with beaded serpent for woman's headdress (Cleveland stela, after Miller 1974: fig. 2).

d. Composite Rear head with quadripartite badge and perforator, in woman's headdress (Piedras Negras stela 3, after Maler 1901: pl. 13).

but in this context inscribed with the *kin* or sun sign. The central vertical element in this dish was identified by Joralemon (Schele 1976: 18) as the perforator made from the barbed weapon of the aquatic stingray. The flanking elements also have sacrificial connotations.

The cartouche with crossed bands and *fleur-de-lis* device which flanks the stingray spine is a costume ornament, generally worn as a pectoral by Maya rulers and deities, and associated with sacrificial imagery (Yaxchilan stela 5, Narango stelae 8, 19) as well as with water-scattering (Piedras Negras stela 13, most Yaxchilan stelae). The third object, a shell, will be shown subsequently to carry similar associations with water and sacrifice. The shell may take the form of a halved univalve conch shell, or the more circular form of a bivalve. At Tikal and Yaxchilan, the head of god C replaces the quadripartite badge as the forehead infix (fig. 18b). God C is related to the rear head not only through associations with water and the north, but also as a sacrificial emblem, since it is interchangeable with the hand-grasping-fish and T712 (figs. 21b, 8b) glyphs of blood-letting.[11]

When the rear head with quadripartite badge is worn in the headdress or on the back, with one exception by women, the stingray spine is usually replaced by a beaded form of the fret-snouted serpent (fig. 18c). While the standard fret-snouted serpent or *zip* monster[12] is a rebirth image in Maya art, appearing with the sun god in sky bands and loin-cloths and calendrically related to the rainy season, the beaded form may carry the opposite connotations of fire and devouring. For example, on the Jaina onyx vessel (Cohodas 1976: fig. 6) the beaded serpent head is opposed to the two bicephalic monster emblems, one of which appears with the standard fret-snouted serpent. On a Jaina figurine (Princeton 1975: 61-66) the jaguar god sits astride a monstrous saurian form of this beast[13] whose upturned beaded snout seems ancestral to the Aztec image of the fire serpent, *Xiuhcoatl.* At Palenque, the beaded serpent becomes a cross-shaped tree which grows from the quadripartite badge and rear head, as on pier c of House D, where it is associated with prisoner sacrifice, and on the Cross tablet and sarcophagus (figs. 10-11). Despite the association of the beaded serpent with trees at Palenque, the context of the rear head with

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11 The god C head appears to function as the blood-letting glyph on Naranjo stela 24, while on Piedras Negras 36 (Thompson 1960: fig. 34, 2) the hand-grasping-fish substitutes for the god C head in the glyph of the first lord of the night.

12 Kelley's (1976: 120) identification of the *zip* monster as a "sky peccary" is based on Postclassic codical representations. In the Classic period it is never shown with a body.

13 Th *xi* signs on the monster's tail are also associated with warriors at Naranjo.

quadripartite badge in the woman's headdress appears to be sacrificial, as in the composite rear head-perforator sceptre on Piedras Negras stela 3 (fig. 18d).

Investigation of the shell symbols found in the quadripartite badge clarifies the contexts and meaning of the rear head in monumental art. First, shells may be considered aquatic symbols which also carry the association of vessel or container. The concepts of water and vessel suggest the watery underworld, the womb of the earth goddess within which the sun-maize deity and ruler are conceived and from which they are reborn. Pacal was actually interred in a cavity suggesting the shape of a bivalve shell as well as pottery jar. The crescent glyph of the moon goddess (fig. 10r) is a vessel which may substitute for shell signs, supporting the association of shells as containers with the water-filled womb of the moon-earth goddess.

Since the symbolism of water and vessel is associated with transformation in the underworld, shell designs carry liminal connotations which equate them with bone imagery. For example bivalve shells may substitute for lower jaws (Foliated Cross panel). More significantly, the Cross panels is distinguished from the Sun and Foliated Cross panels by the dispersal of all forms of shell (and bone) ornaments throughout the field, thus representing not only the watery underworld environment but also vessels, bones, and transformation. On the Palace tablet, the composite serpent-fish support of the central figure (fig. 20c) associated with the north, contrasts with the jaguar head support of the western figure, and the serpent head support of the eastern figure. Like the skeletal imagery on Yaxchilan lintel 25, the shell motifs on the Cross panel and fish heads on the Palace tablet place these central elements of three-part sculptural programs in the context of the north, underworld, and the liminal point of transformation.

Shells are also sacrificial symbols in Maya art. They are worn by kneeling figures on Yaxchilan water-scatterer stelae and warrior-rulers and Piedras Negras and Jaina. Bivalve shells, substitute for two trophy heads in the ruler's costume on Yaxchilan lintel 9 (Graham and von Euw 1977: 29), while on Narango stela 21 the ruler wears the same bivalve shells as well as a shell pectoral. This ruler (fig. 19a) impersonates the jaguar god, with the nose pendants, cruller, jaguar ear, and beard shown with a crenellated shell-like outline. A similar univalve shell which tops his headdress[14] may be

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[14] A hand, also a sacrificial emblem, substitutes for the shell in the headdress of Pacal on the Oval tablet. In funerary art, the blade-like shell headdress ornament is diagnostic of the deity Coe (1978: 46) names god N[1], a common variant of the aged shell god N.

associated with the blade-tongue of the perforator. Bivalve shells appear with scenes of blood-letting in the Madrid Codex (fig. 19b). Pairs of bivalves flank the heads of perforator gods on Tikal diamond staffs (fig. 19c), recalling the shell-winged avian (fig. 19d) (Schele 1979: 59), associated with death imagery, and appearing with the cartouche and *fleur-de-lis* in the relief of House B.

FIGURE 19
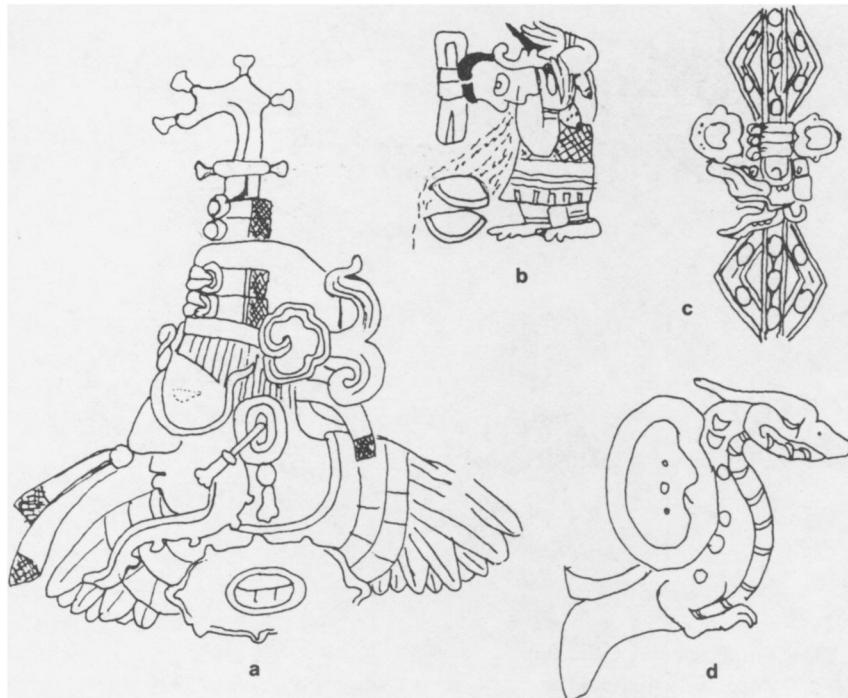


Sacrificial associations of shells

a. Ruler impersonating Jaguar god (Naranjo stela 21, after Graham and von Euw 1975: 53).

b. Ear-piercing with blood falling on shells (Madrid Codex 95a, after Villacorta and Villacorta 1976: 414).

c. Diamond staff with perforator god heads, detail (Tikal stela 16, after Jones 1977: fig. 7).

d. Shell-winged dragon (Slave tablet, after Schele 1979: fig. 17).

The sacrificial connotations of shells center on the monstruous fish, the patron of the month *Mac* previously related to the T617a glyph. Maya women wear this fish head at the front of their belt (fig. 20a), with a bivalve shell substituting for its extended tongue, and the same fish is worn as a wristlet by the giant jaguar of Tikal.[15] It is identified by fins emerging from the side of its face, the fins-with-cavities which form its brow, and the

FIGURE 20
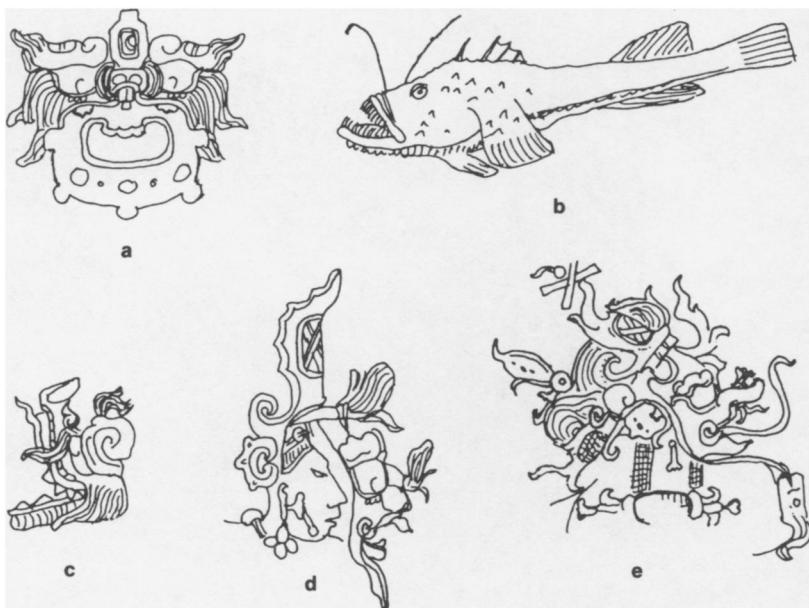


The Barbel god and angler fish
a. Stylized angler fish from woman's belt (Cleveland stela, after Miller 1974: fig. 2).
b. Angler fish (Goosefish, family *Lophiidae*, after Migdalski and Fichter 1976: 171).
c. Serpent-fish composite (Palace tablet, after Schele 1979: fig. 10).
d. Ruler wearing ear-covering, symbolic lure, and mask of Barbel god (Yaxchilan stela 11, after Thompson 1966: fig. 21).
e. Barbel god (Creation tablet, after Thompson 1966: fig. 22).

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15 Kelley (1976: 123) suggests that two aquatic predators are involved, the *ca* or fish, patron of the month *Mac*, and the *xoc* or shark.

protruberance which rises vertically from its upper lip. On the basis of this protruberance, it may be tentatively identified as the goosefish angler (family *Lophiidae*), a large predatory fish found along the Atlantic coast, which uses as its lure the first, widely separated spine of the dorsal fin, rising from the upper lip, and tipped with a ragged piece of flesh. The angler lies hidden on the bottom, in both deep and shallow waters, and sucks in the fish it attracts by opening its cavernous[16] mouth. It is also distinguished by the broad pectoral fins on which it crawls[17] (Migdalski and Fichter 1976: 171; Wheeler 1975: 236-37).

The prey of the supernatural angler fish monster would be more vulnerable piscine deities, the sun god (appearing as G I of the Palenque triad with a shell ear-covering), the maize god and god C. As representations of the sun – maize deity, these must be devoured by the monstruous fish in order to be transformed in the watery underworld and reborn. The relationship of the angler fish to his prey thus parallels the relationship of the eagle and jaguar to the deer, as a representation of the earth monster devouring the descending sun.

The angler fish appears in deified form as the barbel god (also called the rain beast by Coe (1978: 76) and the executioner by Hellmuth). The name glyph of the codical god A' may be associated with this deity, since it consists of a jawless version of the "fish-head" type used for gods C and E (fig. 21a). The barbel god (fig. 20e) is recognized by the heavy folds of facial skin, the barbels flanking its mouth, and the stylized lure in the headdress, formed of a halved conch shell with bands infixed. In some examples (Quirigua altar O) this stingray spine replaces the lure motif (both are represented with the same diverging curls at the base). The barbel god may also have "god-markings" in the form of shell designs, and wears a bivalve shell as his ear (in this case gill) covering.[18] As a predatory fisherman, the barbel god is an important sacrificial deity, and is thus

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[16] The meaning of *mac* as "to enclose" may relate to the angler fish engulfing its pray in this manner as well as to the descent of the sun into the underworld.

[17] The *"ma"* prefix which appears in the glyph of *Mac* may represent an abbreviated frontal view of the angler fish shown only by its lure flanked by the enlarged pectoral fins. The same prefix occurs with the conch shells as the glyph for south, paralleling the god C head as codical glyph for north in its aquatic association, recalling the importance of south as associated with the night sky in which the underworld or watery realm is reflected.

[18] It may be that Yucatec fishermen recalled the angler fish as their supernatural patron. According to Landa (Tozzer 1941: 156), instead of piercing their ears to draw blood, they cut them around the edges. The result must have resembled a gill covering as much as the bivalve shell worn by the barbel god.

associated with imagery of the jaguar and perforator gods (Quirigua altar O, Naranjo stela 21). The representation of the barbel god fishing as a sacrificial act occurs on the Tikal bone engravings (Kubler 1969: fig. 91) and in the blood-letting glyph of the hand grasping a fish (fig. 21b). The barbel god is also associated with the *ik* (tau) sign (Quirigua altars O and P) which appears in the introductory glyph of the month *Mac*, and forms the eye of the name glyph of the codical god B, apparently a Postclassic descendant of the barbel god (fig. 21b).

In funerary arts, the barbel god is shown as the dancing executioner (Coe 1978: numbers 4, 6, 7, 11, 12) carrying a sacrificial axe and shell blade (carved with the sun god face), wearing the *akbal* (darkness) vessel and death-eye collar, and about to sacrifice the jaguar god, fish-snake, or aged god N, all representations of the descending sun, a metaphor for the deceased who must also enter the underworld. In monumental arts, the

FIGURE 21
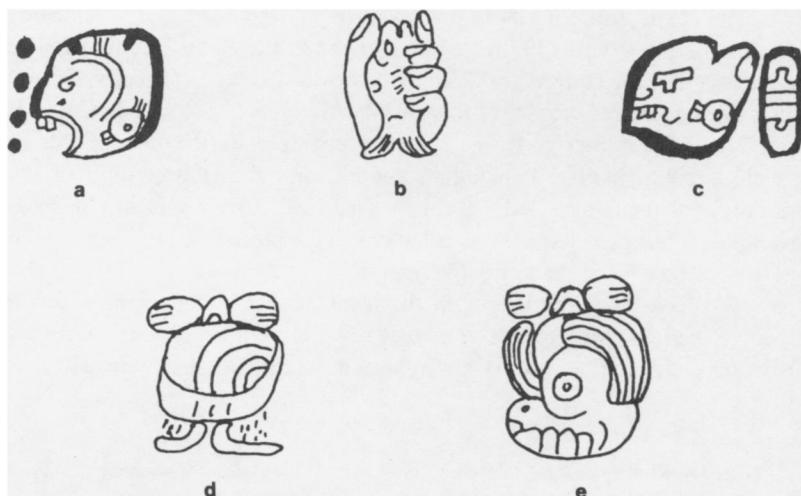


Other fish associations
a. Codical glyph of God A' (Dresden Codex).
b. Hand-grasping-fish glyph.
c. Codical glyph of God B (Dresden Codex).
d. Glyph of month *Mac* (After Thompson 1960: fig. 18, 2).
e. Glyph of month *Mac* (After Thompson 1960: fig. 18, 3).

dancing barbel god is usually juxtaposed to imagery of water and the bicephalic monster (Quirigua stelae A and C, and zoomorph-altar pairs O and P) to show the inaugural transformation from death to rebirth. Maya rulers often wear the stylized shell-like lure and the bivalve ear covering, in one example (fig. 20d) apparently shown with a mask of the deity. In both contexts, the barbel god is a death image, the monster who devours the descending sun-ruler.

The barbel god may also be related to the rear head and quadripartite badge: the stingray spine may substitute for the barbel god's lure since both are aquatic weapons; the shell forms his ear covering: and the cartouche with *fleur-de-lis* is his pectoral.[19] The barbel god actually substitutes for the rear head on Quirigua Zoomorph P.[20] However, in contrast to the representations of the barbel god in relation to male sacrifice and death imagery, the rear head with quadripartite badge and the fish monster belt are both specific to female costume (the Foliated Cross panel being the sole exception). The sacrificial dish and perforating implement which are associated with male sacrifice in funerary art, are likewise held specifically by women in monumental art. These sacrificial implements may be combined with the image or emblem (see following section) of the rear head, as in the dish held by the woman on Naranjo stela 24 and the rear head-perforator (fig. 18d) in the woman's headdress on Piedras Negras stela 3.

Depictions of females with the emblems and implements of self-sacrifice constitute a major form of rebirth imagery in Maya art, since they refer to the mythological death of the earth-moon goddess which allows the emergence of the reborn sun. On the inaugural stela 14 at Piedras Negras, the ruler is shown emerging as the reborn sun, while the female (consort or mother) holds the perforating implement as the dying earth-moon goddess. On Piedras Negras stela 40, the ruler scatters water (a rebirth image) over the torso of the earth goddess herself, shown rising from a platform below which is inscribed an emblem of the rear head (Kubler 1977: fig. 8j). She holds the perforating implement, while the tongue-piercing cord marked with the knotted headband designs of the perforator god rises above her. After passing through the sky band body of the

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[19] The cartouche and *fleur-de-lis* pectoral worn by the barbel god does not always have the crossed bands infix, but may instead have the braided mat, knotted yarn, or other motifs.

[20] The image of the ruler as barbel god wearing the rear head in his headdress on Copan stela I derives from a separate tradition of ceramic incense burners and cache vessels.

bicephalic monster (see below), the cord terminates in the head of the fret-snouted serpent. Like the beaded form worn in the modified quadripartite badge of the woman's headdress, the fret-snouted serpent appears to constitute an image of rebirth through representation of female sacrifice.[21]

The image of the self-sacrificing female is almost always paired with the image of the ruler as warrior, as on the lintels of Yaxchilan structures 20, 21, and 23,[22] and the paired stelae of Naranjo. The ruler-warrior represents and often impersonates the jaguar or barbel gods who devour the descending sun. The self-sacrificing women who hold the perforator or sacrificial plate and wear the fish monster belt, often also wear the rear head of the bicephalic monster with the quadripartite badge, suggesting that the birth-giving and dying earth mother whom they impersonate is the bicephalic monster. The human contrast of the warrior-ruler and the self-sacrificing female is thus analogous to the deity contrast of the jaguar or barbel god and bicephalic monster (Cross group, Quirigua altar-zoomorphs O and P, Tikal Temple IV) as a representation of the ruler's inaugural transformation from death to rebirth.

## 6. PAIRED DISEMBODIED HEADS

The bicephalic monster may be represented by emblematic heads, distinguished by the number prefixes seven and nine, often shown with plant forms growing from them. Both heads are shown in most cases, either on the same or a pair of related sculptures.

The rear head emblem takes the number nine prefix (fig. 22a). In most examples the forehead infix is a bivalve shell, surmounted by ovals outlined with dots, with the quadripartite badge occurring only on Naranjo stela 3. In three historically related examples (Cross panel, Jaina vase, Copan stela D) the shell infix is half darkened or crosshatched, suggesting the point of transformation between the dry (light) and rainy (dark) seasons that accords with the association of the rear head with the point of transformation in the underworld. In the later Dresden and Madrid codices, the half-darkened symbol is associated with the sky band body of the bicephalic monster, and rain falls from it (fig. 23a), as from the rear head vessels on the

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21 Like the beaded from, the standard fret-snouted serpent appears to relate to both male and female sacrifice, as on the paired stelae in Cleveland and Forth Worth (Miller 1974).

22 On the lintels of Yaxchilan structures 20 and 21, as well as the Foliated Cross jambs, simultaneous male *and* female sacrifice is employed as an image of rebirth.

panel and jamb of the Cross (fig. 11).[23] The number nine prefix, symbolic of the underworld, occurs with the head of god C as the glyph of the first lord of the night (fig. 22b), also associated with the north and the point of transformation (Cohodas 1974).

FIGURE 22
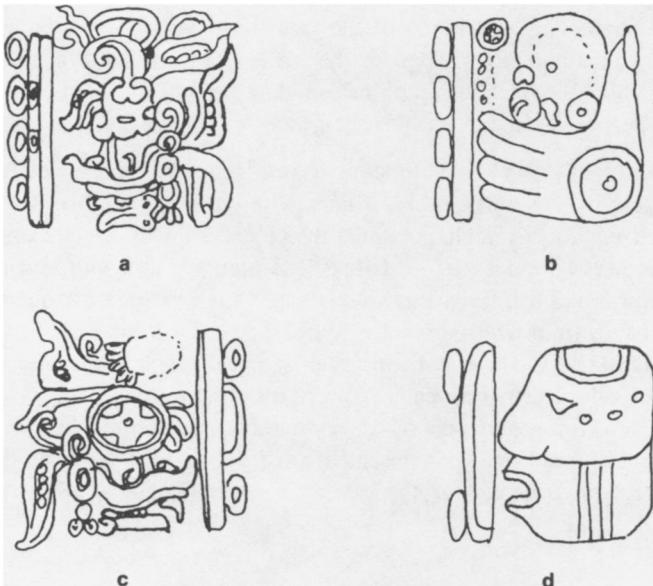


Emblematic Bicephalic monster heads
a. Rear head emblem (Copan stela D, after Kubler 1977: fig. 8).
b. First Lord of Night (after Thompson 1960: fig. 34, 1).
c. Front head emblem (Copan stela D, after Kubler 1977: fig. 8).
d. Fourth Lord of Night (after Thompson 1960: fig. 34, 22).

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23 Since the half-darkened glyph occurs in the lunar ecclipse tables of the Dresden Codex, it is assumed to represent an ecclipse. However, Thompson (1972: 73) shows that these tables also represent a strictly lunar count organized according to groups of six lunations. These constitute lunar half-years which, according to the monument glyphs for the lunar series, would divide conceptually at the solstices (Cohodas 1974), with the young moon goddess as patron of the dry season (winter to summer solstice) and the old moon goddess as the water-bringing patron of the rainy season (summer to winter solstice). The light-dark glyph would then be associated with the summer solstice transformation of the moon goddess from young to old form, which occurs when she mates with the sun.

The front head emblem also takes the saurian form (fig. 22c) due to its function as an independent image. It is differentiated from the rear head emblem not only by the number seven prefix, but also by the *kan* cross forehead infix, a water symbol which is sometimes prefixed by another water sign, the glyph of the month *Mol.* The number seven is associated with the surface of the earth, and it appears in the glyph of the fourth lord of the night (fig. 22d) associated with the month *Zip.* On the Jaina vessel, the fret-snouted serpent or zip monster is actually appended to the front head emblem. The association of the front head with water symbols, the rainy season month *Zip,* and with the maize plant on the Foliated Cross panel, parallel the relationship of the ophidian form of the front head to the eastern horizon as the place of emergence.

As Kubler (1977) shows, these two heads may be represented by their infixed glyphic elements or related signs with the same numbers seven and nine prefixed. One example not noted by Kubler is found on the Copan ball court markers (Cohodas 1974: 101).[24] The numbers nine and seven occur on the north and south markers, respectively, prefixed to a cartouche with crossed bands from which a plant emerges. The crossed bands motif appears here to represent the bicephalic monster, as in the glyphs of the months *Uo* and *Zip.* The quadripartite badge (minus the stingray spine) is shown four times below the groundline on these markers, associating the bicephalic monster and world tree with the quadripartite surface of the earth through which the sun is reborn at the eastern horizon (Cohodas 1979: 223).

## 7. BODY TYPES

The body of the bicephalic monster is usually that of a four-legged saurian,[25] often with shell symbols at the joints, and *cauac* signs or *cauac* monsters on the back, sides, or limbs (fig. 1). The *cauac* monster is a sacrificial, blade-tongued devouring deity of lightning (fig. 5c), so that its association with the bicephalic monster parallels that of the barbel and perforator gods as a representation of the female sacrifice which attends rebirth. The earliest bicephalic monster representation, on the Chiapa de

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24 Earlier confusion as to the dual meaning of the number seven, related to both the eastern and western horizons and thus to both rebirth and death, led to misinterpretations of the south marker design (Cohodas 1975; 1974: 102).

25 The feathered serpent body of the bicephalic monster on lintel 3 of Tikal Temple IV is extremely rare, paralleled only in the Teotihuacan stylization of this Maya deity on the so-called Temple of Quetzalcoatl.

Corzo bones, shows it as a swimming creature, recalling the Mesoamerican concept of the earth's surface as the back of a giant, floating crocodile.

The monsters body may also be abstracted into a thin band divided into segments, within which are shown symbols of the sun, moon, venus, as well as the *akbal* (darkness-underworld), *caan* (sky), and crossed bands signs, the heads of the sun god and the *zip* monster, and a shield-like device (figs. 15, 11, 10). These are all rebirth-associated motifs, and most are symbols of celestial objects visible in the night sky, the dark mirror on which are reflected the beings and events of the underworld. This sky band body, shown with the serpent-winged bird perched upon it, occurs primarily in the Usumancinta region.

The crossed bands sign is the most prevalent sky band symbol, and may stand for the body as a whole. In the codices, it is a verb signifying copulation (Kelley 1976: 152)[26] and it has also been related to celestial conjunctions. M. Coe (personal communication) suggested that it might refer specifically to the crossing of the ecliptic and the milky way, the two

FIGURE 23
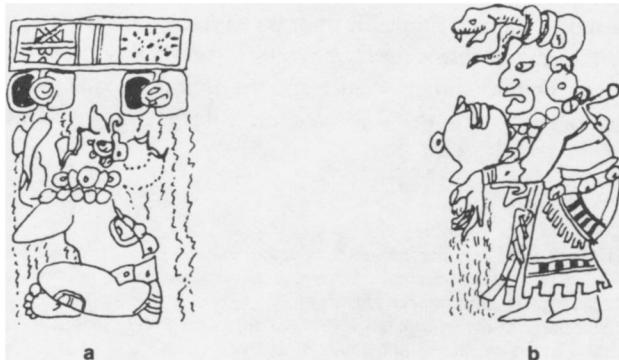


Codical Rain scenes

a. God B in rain falling from sky band and light-dark signs (Dresden Codex 39c, after Villacorta and Villacorta 1976: 88).

b. Old Goddess pouring water (Dresden Codex, after Villacorta and Villacorta 1976: 88).

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26 The phonetic equivalent of the crossed bands is translated both as the crossing of two objects in the middle and as desire (Kelley 1976: 152).

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major bands that cross the night sky. The ecliptic is the plane of the solar system, manifested as the roughly east-west path travelled by the sun, moon, and planets, and marked by the zodiacal constellations. The milky way is instead the plane of our galaxy, and along with other fixed stars it appears to rotate around the pole star every twenty-four hours. The milky way intersects the ecliptic at a 60° angle (Olesen n.d.), but on the summer solstice the northernmost orientation of the setting sun (25° north of west) is perpendicular to the northernmost orientation of the milky way at midnight (25° east of north).[27] This symbolic crossing of the ecliptic and milky way at the zenith would then reflect the mating of the sun god and moon-earth goddess at the nadir of the underworld, at midnight on the summer solstice, thus unifying the two meanings of the crossed bands symbol: conjunction and mating. The sky band body would then be a reflection of the earth goddess in the underworld, while the images which occupy its segments would represent the bodies in the solar system which travel the ecliptic,[28] and are transformed as they pass through the milky way in their nocturnal underworld journey.

In this light, it is unlikely that two further parallels between the milky way and the bicephalic monster would have escaped notice. First, the milky way bifurcates south of the zenith, due to intervening dust clouds (Olesen n.d.) so that at times it appears to have an open serpent mouth. Second, the milky way appears brightest, widest, and densest during the period between the summer solstice and the autumnal equinox, since at this time we look towards the center of the galaxy at night. This coincides

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27 The long axis of the northern cross (Cygnus) lies along the milky way, with the short axis perpendicular, so that at simmer solstice midnight it would reflect both components of the crossed bands sign in their proper alignments.

28 The Temple of the Inscriptions is oriented approximately 25° east of north, parallel to the midnight solstitial orientation of the milky way. Although the sarcophagus deviates slightly, the sky bands which line the east and west sides of the lid may have been intended to parallel the milky way orientation. The placement of the sun and moon glyphs at the center of the east and west sides creates a bisecting cross-axis which is then roughly parallel to the orientation of the setting sun on the summer solstice. This bisection is enhanced by the differentiation of symbols occupying the north and south halves of the sky bands. While the crossed bands occurs throughout, since it represents the sky band in general, the *akbal*, shield, venus, and *zip* monster appear only on the north, while the sun god heads and *caan* sign appear only on the south. The opposition of the *akbal* (darkness, underworld) sign on the north and the *caan* (sky) sign on the south may represent the parallel between these two directions when the south or night sky is seen as a reflection of the north or underworld. The configuration changes slightly on the Cross panel, where the sun god face and *caan* occur with the sun glyph on the east, while the venus and *akbal* occur with the moon glyph on the west.

precisely with the conceptual period of agricultural renewal between the conception and the emergence of the reborn maize-sun, the firs half of the rainy season during which the bicephalic monster functions as the pregnant earth mother and rain-bringer, and demarcated by its rear (north, summer solstice) and front (east, autumnal equinox) heads.

## 8. THE COMPLETE IMAGE: FORM AND CONTEXTS

The most complex and earliest standardized bicephalic monster configuration occurs on the Piedras Negras accession stelae (Kubler 1969: figs. 58-60). The monster surrounds a niche, with its sky band body surmounted by the serpent-winged bird, and with water pouring from its two heads. A cloth-covered ladder ascends to the niche occupied by the newly-inaugurated ruler, who holds a decorated bag and wears as his headdress the open-jawed ophidian front head of the bicephalic monster. The inauguration of the ruler is thus shown to be a symbolic rebirth-ascent in which the representation of the bicephalic monster is associated with themes of falling water and of the ruler's emergence through its body, both of which may be explored further.

In Classic Maya art, the ruler is often responsible for pouring water, perhaps since as a representation of the reborn sun he is responsible for agricultural fertility. Rulers are shown scattering water on stelae at Piedras Negras, Yaxchilan, and Quirigua, all paired with death imagery in the form of the warrior-ruler. At Tikal the two events are combined in a single image, as the ruler holds the perforator god staff in his left hand while scattering water with his right (Jones 1977: 31), a parallel to the death-rebirth opposition of the wrist shield and manikin sceptre.[29] Women are usually shown with sacrificial implements, although they do pour water on the historically related lintel 25 at Yaxchilan (fig. 17) and Cross temple (fig. 11: Pacal impersonates the earth goddess), in both cases associated with bicephalic monster implements. These examples, and the representations of deities pouring water on the bicephalic monster body of Quirigua zoomorph P, complement the streams of water falling from bicephalic monster heads on the Piedras Negras accession stelae. Parallel representations in the codices include water falling from the sky band and/or light-dark signs, as well as images of the aged goddess pouring water from a pottery jar (fig. 24a-b),

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[29] Stelae with this configuration were actually placed in a special northern enclosure, symbolic of the underworld as a vessel of transformation, in the Twin Pyramid complexes (Cohodas 1979: 219).

suggesting that as a pregnant earth mother, the bicephalic monster was the primary rain-bringing deity.

The configuration of the passageway created by the body of the bicephalic monster, as on the Piedras Negras accession stelae, is repeated in other monuments, many of which are also inaugural. The arched body forms a similar passage on lintel 3 of Tikal Temple IV, and surrounds actual doorways in House E (fig. 15) and Copan Temple 22. On the piers of House A and the Temple of the Inscriptions, planetary band forms a frame for the reborn ruler, while on the sarcophagus (fig. 10) a unique transposition of monumental imagery to a funerary context, the sky bands which outline the lid symbolically frame the womb- or shell-shaped cavity in which Pacal was interred.

This use of its body to delineate the passage through which the reborn sun-ruler emerges highlights the dual spatial configuration of the bicephalic monster. First, the rear and front heads may be associated respectively with the north and east, calendrically associated with the summer solstice and autumnal equinox. This spatial configuration dominates representations of the bicephalic monster at Palenque, where isolated heads or the complete monster are associated with the directions north and east, as in the Cross (N) and Foliated Cross (E) panels, House A piers (E), Inscriptions piers (N), sarcophagus (N), and the House E doorway (N-E). This configuration coincides with the representation of the Flare god emerging from the front head, representing the ascent through the surface of the earth at the eastern horizon.

In the second configuration, the bicephalic monster (Copan altars M, O'; Quirigua zoomorphs O, P) or its emblems (Sun panel; Yaxha stelae 2, 4; Copan markers) are placed along a north-south axis, with the front head usually in the south. The place of emergence in the east is then the passage at the center of or through the monster's body, as in the Tikal lintel and Piedras Negras stelae. The north-south alignment may have been designed to reflect the midnight solstice orientation of the milky way, or it may simply show that the sun-ruler must emerge through its body towards the east. The actual doorways framed by bicephalic monster bodies are associated with the movement of the sun from the underworld (north) to the upperworld (south) by passing through the surface of the earth in the east. This explains the symbolism of the seven scrolls and deities which compose the monster's body in the Copan Temple 22 doorway.

The representations of the *cauac* monster or *cauac* signs on the bodies of bicephalic monsters at Copan (fig. 1) and Quirigua also appear to

highlight the center of the monster's body as the place of emergence. Since the *cauac* monster's blade-tongue opens the passageway through the surface of the earth, thereby, destroying the female earth mother in order to allow the reborn sun to rise, this passageway may be represented by the *cauac* monster itself, or it may be delineated by a ring of *cauac* heads, as on the sides and back (symbolically underneath as well) of the bicephalic monster altar M at Copan. The radial configuration of *cauac* heads also occurs on the Foliated Cross panel: while Pacal impersonates the dying earth goddess with perforator but stands on the image of the sun's rebirth (fig. 7d), Chan Bahlum who impersonates the reborn sun god stands on the multi-headed *cauac* associated with the goddess' sacrifice. On the jambs of the Cross and Foliated Cross shrines, Pacal wears a belt from which dangles the barbel god, his arm thrust through the opening of a quatrefoil *cauac* glyph, paralleling the configuration of the passageway through a ring of *cauac* heads. The image occurs in both temples associated with the bicephalic monster, and is worn only by the dead ruler who impersonates the earth mother-bicephalic monster.

## CONCLUSION

The bicephalic monster is a major image of rebirth in Maya sculpture, synthesized from many elements that carried mutual connotations of the earth, underworld, female, water, rebirth, and fertility. By the Late Classic period, it had become a primary symbol of the authority and divinity of the Maya ruler, associated specifically with his inaugural transformation into a divine king.

The bicephalic monster appears to represent the aged earth mother during the first half of the rainy season, between the conception and the emergence of the sun or ruler.[30] The female associations derive from the representations of birth-giving from the front head as well as through the body, from representations of women pouring water as does the monster, and from the representations of women wearing the sacrificial attributes of the rear head. The parallel earth goddess image of Teotihuacan (Pasztory 1973) also appears as a torso rising from a platform, scatters water with her outstretched hands, and is shown with a tree growing behind her. The

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[30] Despite the fact that *na* means mother as well as house, it is unlikely that the bicephalic monster was called *Itzamna* in the Classic period, since it is more related to crocodilian than iguana *(itzam)* imagery. By the Postclassic or Colonial periods, disjunction may have resulted in its transformation from a female, earth-mother crocodile to the male iguana deity *Itzamna*.

glyphic representation of this female deity (Ixtapaluca placque, Xochicalco stela) as "seven reptile-eye" parallels the emblem of the bicephalic monster front head with the number seven and water or fertility glyphs.

The bicephalic monster occupies a distinct position in Maya monumental art, which appears to be designed to convey the authority of the ruler by illustrating the symbols of this transformation from mortal to divinity through identification with the sun god in his yearly renewal. On most stela sculptures, the ruler's transformation is depicted through oppositions of death and rebirth imagery in his costume and attributes, such as the oppositions of the perforator god wristlets and anklets, with flare gods emerging from the serpent bar; of the jaguar wrist shield with the flare god sceptre; or of the perforator god staff and the water scattering (at Tikal). In these more complex and standardized designs, the dominant image of rebirth is the flare god and serpent head.

On some sculptures the themes of death and rebirth are separated into two or three complete scenes, allowing the interpretation of these images through their opposition. Death imagery is then represented by the theme of male sacrifice, with the ruler depicted as a warrior, often with prisoners, and wearing attributes of the jaguar, barbel, or perforator gods. Rebirth imagery is then represented by the bicephalic monster, shown in two ways. The ruler, flare god, or sun god may be shown emerging from the front head of the monster or through the passage created by its body.[31] Male rebirth may also be shown through depictions of female sacrifice, with consorts or mothers impersonating the earth goddess and holding or wearing symbols of self sacrifice associated with the rear head, including the fish monster belt, rear head with modified quadripartite badge headdress, perforator, and sacrificial dish with bark paper and blood-letting paraphernalia.

This Maya symbolic structure may be associated with a widespread dichotomy of sexual archetypes. For example, the terracotta effigy pairs created for funerary offerings in Jalisco and Nayarit often show males with weapons paired with females holding bowls, simultaneously expressing the opposition between the male as penetrator and the female as vessel, and the opposition between the male as destroyer and the female as nurturer. The same opposition between the male warrior and female with vessel underlies

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31 The sculptural representation of a dynastic series, as on the sides of the sarcophagus and on the Hieroglyphic Stair, Temple 11, and altar Q at copan, is a rarer example of the rebirth theme.

this Maya symbolic structure, except that the nurturing bowl has been transformal into an instrument of self-torture. Sacrificial symbols abound in both the naturalistic representations of women and the abstracted representations of the bicephalic monster. For the Maya, the concept of rebirth appears to have been inseparable from the concept of the sacrifice and destruction of the mother.

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# The Language of Ethnohistory

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RÉSUMÉ

La position prise dans cet article est que la méthodologie dans l'éthno-histoire devrait inclure les modes du discours et l'analyse de l'utilisation des concepts. De la précision et de la consistance dans l'utilisation et l'application des concepts sont nécessaires dans une discipline qui de plus en plus tire son information de diverses sources et ses concepts d'autres disciplines.

The language which the historian talks contains hundreds or words which are ambiguous contructs created to meet the unconsciously conceived need for adequate expression, and whose meaning is definitely felt, but not clearly thought out.
— Max WEBER, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (1949). The Free Press: New York, p. 92-3

...without a constant misuse of language there cannot be any discovery, any progress.
— P. FEYERABEND, *Against Method* (1975) Verso: London, p. 27.

A recent exchange in the literature (Gadacz 1981; Trigger 1982) has made it clear that despite the sophisticated methodologies of some interpretive social histories (e.g. Trigger 1976) philosophical and epistemic considerations remain relatively unexplored. There is no question that concepts like "understanding", "interaction", and "motives", and the use of the "interest group" as a unit of analysis, among others, have utility. Indeed, methodological advances in ethnohistory are sorely needed. It is the innovative ethnohistorian who can successfully write a history, ethnic or otherwise, and who does not lose sight of social science as the *raison d'être* for the account in the first place. The position taken in this paper, however, is that concept use must be accompanied by concept definition and

development.[1] It is argued that a successful methodology must be grounded in a so-called metalanguage which will serve to maintain high levels of precision and consistency in concept use and application. This is important in a discipline which increasingly draws its data from diverse sources and its concepts from other disciplines.

I

There are many définitions of ethnohistory and opinions of what its goals are (Symposium in *Ethnohistory*, volumes 8 and 9 (1961); see also Schwerin, 1976 and Carmack, 1972). Some scholars emphasize that ethnohistory is not a discipline but a method and technique. Others suggest that ethnohistory is indeed a discipline – one wherein "various explanatory approaches and methods of *scientific analysis* are more or less applicable" (Schwerin 1976: 329, italics added). In fact, the scientific approach looked at this way seems to provide for a sort of methodological *carte blanche:* "The healthiest situation for the full development of any discipline's potential is when its practitioners are free to apply *whatever* techniques are best suited to the analysis of a given problem" (Schwerin 1976: 328-329, italics added).[2] Science, however, cannot be approached with such a "natural attitude".

Whether it is called a discipline or technique, the writing of Indian history (or preferably "un-hyphenated history") precludes neither scientific discipline nor rigorous standards. Whether objectivity is attainable, in science let alone in history, is however another matter. Objectivity is no

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1 The present article is not so much intended as a reply to the original exchange as it is an attempt to go beyond the original argument to a more fundamental issue. In the earlier article (Gadacz 1981) I tried to show what could happen when concepts and terms remain undeveloped and in some cases undefined. In this article I hope to show why problems in interpretation can arise and how this can be avoided. My own work of course is no less free of the ambiguous, opaque and even contradictory use of social science concepts and terminology. Finally, the comments offered in the last article and in this one are in the spirit of academic debate, and are least of all to be construed as criticisms of any single individual's scholarship.

2 It would have been helpful had Schwerin defined what he meant by the scientific approach or "systematic scientific analysis", with respect to methodology in science (Nagel 1961). As part of the scientific approach are we to include, for example, dramatic metaphors such as Goffman's (1959) "all the world's a stage" approach to social interaction, or the dramaturgical technique that is Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* applied in ethnohistory by Trigger (1975)? These are not so much scientific as they are examples of humanistic approaches (when correctly applied). While not mutually exclusive (Truzzi 1974), science and humanism are *not* the same. An important question would be: Can a humanistic approach be carried out scientifically? See for example Riches (1982), but Martin (1978) is an extreme example.

longer an article of faith in either the hard or soft sciences – an "objective" study is no longer "more scientific". The historical enterprise is not dissimilar to the scientific one and it too is not immune to extremist positions and viewpoints. There are, for example, the scientific historians who seek to describe past events "as they really were" and who approach materials with complete objectivity (e.g. Ranke). There is, at the other extreme, the historical idealist view which sees the historian playing a creative role in writing history (e.g. Dilthey, Collingwood). Perhaps because there seem to be so many kinds of history (a situation probably more apparent than real – see the essays in Gardiner, 1974) anthropologists in the past have been somewhat schizophrenic with respect to the place of history in anthropological research (Hudson 1973: 118, 120-123; Carmack 1972: 228-232).

As in science, where scientific methods "deliberately and systematically seek to annihilate the individual scientist's standpoint" (Wallace 1971: 14), in history "the multiplicity of viewpoints that have gone into the writing of history over a number of generations ... tends to expose biases and thereby to endow history with a degree of objectivity that refutes its most determined critics" (Trigger 1978: 22). However, "the methodological controls of the scientific process thus annihilates the individual's standpoint, not by an impossible effort to substitute objectivity in its literal sense, but by substituting rules for intersubjective criticism, debate, and ultimately agreement" (Wallace 1971: 14). Methods deemed scientific constitute rules whereby agreement about specific images of the world is reached. Objectivity, then, is agreement and consensus about something. Importantly, criticism (in science though there is no reason why history cannot be included) "is not directed first to what an item of information says about the world, *but to the method by which the item is produced*" (Wallace 1971: 14, italics added; Nagel 1961). The argument, then, is that it is not so much a question of whether anthropology is a kind of science or whether it is a kind of history (Hudson 1973: 111) as it is a question of how anthropology – and historical ethnology or ethnohistory – obtains its facts and how it deals with its materials. As an aside, if there is to be any kind of objectivity *qua* consensus or agreement it would have to be with regards to method (but it would be going too far to say that historical ethnology or indeed anthropology should eschew criticism and debate for rules).

The concern with method in historical ethnology or ethnohistory should be obvious. Historical ethnology is the testing-ground for anthropological theory, and anthropology is holistic. Thus, theories in historical ethnology are derived from a number of disciplines. It follows that historical

ethnology also has multiple methodologies; if ethnohistory is itself a method or technique, it is one which makes use of a number of other methods. What they are, how they are put to use and whether one is more or less appropriate than another are standard scientific considerations. Ethnohistorians essentially depend on documentary evidence, such as chronicles, letters, diaries, records, reports, and so forth. But at the same time they rely "more upon auxiliary sources of data than does the regular historian" (Trigger 1978: 19). The historical ethnologist must therefore make use of and be familiar with the methods, skills and techniques of historians and anthropologists. He or she must, for example, be sufficiently aware of what historiography is, but at the same time know what science, and indeed social science, is all about.

As well, it should be recognized that use of auxiliary sources of data does not *by itself* constitute the inter-disciplinary approach. Archaeological data, for example, no matter what they may reveal about cultural development, are only as useful as the methodology that guided their recovery. The New Archaeology is a case in point. While it completely rejects any appeal to history (presumably in favor of formulating laws, something which critics have bemoaned – but see counterarguments in Salmon 1982: 20-26), its focus on the significance of the data themselves "has laid the foundations for far better interpretations of an historical sort than were possible previously" (Trigger 1978: 21). The methodology of the New Archaeology, despite its philosophy or perhaps because of it, produces data useful only to the ethnohistorian who can appreciate the difference in methodologies. The same should hold for methodology in linguistic analysis, ecological studies, comparative ethnology, physical anthropology, even history. But to discover order where disorder prevails (Hickerson 1970: 2) requires more than just data, however.

While there are many arguments in favor of diversifying the sources of information available to ethnohistorians, little attention is paid to *concept use* in those sources. Are not the terms, concepts and the language that the researcher uses part and parcel of the "other" data? Can we rightfully use ecological concepts in, say, an ecological study in historical ethnology (Bennett 1977, Glassow 1978)? Are we on safer ground when we use sociological terms like "interest group" or psychological terms like "motive"? Contextual criticism in this sense means analyzing or at least recognizing where these terms and concepts come from and what they mean (Fischer 1970: 37), even though they are familiar enough. There is little consolation in using a concept from another discipline in the name of the multi-disciplinary approach or even methodology, only to find that it is a

debated one that has six possible definitions. Operationalism, as this is sometimes called, is not highly developed in anthropology (Pelto and Pelto 1978: 38-53), despite the holistic perspective, the inter-disciplinary approach, and cross-cultural comparative research. It is universally recognized that a fundamental methodological requirement of all scientists is the need to operationalize concepts (Harris 1979: 14). While it is recognized that operationalism can be carried to extremes in science, in social science and even in history (Fischer 1970: xx),

> ...a strong dose of operationalism is desperately needed to unburden the social and behavioral sciences of their overload of ill-defined concepts, such as status, role, superordination and subordination, groups, institutions, class, caste, state, community ... and many others that are a part of every social scientist's basic working vocabulary. The continuing *failure to agree on the meaning* of these concepts is a reflection of their unoperational status and constitutes a great barrier to the development of scientific theories of social and cultural life (Harris 1979: 15, italics added).

We are inclined to worry less about it when we are working in the shelter of a "discipline" than when working on the so-called peripheries. Ethnohistory, which is guided by multiple methodologies and whose objectives we are told are still uncertain, is in a particularly vulnerable position with respect to problems of operationalism. Through no one's fault in particular, it is vulnerable to the use of "personalized concepts and idiosyncratic data languages" (Harris 1979: 15). In summary, the argument is that terminology, concepts and language use are as much data as anything else. How is this type of data to be treated?

## II

The concern is not solely with operationalism; such a rational obsession is not advocated here. While the argument will return to operationalism later in the article, the purpose of this short section is to tie operationalism, and thus by implication methodology (of history as well as anthropology) to something else. Concern is with the sociology of knowledge, for it is in this branch of science that most if not all of the substantive issues in historiography actually have their parallel (e.g. critical analysis of documents, Pitt 1972: 46-62; the writing of history, Fischer 1970). Interestingly, Fischer (1970: 218, n. 3) in a long footnote discussing progress in the "new" (i.e. social) history commented that "German academic historiography may be the most backward in the world". The sociology of knowledge, historiography's parallel, deals with the socio-cultural factors associated with thought and its various forms of expression on a number of different levels, and it is the German contributions to the

sociology of knowledge that are by far the best developed and have left their distinctive mark on the whole field (Mannheim 1936; Adler 1966: 399-415 for outlines of the contributions of Szende, Adler, Lerner, Scheler, and Speier among others). Significantly the sociology of knowledge has its roots in the vast accumulation of historical scholarship that is one of the greatest intellectual fruits of 19th century Germany (which includes the work of Max Weber and Karl Marx), and as Berger and Luckmann (1966: 5) note, "the sociology of knowledge takes up a problem originally posited by historical scholarship", that is, the relationship between thought and its historical situations, between ideas and their social contexts.[3] Consequently, there has been no need for 20th century German historians to develop a historiography of a new (whatever that means anyway) social history. The sociology of knowledge *is* their historiography. In North America this situation does not obtain.

The sociology of knowledge as a comprehensive historiography seeks to observe how and in what from intellectual life at a given historical moment is related to existing social and political forces. It is concerned with the way in which systems of thought, whether cognitive or evaluative or both, are conditioned by other social facts (in this discussion the kinds or types or knowledge that exist are not relevant, but see Stark, 1977: 3-45, and Merton, 1973). It is a *comprehensive* historiography because, in combining the writing of social history with its own critique, it evaluates sources of data in the standard ways (e.g. observer bias, which includes the *Zeitgeist*) and examines the historian's own mental processes, common-sense knowledge of life, specialized knowledge, *Weltanschauung* (e.g. interpretational bias), based on his social position, interests, affiliations, and so forth. The sociology of knowledge ought to be ethnohistory's methodology, for it sensitizes the social scientist to a number of distinct modes of discourse, *one of which is his own.* In a multi-disciplinary and empirical setting this is crucial.

## III

A reality of a multiple methodology situation such as what obtains in ethnohistory is the diversity of theoretical orientations which are an indicator of cognitive diversity. A consequence of that is a plurality of

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3 Intellectual roots go back to Durkheim, but especially Marx to whom we are grateful for the familiar statement – "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness".

languages, or *modes of discourse*. Language is constitutive of social science practice and its subject domains, and is thus essential to the kinds of reality that there are (Stehr 1982: 47); in fact, concepts and terminology are created, modified and diffused along with theories and procedures so that their study cannot be undertaken independently from the latter (Stehr 1982: 48, n. 1). This is a well-known fact in the sociology of knowledge. This is what was meant when it was suggested that terms, concepts and language, as discourse or as knowledge claims, are data.

The idea of discourse is seen to provide a useful theoretical orientation for the analysis of anthropological knowledge, and is one that creates a linkage between cognitive and social processes, and the development of anthropology and anthropological knowledge. The degree of language formalization (e.g. linguistic homogeneity) in a discipline is generally taken as an indicator of the level of cognitive development of it as a *scientific* discipline. That is, "a discipline comes to be regarded as scientific when it is within the reach of speaking a language free of ambiguity" (Stehr 1982: 49, Scientific discourse is identifiable in terms of its differentiation from everyday discourse, and what differentiates it is linguistic homogeneity. If methods of scientific analysis are applicable in ethnohistory, and if ethnohistory is deemed a scientific enterprise, then important questions (not answered in this article) are whether multiple forms of discourse present an obstacle to the development of scientific knowledge in ethnohistory, or whether homogeneity of language is desirable or even possible.

One of the problems encountered in identifying the different modes of discourse in anthropology or ethnohistory, or in any of the social sciences, on the basis of language used to formulate knowledge claims is that of locating criteria for distinguishing different modes of discourse. Different systems of knowledge codify their claims in distinctive specialized languages which is subject to variation. In general, however, it could be argued that discourses range from the specialized to the everyday. Stehr and Simmons (1979: 146-147) propose a typology for the classification of the different modes. Natural discourse simply refers to knowledge claims formulated in the terms of everyday language concepts present in any given natural speech community. Even within this mode is evidence for specialization, e.g. restricted codes associated with social class or geographic area. Technical discourse (in occupational roles, for example) refers to knowledge which is formulated in a way which clearly distinguishes it from everyday discourse yet which is still intelligible to "outsiders". Finally, knowledge claims which have been formulated in terms of specialized languages of observation and theory refer to formal discourse. To some extent, consensus in formal

discourse becomes necessary as a pre-condition for communication, rather than an outcome of it (controversy over discourse in the sciences, characteristic of their development, is tolerated only insofar as it is regarded as transitory; in the social sciences this situation is endemic and persistent). Lachenmeyer (1971) simply distinguishes between "scientific" and "coventional" language.

If archaeology, anthropology or ethnohistory are scientific in their approaches and methods, then they ought to be characterized by formal discourse. We acknowledge this is not the case. As an aside, it is interesting to note that modes of discourse are manipulable. Formal discourse is part of the dominant conception of science by both scientific and lay persons alike, and a discipline's credibility and ability to obtain political and/or economic support from socially powerful groups in society is most certainly contingent upon the level of formalization of its mode of discourse (Stehr and Simmons 1979: 149). Anthropology as a social science is not exempt from this. At any rate, there is no method of selecting *a priori* a mode of discourse most appropriate for formulating particular knowledge claims. Winch (1958: 88-89), for example, has advocated a natural or everyday discourse for anthropology and sociology, while others like Nagel and Hempel view that as undesirable. Lachenmeyer (1971: 48) has observed that sociological language more closely approximates conventional (i.e. natural discourse) than scientific language; the same would hold true for anthropological language. Unlike sociology, however, the structure of anthropological discourse at first blush does not include as considerable a variation of specialized languages. Communication across sub-disciplines may be less problematic than between sociology and anthropology. This may be so because communication across specialties within sociology, where the variation of specialized languages ranges conceptually from naturalistic to highly formalized formulations, is said to contribute to practical difficulties in sociological research (Stehr 1982: 48). With respect to language/concept usage, excursions into sociology by anthropologists have therefore to be made with caution.

A brief comparison of conventional and scientific language usage would be helpful. Scientific language systems demand a much greater control over language usage than do conventional language systems. By control over language usage it meant the use of devices to increase precision of usage, and precision refers to the degree or extent of consensus in the use of language and linguistic elements such as words, phrases, *etc.* Agreement between users of linguistic elements has, according to Lachenmeyer (1971: 23) three components: semantic agreement, grammatical agreement, and

contextual agreement. Semantic agreement refers to the judgement by users of a term that the term's object predicate reliably designates the empirical reality they are supposed to designate. Contextual agreement, for instance, refers to how the object predicates of one term are affected by the object predicates of another term. In addition, there are two devices which increase the precision of usage, namely *definition* and *systematization* (Lachenmeyer 1971: 24-25). Definition of terms is the most common way to obtain semantic agreement, and definitional *chains* increase contextual agreement (e.g. the simplest chain would include definitions of each component, actual or implied, or a term, for example, for the term "interest group", both "interest" and "group" would have to be defined). In addition, there are two kinds of definitions – nominal and operational (Lachenmeyer 1971: 53-57). Nominal definition is definition by agreement, where "users of a term agree that a particular set of predicates are the most appropriate defining predicates of a term". Operational definitions are those which interpret the nominal definitions of terms, concepts and so forth in to terms that are acceptable for research. Very often in the social sciences distinctions between the two types are not made, so that the danger increases that arbitrariness occurs in definition formation (Salmon 1982: 143-150). What occurs is the "nominalist fallacy". Though it is recognized that researchers are under obligation to define terms explicitly and to remain consistent with the definitions, it is not uncommon and is indeed acceptable for terms to be defined in ways deemed "most appropriate" to a given situation (this parallels Schwerin's idiosyncratic attitude to techniques in a scientific approach, and Trigger's (1978: 18) chastisement of amateur historiographers who prefer those sources that are most congenial to their own interpretations). The nominalist fallacy fails to consider the constraints placed on all definition formation:

> Any definition is only as good as its empirical utility in a theory language. This utility has two dimensions. First, the defined terms must be used to facilitate the formation and derivation of theoretical statements that enhance explanation of the phenomena in question. Second, those terms that are defined must designate or be used to permit the designation of recurrent, stable, and discriminable empirical objects, properties, or relations ... [T]hese are limits to the arbitrariness of nominal definition formation (Lachenmeyer 1971: 54-55).

The second device having to do with precision in language usage is systematization, which refers to "the ordering of linguistic elements and specifying the exact relations between them so that the deductive and inductive logical processes are facilitated" (Lachenmeyer 1971: 24; Salmon 1982: 150-157). Rephrasing and axiomatization to form sets or hierarchies of statements are examples of this procedure.

These are only some of the linguistic problems facing discourse in the social sciences. Unlike scientific language, social science language has minimal control over definition and systematization which function as a "metalanguage", or language control procedures. Insofar as the social sciences lack this control, theirs is like a conventional language system. Conventional language systems exhibit greater tolerance to language use in a number of other respects too:

> *Vagueness* exists when a term or expression has multiple, equiprobable, specifiable referential meanings. *Ambiguity* exists when a term or expression has multiple, equiprobable, specified referential meanings. *Opacity* exists when a term or expression has no referential meaning. *Contradiction* exists when a term or expression has logically inconsistent referential meanings (Lachenmeyer 1971: 30-36, 58, italics added).

The term equiprobable refers to when a term can have a number of equally legitimate meanings. Arbitrariness in definition formation, especially in nominal definitions, contributes to all four of the above language control problems. These problems are not present in scientific language. We have only to consider Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952) thorough critical review of the concepts and definitions of the term "culture" to appreciate the argument (see also *ibid.*, 41-42). Examples of vague terms would be "social structure", "function", *etc*; ambiguous terms would be "status", "power", "role", "group", "culture", *etc*; opaque terms are those like "social system", "role", "institution", "norm", *etc.*, which are used as if they designate directly observable things. These terms do not refer directly to empirical events – there is no one-to-one correspondence with physical reality. Other problem terms are "rights", "obligations", "values", "order", "competition" – the list goes on. The way each researcher uses a term will determine whether it is vague, ambiguous, or whatever.

There are two possible solutions to language problems such as these in a conventional language system. One solution is to repeatedly use particular terms in ways that can narrow the gap between nominal and operational definitions, provided that definitions are even offered. Their range of empirical referents must also remain fairly constant for any agreement in usage to result. Another solution is to call for extensive explication and definition to account for and to anticipate diverse and dissimilar referential meanings (predicates). However, this task is virtually impossible to accomplish since predicates that explicate a particular term are themselves subject to explication of infinite regress (Lachenmeyer 1971: 110). Definitions must therefore (unfortunately) remain open-ended. Nevertheless, definitions may themselves be offered and consistency maintained within a single empirical study or theoretical statement.

That language use is of concern to those interested in the growth of knowledge (Stehr 1982: 54-55) can now be more fully appreciated. In addition, inter-disciplinary "borrowing" of terms as well as concepts without definition and systematization, and unfamiliarity with possible problems connected with the term(s) or concept(s) even within the "donor" discipline (Salmon 1982: 165-166; Lachenmeyer 1971: 112) also presents an obstacle to raising the conventional language of anthropology (or any social science) to the status of a more scientific language.

## IV

Returning to ethnohistory, it is felt that empirical research will in the future become more complex and methodologies increasingly sophisticated. If so, then ethnohistorians would do well to "watch their language". The issue is not simply one of rhetoric, however. Hickerson (1970: 1-2) wrote that "the work of the anthropological ethnohistorian must be highly interpretive. He is inclined to find clans in societies in which they were not described as such ... He must be prepared to *conjure up* formal structures where none seem to exist ..." (italics added). The anthropological ethnohistorian is likely, then, to conjure up interest groups, roles, social interaction, personality types, and even motivations from the documents (Trigger 1976: 1-26). A comprehensive historiography is required for this enterprise, which must include language and concept analysis involving, at the very least, attempts at definition formation at one or both of the two levels that were described. For the purposes of a particular study, it suffices to offer either nominal or operational definitions – nominal if the terminology derives from elsewhere other than the study itself or the discipline in which the study is conducted, and operational if from either. Internal consistency should be maintained, especially if use of terms and concepts are intended to be the same in more than just one study.

There is no reason why, in ethnohistory or in anything else, research results and interpretations should be accepted without question. Knowledge producers in our century are neither authoritarians nor mystics (Wallace 1971: 11). Particularly in a situation where replicability is impractical – a situation that obtains in ethnohistory – agreement on concept use and terminology is critical. If a scholar takes ten years to sift through documents, analyze the "data" and write an interpretive account, it might take a scholar of comparable skill (and endurance) a similar length of time to verify, reanalyze or reinterpret the same documents (if they are even accessible to him or her) to see whether different data might emerge. Few scholars will

devote time and energy to reanalysis as a consequence, and would prefer to write their own accounts. Reanalysis is not impossible, but it is unlikely. My own work, which will take the form of a comprehensive and exhaustive anthropological ethnohistory of the Montagnais-Naskapi of Labrador and Quebec, even at present involves more original research than reanalysis or earlier works (unless they were of sufficient "antiquity" that made it worthwhile to see "how far we have come" in analysis). It has already involved five years of sporadic effort, the last one of which has included study in such areas as sociology of knowledge, cognitive anthropology, phenomenology, symbolic interaction, and others. I, too, am interested in discovering order where disorder seems to prevail, to use Hickerson's phrase, and I see the challenge in methodology and theory.

It has been said that the only study worth pouring over is the one that stimulates thought and excites the imagination, not because of what it contains, but because of its possible influence and effect on the future of the subject matter or its methodology. Trigger's (1976) *The Children of Aataentsic* is such a study. Concern has been with the terms and concepts employed in that study (Gadacz 1981). Several of the problems associated with some of them are outlined as follows.

The first of these is the unit of analysis – the interest group. Fischer (1970: 216) provides examples of fifteen types of groups, each of which possesses at least five properties (cf. Trigger 1975: 52). Fischer's groups, not intended as a formal classification, range from "civilizations" to "caravans", and the interest group (not listed by Fischer) is favored by Trigger in analysis. The work of George C. Homans is also cited in support of this choice. The difficulty is not with the unit of analysis but with its derivation. How does it differ from the voluntary association? In what contexts has the interest group, or any other type of group, been dealt with in anthropology? What is their treatment in sociology? In other words, we are presented with what appears to be a nominal definition of *group*, not specifically with a definition of an *interest* group (Anderson 1971; Zeigler 1964, but see Trigger 1975: 23). There are a variety of perspectives on groups within sociology. Zisk (1969: 78 ff.) discusses four alternative frameworks for the study of groups: structural-functional, communication theory, role analysis, and interaction theory. Warriner (1956) discusses four major orientations in writings that deal with groups: nominalist, interactionist, neo-nominalist, and realist. These various orientations differ from one another with respect to the individual/group dichotomy, the role of individual psychology (e.g. reductionism), and even such things as game theory, e.g. the rational individual who reciprocates with others, and so on. These approaches are

incorporated into definitions and color their empirical use (and usefulness), and the debates are old ones in sociology.

The fact that Homans was cited provides a clue to the general orientation. Homans has, throughout most of his work, advocated a formal social science premised on the principles of exchange theory (itself developed as an alternative to systems theory), where the notion of bargaining is highlighted. Interaction between individuals is considered partly in terms of reciprocal behavior which is shaped by its pay-off function. Homans' work is thus behavioral psychological. The book *The Human Group* (1950) is functionalist and we are given a mechanical equilibrium model which is dependent on the actual behavior of actual social actors. In *Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms* (1961), Homans claims the task of sociology is to see how relationships between men are created and maintained by individual human choices. Homans therefore proposes a *methodological individualism*. In view of this fact, it is curious that he is cited as an authority when it is "preoccupation with the personalities and idiosyncratic behavior of individual members of interest groups" (Trigger 1982: 21) that is being rejected. Furthermore, Homans had waffled in his position. He combines the "nominalist" and "inter-actionist" orientations in *The Human Group*, and the "interactionist" and "realist" positions in his later writings (*Sentiments and Activities*, 1962). Realism, for example, is theoretical, analytical and is *anti*-reductionist. It is a structural-functional position which denies men the power to construct their own social realities and make their own choices. This contradicts any notions of methodological individualism and is something Homans never fully reconciled (1962: 22-35; 48-49). The scientific sociology he advocated is reductionist, or behavioral psychological – where the emphasis is on the individual. Structural-functionalism denies the role of the individual in the social system. Homans changed his mind about the relation between individuals and groups at least once in the course of his writings; in addition, the cost-benefit notion, or the *economic* exchange analogy in social exchange has been in disfavor in sociology for a long time now (Heath 1976).

Conceptual confusion might have been avoided by providing a nominal or operational definition of *interest* group in *sociology* (with more appropriate references). The reader could have been automatically directed to the theoretical literature on social exchange, game theory, and perhaps even transaction analysis, and someone might have been encouraged to pursue a fine-scale analysis within one of the theoretical approaches. Or, they might have been on firmer ground to even reject the unit of analysis.

Another term with which there is difficulty is "motive". It is a term that appears from time to time throughout Trigger's work, but there is neither a nominal nor an operational definition for it. Fischer (1970: 187-215) provides an excellent discussion of motives and motivation. Perhaps Peter Winch's idea of what a motive is is indeed not wholly acceptable (Giddens 1976: 44-51); more than anyone however, it is C. Wright Mills (1940) who has done the most to clarify the concept and has even suggested how one could *empirically* impute motives in given historical situations. Neither Trigger nor Fischer cite this rather important source that might have led to additional analyses. Interestingly, Fischer (1970: 214) suggests that only individuals have motives, not groups (though individuals may share motives to some extent). If true, it might be difficult to reconcile this with the interest group as the unit of analysis. Otherwise, we are back with idiosyncratic individuals and personalities. The whole idea of motives and motivations is a rather complex one and needs to be studied and developed if it is to be a more powerful analytic concept. Again, the difficulty is not with the concept but with its lack of explication.

Lastly, the notion of "understanding" requires something more than conventional language treatment. The appropriateness of the term is not questioned however. In one article, the term understanding occurs ten times in two pages (Trigger 1975: 54-55), and in Chapter One of *The Children of Aataentisic* it occurs at least 27 times between pages 11 and 26 (seven times on page 26). Of all the contexts in which the term is used, it refers most often to the following: a process, interaction, a situation, "the Indian", motives, personality, history, Huron behavior, and the documentary sources themselves. Nowhere is the term understanding defined. It is unclear whether the term/concept is to be used as an analytical tool or heuristic device, or in empirical validation or verification (see the debates over this issue in Truzzi 1974).

The concept of understanding, or *Verstehen*, which emerged out of debate between a number of German historians, was developed and used primarily by Max Weber in his historical investigations. Weber was interested in three types of subjectivity – concrete purposes, motives, and meanings attributed by people to specific social actions; common meaning of something given to it by a group of people; and, meanings attributed to an "ideal" actor in a symbolic model of action constructed by the social scientist. In pursuing these, Weber considered our capacity for empathy, our capacity for rational understanding, and our capacity to formulate and test causal models. In his work, Weber aimed to acquire a causal explanation of social action and to achieve empathetic appreciation. *Verstehen*, then, was a

device that could generate hypotheses concerning the connection between subjective states and human action, but it could not validate them (Weber 1949). Unfortunately, there is no mention of Weber in Trigger and not even a hint about *Verstehen* as it is used in historiography (links with the sociology of knowledge are obvious). Understanding is very closely related with motives and motivation, but how they can be operationalized together to make what would be a formidable analytic tool is never pursued. There is considerable debate both in sociology and in the philosophy of the social sciences whether *Vestehen* is applicable to groups or individuals. Some fear a psychological reductionism (Truzzi 1974). If this is a consequence of *Verstehen*, then the concept is not at all useful if explanations premised on idiosyncratic individuals and personalities are to be avoided. Finally, what kind of causal models can we formulate or test? The formulation of models and the generation of hypotheses is replaced instead by something called a "materialist orientation" (Trigger 1982: 23-24).

A critique of historical materialism would require another article, so any remarks have to be limited ones. We note that the unit of analysis in historical materialism is not the rational actor, as in exchange theory, nor the formally defined role player, as in structural-functionalism. The unit of analysis is the mode of production (Wilson 1983: 177). Depending on which version of Homans one is inclined to follow, historical materialism is incompatible with Homans the methodological individualist, but may be compatible with Homans the realist. The materialist orientation also seriously neglects the role of human agency in social life (Wilson 1983: 208); there is the tendency toward sociological reductionism, where individual actors are collapsed into social structures. People are conceived as stepping into already conceived systems (sometimes of the researcher's own making) such that they do not create their own motivation or ideological structures (around family, community, or in political groups) (Wilson 1983: 211-212). Historical materialism lacks on adequate phenomenology of social action (Wilson 1983: 212). Harris (1979: 225) makes the well-taken point that "what we encounter in ... the entire corpus of dialectical materialist theory is the inevitable ambiguity associated with any views of sociocultural causality that fails to distinguish between the mental and behavioral and the emic and etic components of sociocultural systems". Thus, a materialist orientation may be compatible with one version of Homans but not with the other. It is, however, incompatible with the notion of motives or motivations *except* those which have been imposed from outside. Futhermore, the kind of understanding (or *Verstehen*) that might obtain from this context is quite different from what Weber and others

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intended it to be. Finally, the dialectic method is not exclusive to historical materialism. Writes Wilson (1983: 208), "sociologists working in a variety of research traditions are fond of pointing out that the consequences of human action are frequently the opposite of what was intended" (see Trigger 1975: 56; 1976: 850; 1982: 22). The idea that social life is ordered by basic contradictions can be incorporated without serious modification into functionalism, where the idea of "structural strain" already plays a prominent part (Wilson 1983: 209).

## V

In conclusion, if ethnohistory is to be a valid scientific endeavor as a discipline or a method, and if knowledge in the subject is to be cumulative, language and concept-use analysis should be an integral part of our work. Most ethnohistorians rely on documentary evidence. In their analyses they "transform" them and produce yet another type of document. Thus, the accounts and "histories" they produce are data themselves and are no less subject to historiographic analysis than the so-called primary sources they work with. Far from being an obsessed operationalism, what I am proposing is a historiography of our own work. This is not new (e.g. Fischer 1970), but as I have tried to point out, the tendency to "borrow" from other disciplines requires much tighter control over the use of language and especially the development of concepts.

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# Methods in Caribbean Anthropological Research: A Re-consideration

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RÉSUMÉ

L'article réévalue les cadres théoriques et les approches méthodologiques qui ont prévalu dans les recherches socio-anthropologiques dans les Caraïbes, recherches qui ont été implicitement influencées par la théorie des "sociétés pluralistes". L'auteur insiste sur les faiblesses suivantes de ces recherches:

a) elles ignorent le matériel des archives,

b) elles acceptent des thèses comme "les origines culturelles africaines" ou le "déterminisme économique" pour expliquer, par exemple, la fréquence des unions de droit commun, ou

c) elles s'appuient sur la thèse de "la classe inférieure en tant que normative" sans traiter le système de valeur de la société globale.

L'auteur suggère un élargissement des procédures de recherche pour considérer le système social entier dans lequel les phénomènes apparaissent aussi bien que la nature des sources de données accessibles.

## INTRODUCTION

For some decades now, the Caribbean region has been the focus of extensive anthropological research particularly by North American-based researchers. The general methods adopted in the study of the societies and cultures of this area are basically those of traditional anthropological fieldwork for investigation of remote, homogenous, "small-scale", pre-literate societies. However, insufficient recognition has been given to the significant differences in these respective field situations.

It would appear methodologically obvious that fundamentally different social situations with radically different principles of social organization would call for different field research approaches, yet this has not been the

case with Caribbean ethnology. To begin with, there is the question of "units of research" constituting the "social structure" of any given society that one selects for study. Unlike New Guinea, or Africa, or Amazonia, the population segments studied in the Caribbean are neither "tribes" nor simple autonomous societal units, nor are they "indigenes", but are sub-cultures within a complex of socio-economic, political and cultural systemic order, the structure of which encompasses diverse population categories defined in ethnic and colour terms. Secondly, these societies are literate and possess written historical and contemporary records in languages not unfamiliar to anthropological field researchers. Consequently, from a qualitative point of view, Caribbean ethnography ought to reflect a higher standard of reliability, validity and replicability than work done among those pre-literate societies of traditional anthropological concern.

The epistemological issue here is whether conventional field methods devised for the type of societies traditionally studied by anthropologists can be considered adequate for the kinds of societies discussed in this paper. In other words, could a study of constituent segments of a complex Caribbean society conducted in isolation from the overall cultural configuration claim to be a valid reflection of what is termed a "Caribbean Society" in the resultant report? Holism is one of the sacred canons of the empirical method in anthropology; so a study of a subcultural segment of a Caribbean society is no more than just that – a sectional study of an atom of the whole which leaves a host of other questions unanswered about that society. A case in point is the study of extra-marital mating patterns in Caribbean family research. Much of the literature on this subject reflects the heavy influence of conventional anthropological methods for the study of conjugal and kinship units among pre-literate, often kin-based societies.[1]

Virtually all studies of family patterns and organization are confined to the "Afro-West Indian lower class" segment of Caribbean societies, and in a few cases, the East Indian peasantry. This sectional bias in unit selection leaves a large part of the society unconsidered. Very few studies have taken the "elites" or the "middle class" (white, coloured or black) as the focus on the investigation, either in their own right or for purposes of comparison.

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1 See for example the attempt to analyse Caribbean family structures in terms of the kinship approach in: William Davenport. "The Family System of Jamaica", *Soc. & Econ. Studies* (10) 1961 pp. 420-454; Michael G. Smith, "Kinship and Household in Carriacou", *Soc. & Econ. Studies* (10) 1961, pp. 455-477; Remy Bastien, "Hatian Rural Family Organization", *Soc. & Econ. Studies* (10) 1961 pp. 478-510.

There are marked discontinuities even where attempts have been made to draw a historical and comparative development of mating patterns among the constituent segments.

## THEORETICAL APPROACHES

The bankruptcy of the plural society theory is a pertinent point. This theory treated segments of Caribbean societies as if they were *parallel, non-complementary* cultural systems that could be studied as discrete, autonomous social units as one would treat a "tribal" society. The incipient influence of this theory has led many researchers to treat, in practice, the social segments they select for investigation as if they were indeed holistic societies. Following M. G. Smith's pluralist ideas,[2] they approach and describe the cultural practices of a population segment of a given society as if it were a full-blown cultural system rather than a subculture of the social whole. Yet it is known that all Caribbean cultural practices are a conglomerate of elements contributed by the various immigrant groups (there being no indigenous culture among those) who make up present-day inhabitants in most territories.

I have argued elsewhere (Manyoni, 1977, 1980) that we cannot begin to adequately explain particular behaviour patterns among West Indian societies unless we take cognizance of the dominant cultural ethos encompassing all segments. All population segments in the Caribbean derive their ethos from the experience of plantation social organization and from the culture that developed in consequence of slavery. The prevailing cultural patterns, family structures, mating practices and value systems are teleologically linked to the pervasive plantation socio-economic system which created them in the first place three centuries ago. By "plantation socio-economic system", it should be understood to mean the total social structure composed of all the constituent segments whose relations were inexorably shaped by the plantation productive enterprise. Behavioural patterns that emerged from the interplay of intergroup relations within the plantation system were influenced by a value system shared by the society as a whole, notwithstanding the manifestation of particular elements peculiar to the discrete segments.

I suggest that M. G. Smith's postulated notion of institutional pluralism is wrong, and woefully inadequate as a heuristic device for analysing sub-

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2 M. G. Smith's postulates on this theme are contained in his various publications: 1953, 1960, 1961, 1965a, 1965b, and with Leo Kuper (1969).

cultural patterns or practices in Caribbean societies. For example, the theory has considerable difficulty in explaining the cultural basis for the notion of the "coloured creole" institutional autonomy (Smith 1960: 767, 1965a: 4, 235; 1965b: 112). Once a society is defined as "plural" on the basis of cultural or institutional diversity, it then becomes imperative to demonstrate how the various institutions are structurally arranged within the social system. If these units are in fact closed, non-complementary and parallel sub-systems, then we do by definition have pluralism. However, if they are merely a variation of the dominant cultural ethos, then we simply have sub-cultures within a commonly shared system of values.[3]

What most writers on Caribbean (sectional) cultural practices have treated as 'differing institutional cultural systems' (Smith, 1960: 767), are in fact complementary rather than alternate or opposed 'exclusive (and) ... distinctive systems of action, ideas, values, and social relations', nor do they entail the 'co-existence of incompatible institutional systems' (Smith, 1965: 4). There appears to be no justifiable methodological or theoretical reason for regarding the co-existence of differing social practices among population segments of most Caribbean societies as evidence of synchronic and full blown parallel systems.

The evolution of Caribbean cultural forms entailed a synthesis of many diverse elements, none of which enjoyed independent existence for any length of time after the crystallization of Creole society in the 17th century plantation milieu. Since slavery was never an independent institution peculiar to the slave segment, the social practices of the slaves similarly were not, and could not have been, voluntary and exclusive institutional behaviour that could be analysed independently of the social environmental context. This observation applies equally to the position of the "Free Coloured Creoles". Any sociological analysis of their behaviour or social position would need to take account of their relationship to the total social system consisting of masters and slaves, whites and blacks if it is to make ethnographic sense.[4] To argue, as Smith (1965: 112) does, that Caribbean

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3 The point is brilliantly enunciated by Lee Rainwater in his "The Problem of Lower Class Culture", *Journ. of Soc. Issues* 26 (2) 1970, pp. 133-148, following Goode's (1960) now classic challenge of the normative thesis then prevailing among Caribbeanists about common-law unions. See also H. Rodman, "The lower class value stretch", *Social Forces* 42 (2) 1963; and his: *Lower-Class Families*, London, oup. 1971.

4 It should be noted that the intermediate position of the "Free Coloured People" was a structural and social status deriving directly from the very nature of plantation society. They shared all the values of plantation society including the institution of slavery itself. Their

societies are plural by virtue of an assumed existence of incompatible institutional systems which leads to each sector practising "different cultures", is to fly in the face of ethnographic facts. The coloured segment of Caribbean populations was and is entirely Creole by birth, culture and behaviour; it could in no way be assumed to have at any point in time practised a "different culture" or adhered to "different institutions" distinct from those governing the society as a whole. Similarly, the institutions developed by the white segments of the population and the practices prevailing among its members were by their nature largely Creole, influenced as they were by the totality of the slave system of which they were an integral part.

Earlier I alluded to the question of mating patterns in the Caribbean which I think demonstrates the inadequacy of research approaches that focus on a single segment of these societies. The white Creole segment was as implicated in these practices as the other segments of the society and thus should be the subject of comparative research. The habit of field researchers on family and kinship structures to concentrate on "lower-class negro" behaviour to the exclusion of other constituent segments and status levels prevents a more comprehensive understanding of these patterns. This focus on non-efficient causes leads to ineffectual "explanations", erroneous paradigms and misleading data bases (Manyoni, 1977: 418). So long as field researchers appear to be implicity wedded to the plural society notion of West Indian social systems, the result can only be further obfuscation of the research problem.

## METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Let me illustrate with concrete examples the charges I am making about the shortcomings of present research procedures. Schlesinger (1968a; 1968b), in reviewing the extensive body of literature on family patterns in Jamaica and in the English-speaking Caribbean, has aptly summarized the major "findings" of nineteen studies by twenty-two investigators for the period 1943-1956, and tabulated their sample units by geographic location (rural-urban), population numbers, and social status of the unit selected for study, together with their respective methods of data collection

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intermediate position is well portrayed in Jerome S. Handler, *The unappropriated People: Freedmen in the Slave Society of Barbados*, 1974, and David W. Cohen and J. P. Greene, *Neither Slave Nor Free*, 1972. It should be remembered that the "coloureds" are the true creoles, not having any other cultural roots like their white and black counterparts.

(1968a: 137; 1968b: 150). Interestingly enough, the social unit selected for all but six of the nineteen studies is described as "lower social class", and of the total studies, only six include "urban location" in their samples. As to method of data collection, seven out of ten studies utilized census data only, four employed questionnaire interviews, and only two combined interviews and observation. Obviously other sources and methods of data retrieval which could have thrown more light on these mating behaviours were neglected at the cost of validity.

Virtually for all the former plantation slave territories in the Caribbean, there are extensive documentary records in existence relating to, among other things, marital issues throughout the slavery and post-slavery period. These materials could, and do shed considerable light on the origins and persistence of contemporary mating patterns. I refer here to various local legislative enactments relating to the slaves' legal and civil fetters against contracting formal conjugal ties; to Registers of Marriages, Births and Divorces, Legitimacy Registers, Reports and Correspondence on plantation affairs in British State Papers, Colonial Reports (Blue Books), Ecclesiastical Correspondence of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), and Royal Commissions of Inquiry: Proceedings and Reports (see Manyoni, 1980: 88-89fn.; Bennett, 1958; Klingberg, 1983). I suggest that a careful utilization of such valuable sources of historical and contemporary data could help strengthen the partially substantiated findings and largely intuitive conclusions of field researchers.[5]

Even where the researchers' intuition suggests a plausible explanation, this is often not supported by the sort of data that would provide an external test of validity for the explanation proffered. Henriques (1953: 27), for example, in a fit of intellectual intuition suggests that the direct encouragement of promiscuity by the planters was sufficient to establish a cultural pattern which has existed to the present day. However, he fails to provide or ignores the concrete historical data that would validate this insightful explanation, nor does he attempt to explain why the pattern has persisted more than a century after the postulated causal conditions had changed. A search in the archives would have furnished the necessary supporting material. At times intellectual myopia prevents a researcher from perceiving

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5 See for example a move in this direction in: Robert Dirks and Virginia Kerns, "Mating patterns and adaptive change in Rum Bay, 1823-1970", *Soc. & Econ. Studies* 25 (10) 1976, pp. 34-54. See also Norma Forde, "The Evolution of Marriage Law in Barbados" *JBMHS* 35, 1975, pp. 35-46.

the very context of his/her investigative concern in historical and structural terms. For example, Kerr (1963: 202) concludes for her Jamaica study that it is a fallacy to transplant social institutions (marriage) from England or American and expect them to take root in a different cultural pattern in an unaltered form. She begins from the mistaken assumption that there was indeed a different cultural pattern in existence in the West Indies to which alien institutions (social or otherwise) could have been transplanted. There was nothing that could be called "West Indian culture" prior to plantation slavery and the colonization of these islands.

It is thus woefully inaccurate to suggest that the failure of the monogamous, legally sanctioned form of marital union to preponderate in Jamaica or elsewhere in the West Indies was due to cultural incompatibility. Had Kerr made an ideographic comparative study of the other constituent segments and social categories in Jamaica, she would have recognized the patent invalidity of her conclusions. The historical record is replete with commentaries on how strikingly incompatible were the mating behaviours among the white Creoles with the prevailing patterns of their metropolitan European counterparts throughout the plantation period.[6]

A further methodological shortcoming in family studies is the tendency among most researchers to lump together otherwise discrete issues relating to mating patterns, sexual behaviour and procreation in their analyses. Although these three subjects are taxonomically related, they are analytically discrete phenomena. There is no necessary connection between the prevalence of common-law unions and the prevalance of illegitimacy or the rate of illegitimate births. A sequential link between the incidence of consensual unions and the rate of sexual reproduction is not a matter for intellectual speculation, but a research problem that calls for an analytical demonstration of the alleged link. These separate variables within the mating complex that characterizes Caribbean family studies are often treated indiscriminately in efforts to portray an otherwise unsubstantiated developmental cycle of domestic units. Davenport (1961: 429), without strong demonstrable evidence, makes what amounts to a nomothetic explanation of the sequential development from initial sexual experimentation to procreation and to consensual union. One could avoid this sort of "impressionistic sociologising" if data relating to sexuality are first separated

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6 Among the numerous commentators on white creole behaviours are Dickson (1789, 1814); Nugent (1839); Lewis (1834); Schomburgk (1848); Southey (1827); Sewell (1862); Caldecott (1898); Moreton (1790); Carmichael (1833).

from those relating to conjugality, and those pertaining to maternity with or without cohabitation.

Ebanks, *et al.* (1974) have demonstrated with statistical evidence the falsity of the assumption "that the typical pattern of union formation is from non-legal forms to marriage within the same partnership" (p. 243). From their extensive analysis of statistical data from interviews and questionnaire material, they found "no evidence in support of the notion that women progress from a visiting to commonlaw to married status" (p. 242-3); and that the popular contention of sequential progression has 'no empirical basis whatever' (p. 245). What in fact these authors found was that 'more than six of every ten women had marriages which occurred without a prior commonlaw status' (p. 243); and that 'only three per cent ... went through such a progression' (p. 243).

The work done by these researchers makes an important method-ological contribution in another way: it not only recognizes the analytic rationality of treating the institution of marriage, family structure and child birth as distinct entities, but also controverts the popular notion that these three factors are explanable in terms of lower-class normative values systems (Rodman, 1966, Davenport, 1961; Kerr, 1961). The unquestioned preponderance of consensual unions over formal legal marriage is not explanable by resort to unsubstantiated claims that "lower-class" (black) individuals *prefer* such unions because they are commensurate with their normative value system. The findings of Ebanks *et al.* (*op. cit.*) for Barbados is applicable to other Caribbean societies in respect of the acceptance of legal marriage as a norm, notwithstanding failure to conform. According to Ebanks *et al.* (1974),

> Marriage is widely sought by men and women since it provides security for both parties as well as considerable prestige and self-esteem (p. 231).

Otterbein (1965) in collating research on family patterns up to the early 1960s rightly points out what ought to be the methodological thrust of such endeavours.

> The problem ... is to explain that variability which occurs among Caribbean family systems. ...It is not sufficient merely to describe the attributes and dimensions of such systems; rather it is also necessary to *locate and identify the conditions and factors within the sociocultural system which account for the variability* (p. 66, emphasis added).

More than a decade later Mariam K. Slater echoed the same methodological point with reference to her study of family forms in Martinique. 'Every region seems to produce its own variation on these two themes [illegitimacy

and matrifocality] and the forms display such diversity that one is tempted to seek some underlying process that would explain them' (1977: 16).

The methodological rationale for such differentiation of the analytic problem is precisely that there are two different aspects involved in mating: one relates to *sexual behaviour* with its corollary of *extra-marital births*, and the other involves *marital conjugality* which relates to *forms of unions*, and this may or may not have anything to do with the incidence and rate of "illegitimate" births. Researchers have not provided satisfactory evidence to support those assumptions that link pre-marital child birth with the prevalence of non-marital cohabitation. The problems are analytically separate as witness the high incidence of pre-marital (illegitimate) births in Scandinavian countries and lately in Britain and Canada but which have no correlation with common-law unions.[7]

## THEORY, METHOD AND PRAXIS

I should now want to focus on the long-standing question of the prevalence of non-legal, extra-marital mating patterns that have been the subject of so much attention in Caribbean family studies. The point at issue here is basically this: (1) How do we explain the ontological basis of the dominant mating form among black and "lower-class" West Indians?; (2) How do we account for the persistence of the patterns thus established? and (3) How do we relate contemporary mating practices to the incidence and rate of extra-marital births among the various sectors of these societies? To answer the first question, an ideographic approach is indispensable since we need to consider, among other things, the *legal proscriptions* relating to slave marriages, the role of the Church as an institution in plantation society, and the authority and attitudes of the planters towards slave unions. Legal impediments are well documented for most slave territories, and the issue should pose no problem for the researcher desirous of establishing the relationship between form of union permissible or not at a certain point in time, and the marital practices prevailing among segments thus affected.

The role of the Church in the development of Caribbean mating behaviour is an instructive example of the need to adopt more comprehensive methodological approaches in Caribbean family studies than is

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7 Richard F. TOMASSON, "Pre-marital sexual permissiveness and illegitimacy in Nordic Countries", *Comp. Studies in Society & History* 18, 1976, pp. 252-270, provides an instructive case study of the distinction between illegitimate births and marital patterns.

generally done, and this may lead to greater care not to proffer facile explanations for this phenomenon. The dominance of a particular religious denomination in a territory had far-reaching implications for the marital behaviour of the subordinate population as witness the polar distinctions between Francophone Catholic slave regimes and the Anglophone Protestant territories.[8] In the French Antilles,

> All religious practitioners except Catholics were forbidden to marry. Marriage itself was governed by the planters rather than the priests, who were forbidden to perform marriages involving slaves without the master's permission (Slater, 1977: 50).

Mariam Slater's observations derive directly from the examination of the provisions of The Code Noir of 1685 and early documentary sources relating to slave management. It is instructive to compare the influence of the Catholic Church in French territories with that of the Anglican Church in British slave plantations where it enjoyed the dominant status of being the "Established Church". Only practitioners and officials of the Established Church enjoyed the right of legal matrimony and since slaves were excluded from the church, they were also prohibited to marry by virtue of being "Real Estate and absolute property of their owners" in terms of various Acts, 1674-1688.[9] Two centuries later, the Under-Secretary of State was to observe that

> It is difficult to perceive the policy of confining the right of celebrating marriages to the clergy of the Established Church, nor why other teachers of religion should be deprived of the salutary influence over the minds of the slaves which the enjoyment of this power should confer.[10]

Documents among the State Papers which I have examined make it patently clear that the Anglican Church enjoyed exclusive monopoly on matrimonial matters.[11] The following few excerpts demonstrate the point: '...I beg to observe that I am not of the Established Church, marriages

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8 The literature on the role of the dominant religious institutions and their implication in the system of slavery is enormous. See for example, John F. MAXWELL, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, London 1975 which provides a well annotated history of Catholic teaching concerning the moral legitimacy of the institution of slavery; CALDECOTT (1898); DELANY (1930); DEVAS (1932); BENNETT (1958).

9 The relevant "Slave Acts" for the various slave territories are calendared in: *State Papers, Colonial Series: West Indies and the Americas, 1669-1688*, PRO, London.

10 Under-Secretary of State W. Huskinsson to J. B. Skeete, President of Council of Barbados, October 8, 1827. *Parliamentary Papers 1828-1829*, Vol. 76, p. 55.

11 *State Papers, CSP Col. Ser.* 1669-1674; 1675-1676; *Parliamentary Papers* 1818-1823; 1823-1825; 1837-1841 relating variously to the "Treatment of slaves in the Colonies"; "Slave Population"; "Marriages of Slaves"; "Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice in the West Indies".

solemnized by me would not be legal'.[12] 'I have not considered myself authorized to solemnize marriages in a legal sense'.[13] 'As for slaves I should not consider myself justified in celebrating marriages between them without previous assurance from competent authority that such practice is conformable with the existing laws of the Colony'.[14]

There is ample documentary evidence from official contemporary records that the connivance between Church and State with respect to slave marriages went a long way to effectively discourage attempts to contract and form legal matrimony and family life. Even the unfettered clergy of the Established Church made very little effort to counter the long-standing planter intransigency against slave matrimony. Their collective negligence to take advantage of their monopoly in matrimonial affairs is attested to by the following observations made in response to metropolitan demands for records of slave marriages.

> I beg to inform your excellency that during the space of thirty years I never knew or heard that marriages were ever performed by clergymen of the Church of England in this Island between slaves.[15]

Another Anglican clergyman similarly reported:

> During forty-two years and nine months that I have been Rector and Incumbent of the Parish of St. George, I had never been called upon to marry any slaves.[16]

He goes on to make it clear that his was not an isolated case: 'No beneficed clergyman had ever married any slaves'. And further points out that in any case 'no marriage (is) lawful here unless solemnized by a minister of the Church of England'.[17]

One Anglican clergyman responding to official requests to furnish matrimonial information on the slaves in his Parish, provides clear evidence which supports the view that the connivance of secular and religious authorities in discouraging, if not prohibiting, slave matrimony may have been responsible for the development of a form of mating that has become the present sociological "problem":

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12 Rev. Richard Elliot to Government Secretary R. Chapman, Demarara, December 13, 1821, p. 81. (Note: all references from # 12 to # 19 are extracted from *Parliamentary Papers relating to the Slave Population in the West Indies*, Vol. 1 Part II 1823. All pagination refers to this source.

13 Evangelist John Davies to Secretary Chapman (p. 82).

14 Rev. Archibald Browne to Secretary Chapman November 29, 1821 (p. 82).

15 Rector George Collins (Antigua) to Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban.

16 Rector James Coull (Antigua) to Governor D'Urban, September 26, 1821.

17 Coull to D'Urban (*ibid.*).

> Your excellency will perceive that there is not any marriage of slaves in either Return; there is not a single instance of any such occurrence on record in either register, the circumstances having been invariably considered as illegal.[18]

An even more striking piece of further evidence revealing the dilemma faced by both the clergy and the "free black and coloured people" under the plantation regime is advanced by a non-Anglican clergyman who defiantly responded that because of his non-Anglican affiliation, 'marriages solemnized by me would not be legal; I have therefore refused to comply with requests of the *free black and coloured people*, and have not married any of them' (emphasis added).[19]

Archival materials on all West Indian slave colonies provide definitive evidence supporting the view that the paucity of slave marriages was not

TABLE 1

Comparative Marriages of Slaves, and of Free Coloured Persons for Antigua, Barbados, Demarara, Montserrat, Tobago, Trinidad, 1808-1820

| TERRITORY | SLAVE | COLOURED |
|---|---|---|
| Antigua | nil[a] | 122 |
| Barbados | 17 | 36 |
| Demarara | 159[b] | 59 |
| Montserrat | nil | 7 |
| Tobago | nil | 7 |
| Trinidad | 4 | 425 |

a In a report to Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Rector George Collins affirms 'that during the space of thirty years I never knew or heard that marriages were ever performed by Clergymen of the Church of England in this Island between slaves. I have been Rector of the Parish of St. Philip about eighteen years, and have never been applied to, to officiate at the marriage of slaves.' (14 September 1821. *Parliamentary Papers: Slave Populations in the West Indies Vol. 1, 1823*, p. 50).

b The total is for the three years 1818-1820, there being no slave marriages prior to 1818. 'The Marriages of slaves is a thing unheard of in this colony, and I humbly conceive this holy institution to be altogether incompatible with the state of slavery under existing laws and regulations.' W. T. Austen to Sir Benjamin D'Urban, February 4, 1882. *Parliamentary Papers 1823*, p. 81.

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18 Rector Samuel W. Hartman (Antigua) to Governor D'Urban, September 1821 (p. 51).
19 Rev. W. T. Austen (Demarara) to Secretary Chapman February 4, 1822 (p. 81).

due to any cultural propensity to promiscuity, but was a direct consequence of the intransigency of planter and Colonial interests. From about 1810 onward, considerable metropolitan pressure was being exerted on the legislatures and the clergy to furnish information ("Returns") on the state of slave matrimony. The responses of local officials to the penetrating demands of successive Colonial Secretaries, Lord Bathurst and Lord Glenelg, clearly reveal that the principal cause for the dearth of matrimonial unions among both slaves and "Free Coloured Persons" was the implacable resistance of the planters to relinquish their absolute hold on their human "property".

The slave masters averred that they had 'no other objections to their [slaves'] marriage but what arises from the apprehension of losing their property'.[20] The burning issue then was the effect of legal marriage on the slave as property. The question which called for decision was

> Whether the consent of an owner given to the marriage of his slave, could ... be construed by the law into a virtual emancipation of the slave?[21]

In all the English colonies, metropolitan legal opinion was at odds with legislative enactment of the local legislatures as well as judicial interpretation by local law officers. Attorneys-General supported the planters' view that legal matrimony was incompatible with slave status whilst metropolitan opinion was that civil and "ecclesiastical law has always held without distinction ... that slaves were not to be excluded from marriage either with free persons or slaves..."[22]

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20 Rev. John Stephen to Governor Charles Cameron (Nassau), May 2, 1816 enclosed in Cameron to Lord Bathurst July 12, 1816. *Parliamentary Papers: Slavery and the West Indies 1818-1823*, p. 223.

21 Stephen to Cameron July 8, 1816, *Parliamentary Papers 1818-1823*, p. 226. The issue of Slave marriages and their implications outlived legal emancipation right up to 1840. Barbados was the most recalcitrant as evident from a series of revised slave Bills rejected by the Colonial Office. Under-Secretary of State, W. Huskinsson's observations are illuminating: 'On the subject of marriage, I regret to say that the provisions of this Act are very defective. The consent of the owner is an indispensible [*sic*] condition in every case, however capricious or unjust may be his refusal. It is necessary also that the slaves to be married should be both the property of the same person.' Huskinsson to J. B. Skeete, President of Council of Barbados, October 18, 1827, *Parliamentary Papers 1828-29*, Vol. 76, p. 55.

22 Lord Bathurst to Governor Charles Cameron (Nassau) November 31 [*sic*] 1816, p. 227. Also see: Wm. Wylly (Attorney-General, Nassau) to Governor Cameron, January 26, 1814, p. 218, *Parliamentary Papers: Slavery and the West Indies 1818-1823. Correspondence: Marriage of Slaves* (pp. 217-227). A rather illuminating comment on the legalization of slave marriages was made by a Commissioner on a Tribunal to enquire into the "Administration of Justice in the West Indies: to the effect that, "It would be impolite to alter any law that may operate as an inducement to marriage". *Parliamentary Papers: Justice in the West Indies*, Vol. 15, 1825, p. 45.

Colonial opinion, however, held the opposite view. It was felt that 'no man will consent to the marriage of his slave, when he knows, or even apprehends, that he would thereby endanger his property.'[23] Consequently, in numerous instances local legal and political authorities successfully managed to subvert whatever legal principles and administrative instructions were feebly issued from London.

In Jamaica, the Reverend George Wilson Bridges, who was for long a staunch ecclesiastical supporter of the planters' position against slave marriages and Christianization, attempted to placate metropolitan concerns regarding the condition of slaves by conducting (allegedly) mass marriages. In a letter dated June 14, 1823, to the Abolitionist William Wilberforce, he writes:

> I have myself married one hundred and eighty-seven couples of negro slaves in my own parish, within the last two years, all of whom were encouraged by their owners to marry.[24]

When the London authorities insisted on detailed records, it turned out that all of the 187 marriages were purportedly solemnized in *one month*, February, 1823. (The actual number on record is 145.) Under pressure from Colonial Secretary Lord Bathurst, Bridges' immediate successor, the Reverend Robert W. Dallas, submitted a lengthy but bland list of the alleged couples with the pointed comment: 'It is impossible for me to state what fees the Rev. Mr. Bridges received on [sic] these marriages.' And as to the form of marriage, 'Rev. G. W. Bridges does not state.'[25]

By his own account, Rev. Bridges was all in favour of the planters' position, and he expressed the same vehemence against slave emancipation as their owners. He particularly disliked the 'free negro and coloured population whom he labelled as 'that slothful race living without labour or means.'[26] Elsewhere he described the African slaves as 'the extraordinary people, whose vices have stained [the pages of history] with so many crimes

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23 Stephen to Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

24 "A voice from Jamaica" in *Notices respecting Jamaica*, London, n.d. Gilbert Mathison, p. 22.

25 Rev. Robert W. Dallas to Lord Bathurst, November 14, 1825, Enclosure # A. *Papers and Returns relating to the Slave Population in the West Indies: Parliamentary Papers 1826*, pp. 445-447. The Papers contain a detailed list of all the couples allegedly married by Bridges between August 12, 1821 and some unspecified date in 1824. Between December 28, 1824 and May 1, 1825, 48 slave marriages were reported as having been solemnized by Robert Dallas and John Trew respectively Rectors of the Parishes of Manchester and St. Thomas.

26 *Notices respecting Jamaica*, p. 39.

and whose appearance has attracted the wonder of mankind.' He talks of 'the peculiar habits of so strange and barbarous a people,'[27] concluding that there is a uniformity in the character of all 'African tribes with which we are familiar in Jamaica: for the picture of one contains the outline of them all.'[28]

This sort of vitriolic sentiment was quite common among the plantocratic interests in the West Indies. Barbadian Historian John Poyer believed that the slaves were

> an ignorant, superstitious, vindictive race, whom no moral obligations can bind to speak the truth (Poyer, 1808: 144).

One of the most consistent arguments that the planters and some clergymen employed to rationalize their objection to slave matrimony was the assumption that formal marriage would be meaningless to them given their presumed barbarity, savagery, stupidity, lustfulness and ignorance of God's grace.[29] Few local clergymen believed in the usefulness of their own religious institution's endeavours to Christianize the slave or to instil Christian morality into them because of their 'Lustful inclination,' or because they were too 'untractable & perverse.'[30] It is important to realize that it was not individual prejudices that stood in the way of regulated slave matrimony but the prevailing societal view of the slave's rightful place in the plantation economy. The crux of the problem was that Christian marriage of chattels was a contradiction in terms within the context of plantation slavery. It would have interfered with labour mobility through slave sales if members of a family could not be separated.

This issue became crystallized during the Amelioration period (1810-1827) in the protracted legislative tug-of-war between Colonial Secretary Lord Bathurst and the plantocratic West Indian legislators.

> As regards the sale of Slaves in satisfaction of the debts of their owners, the Assembly ... found that it was surrounded with difficulties even greater than those apprehended by his Lordship...

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27 George W. BRIDGES, in: *Annals of Jamaica*. London, 1827-28 Vol. II, John Murray, p. 398.

28 *Annals of Jamaica*, p. 406.

29 Bryan EDWARDS. *The History, Civil and Commercial of the British Colony in the West Indies*, Dublin, Luke White 1793, Vol. 2, p. 76.

30 Various correspondence between Codrington Plantation officials, Barbados, and the Secretary of the Society for the Propogation of the Gospel (SPG), London, 1760-1775 cited in footnote 17 (Chapter VIII), J. H. BENNETT: *Bondsmen and Bishops: Slavery and Apprenticeship on the Codrington Plantations of Barbados 1710-1838*, Berkeley, 1958, p. 159.

The Assembly claimed to have implemented a law:

> which enjoins the marshall, when selling Slaves under executions, to dispose of them in
> lots not exceeding five in number, unless there shall be more than five of one family, in
> which case he is required to sell the *whole family in one lot.* On this point the Assembly
> are not prepared ... to make further provision...[31]

Throughout the decade 1820-1830, the triple issue of Christianization,
education and marriage of slaves was hotly debated between the local West
Indian Legislatures and the metropolitan authorities. The obstructive tactics
ranged from outright sabotage of ameliorative plans to subtle evasion of
metropolitan instructions. As late as 1825 Barbadian planters were still
paying lip-service to the demands for the education and religious instruction
of slaves. In their farewell address to the Lord Bishop on his return to
England, they affirmed their 'most sincere desire to afford the blessings of
religious instruction to our Slaves'; and promised that they shall always be
'prompt and zealous in furthering every prudent measure which may seem
conducive to this object.' However, they left no doubt what they meant by
"prudent measure".

> We cannot, without injustice to others, consent to such a substraction of labour
> from the cultivation of the estates as would lead to a material reduction of income.[32]

The Barbadian planter/legislators were firmly determined to subvert
the authority and wishes of the metropolitan government with regard to the
amelioration of and alteration to the slave condition. As one exasperated
judicial officer reported to Colonial Secretary Lord Glenelg:

> The Solicitor-General is endeavouring to prove that a clause in one of the local
> Acts, which the Colonial Office has sanctioned, will enable them to effect this, but in
> case this method should fail, they intend to pass another Act.[33]

The subversive practice alluded to in the above-mentioned report was
a long-standing tactic of the planter/legislators in the Caribbean colonies.
The Barbadian slave owners were unquestionably the most intransigent and

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31 Robert Haynes, Speaker, Barbados House of Assembly to Sir Henry Warde, Governor,
October 23, 1826, *Parliamentary Papers 1827*, p. 273. London. Lord Bathurst continued to
express his displeasure that documents relating to ameliorative Acts passed by the Legislature of
Barbados since May 1823 contained no 'provision for promoting the religious instruction of the
Slaves, or the better observance of the Sabbath, respecting the marriage of the Slaves; [or]...
for preventing the separation of Slaves from their relations.' *His Majesty's Papers 1826*,
London, p. 14.

32 Statement signed by 85 Proprietors of Estates in the Island of Barbados in:
*Parliamentary Papers 1826-27*, Vol. 71. London, p. 1.

33 Magistrate Buxton to Under-Secretary, Sir George Grey. 29th March 1837. *Parliamen-
tary Papers 1837-38*, Vol. 85, p. 3. Enclosd in Glenelg to McGregor 1/5/1837.

obstreperous legislators. Throughout the slavery period and even after emancipation they poured out voluminous and cantenkerous enactments designed to ensure their unyielding grasp over the slaves. They continually defied metropolitan orders on the grounds that they

> felt it a sacred duty which they owed to their country, their constituents, and themselves, [and] whilst anxiously disposed to meet the views and wishes of His Majesty's government, not to lose sight of "the safety of the inhabitants, the interest of their property, and the welfare of the Slave themselves" ... the Assembly ... found that they could not yield to his Lordship's recommendations...

> Compulsory manumission is such a direct invasion of the right of property hitherto secured by repeated Acts of the colonial legislature ... that the Assembly felt they could not ... contemplate a measure so absolutely destructive of that right...[34]

It is patently clear from the archival record that the central issue in the legislative tug-of-war between the West Indian slave regimes and their home government was the question of the civil status of the slave. This included the right to matrimony which the planters always construed as an erosion of their proprietory rights. Christianization and education of the slave were cognate issues but did not entail the dreaded ramifications implied by marriage as disruptive of gang-labour organization so essential to the plantation enterprise. A closer examination of legislative enactments governing slave communities may provide more probable sociological explanations for the mating patterns that constitute the majority of contemporary unions among segments of Caribbean societies than current theorizing postulates.

Slave regimes were highly organized socio-economic enterprises underpinned by a pleothora of legal and ecclesiastical precepts designed for 'the governing of Negroes' (Act # 82/1688), or for 'the better Ordering and government of Slaves' (Act # 82/1826), or to 'secure the peaceable possession of Negroes and other Slaves' (Act # 61/1709), the latter being derived from an earlier law declaring 'Slaves to be "Real Estate" and absolute property of their owners' (Act 29/1/1674). The dilemma of the slave regimes was that the slaves as property were also human, hence special laws had to be enacted to deal with them. But the planters' rationale was that

> Negroes and other Slaves ... are of barbarous, wild, and savage nature, and such renders them wholly unqualified to be governed by the laws, customs, and practices of our nation, it therefore becomes absolutely necessary that such other constitutions, laws

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34 Haynes to Warde, October 23, 1826. *Parliamentary Papers 1827*, pp. 271-72.

and orders should be ... framed and enacted for the good regulating or ordering of them, as may both restrain the disorders, rapines, and inhumanities to which they are naturally prone and inclined...[35]

Ecclesiastical pronouncements were equally clear about the Church's view of the slave's position in the plantation system. In a Memorandum of 28th August, 1680, the Lord Bishop of London clearly advised the Council of Trade and Plantations that the 'Apprehension of planters that conversion

TABLE 2

**Marriages of Slaves, Free Coloured Persons and White Persons in 10 of 11 Parishes of Barbados, 1825-1830**

| PARISH | SLAVE | COLOURED | WHITE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Christ Church | 4 | 6 | 55 |
| St. Michael | 4 | 72 | 189 |
| St. James | 3 | nil | 25 |
| St. John | 12 | no record | no record |
| St. Lucy | nil | nil | 31 |
| St. Thomas | 1 | 2 | 28 |
| St. George | 5 | 2 | 69 |
| St. Joseph | nil | nil | 40 |
| St. Andrew | nil | 4 | 45 |
| St. Philip | 2 | 6 | 52 |
| St. Peter | no records available | | |

**Source:** Compiled from Parochial Registers of Marriages 1827-1848 and collated with data from Returns relating to the Slave Population, Barbados. *Parliamentary Papers:* Extinction of Slavery, 1832, pp. 24-30. (Barbados Department of Archives).

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35 Preamble to "An Act for the Governing of Negroes," No. 82, August 8th, 1688, re-affirmed by Bill No. 1, 23rd October, 1826. *Parliamentary Papers 1827*, p. 231.

of slaves may deprive the owners of their present power and disposal of them, [were] to be dispelled as groundless.'[36]

More than a century later another Lord Bishop of London was still assuring the apprehensive West Indian planters that

> The Gospel enjoins everyone to be content with the state of life to which it has pleased God to call him. ...It enjoins servants of all kinds, and Slaves among the rest to be obedient to their masters, and to please them well in all things; ...[Negroes were to be] carefully instructed in these duties, and ... taught to perform them under pain of God's displeasure and future punishment.[37]

Here again, the Lord Bishop endeavoured to dispel any idea that would link Christian conversion with freedom from servitude.

> It should be recollected also, that in the plan here proposed, there is no intention of teaching Negro children to *write* but only to *read;* which ... will always preserve a proper distinction and subordination between them and their superiors, and present an insurmountable barrier against their approaching anything like an equality with their masters.[38]

Some thirty years later, in September, 1838, another high Anglican Church official, the Archdeacon of Barbados, saw fit to exhort the newly emancipated blacks that it was 'decidedly your Christian duty' to continue 'to be honest and faithful labourers'[39] upon the estates. It is thus not surprising to find one Parish Magistrate reporting in 1841 that 'The labourers continue fully as much so as when in a state of slavery.'[40] By then the condition of slavery had been so fully internalized as to make subordination a "natural" state. By the beginning of the 19th century Beilby Porteus, then Lord Bishop of London, had concluded that the planters had 'obtained the most absolute dominion [over] both body and soul' of the slave.[41] Thus the Church quietly acquiesced to the prevailing planters' view that the

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36 Bishop of London to Council of Trade and Plantations August 28th, 1680. *Calendar of State Papers, Colonies, 1677-1680.* No. 1488.

37 Beilby Porteus, "A Letter to the Clergy of the West India Islands," 2nd April, 1788 (15 pp. printed). Rhodes House Library, Oxford University, p. 6.

38 Beilby Porteus, "Letter to the Governors, Legislatures, and Proprietors of Plantations in the British West India Islands," January 1, 1808, pp. 21-22 (italics original), 25 pp. printed, Rhodes House Library, Oxford University.

39 "Address of the Archdeacon to the Labouring Population." (Extracted from 'The Barbadian,' 8th September, 1838). *Papers relative to the West Indies: Condition of the labouring population 1839.* Part II, p. 73.

40 Special Magistrate A. H. Morris to John Evans McGregor, December 31, 1841, reporting on Parish of St. Lucy, Barbados. *Report on the West India Colonies 1843,* London, p. 756.

41 Beilby Porteus: (Letter II) 1808, *op. cit.,* p. 25.

Christianization and education of the blacks was tantamount to 'putting arms into their Slaves hands, against themselves [the owners], & makeing them [the slaves] more Capable of Carrying on Plots & Contrivances against the Common Safety.'[42]

TABLE 3

**Number of Baptisms and Marriages between Slaves and between Free Coloured Persons from 1808 to 1820 in 11 Parishes of Barbados**

| PARISH | BAPTISMS | | MARRIAGES | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Slave | Coloured | Slaves | Coloured |
| Christ Church | no record | no record | 2 | nil |
| St. Michael | 2,656 | 1,419 | 1 | 36 |
| St. James | 118a | 11b | 3 | nil |
| St. Peter | 84 | 147 | nil | nil |
| St. Lucy | 9 | 69 | nilc | nild |
| St. Thomas | 379 | 21 | nil | nil |
| St. George | 254 | 74 | 1 | nil |
| St. Joseph | 42 | 84 | nil | nil |
| St. Andrew | 111 | 76 | nil | nil |
| St. John | 441 | 61 | nil | nil |
| St. Philip | 225 | 104 | 10 | nil |

a Includes 32 adults and 85 infants plus 1 unaccounted for – Margin comment in original record.

b Includes 1 adult and 10 infants – Margin comment in original record.

c, d "No Marriage has been legally solemnized, either between Slaves, or between Free Black or Coloured Persons, from the 1st of Jan. 1808." –– Margin comment in original record.

**Source:** Compiled from various Returns, Barbados. *Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Slave Population in the West Indies*, Vol. 1, 1823, pp. 37-45.

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42 William Johnson to Secretary SPG, Barbados, January 14, 1737, A-Mss. XXVI, pp. 385-89.

Archival records of marriages between slaves as well as between the Free Coloured Persons from the year 1808 to 1820 provide ample evidence of the successful suppression of slave matrimony by anti-marriage proscriptions. In all the 11 Parishes of Barbados, only 17 marriages between slaves are recorded for the entire period, and only 36 between Free Coloured Persons.

In the other West Indian plantation colonies the record is equally dismal. Marriage Registers are silent on the question of slave marriages, and virtually all "Returns" for these territories contain, under the relevant headings, the ominous comment: 'There is no record of marriages among slaves from the earliest period.' For all slave colonies from Antigua to Demarara the enabling Acts for slave marriages date only from the mid-1820s. In the Bahamas the *Slave Consolidation Act*, 28 January, 1824, conferred for the first time the legal sanction of marriage between slaves, and between Free Coloured Persons.[43] It enjoins the clergy to give religious instruction and baptism to slaves. Furthermore, 'Clergymen may solemnize marriages between slaves and slaves, and slaves and free people without publication of banns or license, if they profess the Christian religion and produce written consent of their owners.' It also confers legitimacy upon 'the issue of such marriages.' It should be noted that fetters still exist in so far as the 'written consent of their owners' is a requirement for the exercise of this right.

The most interesting piece of matrimonial legislation is that passed on the island of St. Vincent. *The Consolidated Act*, 16 December, 1825 provided for the Christianization of the Slaves and for 'intermarriage by the Established Church of England, by consent of the owner or deputy, conditional upon a proper and adequate knowledge of the nature and obligation of the marriage vow.' However, the protection of the slave owner was still paramount; 'such marriage shall not confer on the parties or their issue any rights inconsistent with the duties which Slaves owe to their owners.' The slave marriage should not be construed as a means 'which might destroy the rights or injure the property of their owners.'[44] Furthermore, the wily planter/legislators ensured that the grudging concession to Christianization did not mean religious freedom for the bondsmen:

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43 *Parliamentary Papers: Slave Colonies Legislative Acts 1826*, London (Clauses 10, 13).

44 *Parliamentary Papers, Slave Colonies Legislative Acts 1826*, London, p. 80 (Clauses 8, 10).

> Any Slave or Slaves found publicly preaching or teaching any religious subject, shall upon due proof thereof be punished in such manner as any two justices may deem proper by whipping and imprisonment.[45]

In St. Lucia the enabling legislation was also hedged in by all sorts of cautious provisos. The 1825 law dealing with "Social Rights" contained a clause on "The Rights of Marriages."[46] It stipulated that

> Marriages among Slaves shall be subject to the same law as marriages among free persons ... with the following exceptions: A marriage among Slaves may be celebrated by any Christian minister, or by any public teacher of religion approved by the government, and engaged in no other secular calling than that of a schoolmaster.

The Act, while appearing to give unfettered matrimonial rights to the slaves, in fact entrenched the proprietory and paternal rights of the slave owner:

> The consent of the father and mother of the Slave is dispensed with. The owner, his attorney, guardian or other representative, shall give his consent to the marriage in writing.[47]

## CONCLUSION

Given such overwhelming evidence on the causal conditions that led to the manifestation of contemporary mating patterns, it is difficult to understand the persistence of most researchers to posit explanations on presumed cultural, racial, economic and social bases or on some nebulous "normative value system" peculiar to the black segment of these societies. I suggest that it is quite possible to break down the trait complex of mating patterns into separate analytical categories (mating, family, birth), and to consider them ideographically in their temporal and spatial dimensions, and finally to seek for relevant explanations of the particular sociological problem in its context. The first principle is to discover causal factors, then to establish relationships, and ultimately attempt to explain the persistence of the phenomena under investigation. This does not appear to be currently the case in Caribbean research of mating patterns.

The major task facing socio-anthropological research in Caribbean mating patterns is to find satisfactory explanations for the persistence of

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45 *Parliamentary Papers 1826 (op. cit.)*, p. 91 (Clauses 56).

46 "Slave Law for St. Lucia, Book II, Chapter 1; Social Rights Part First: The Rights of Marriages". *Parliamentary Papers 1826.* London.

47 *Op. cit.* Clause 1, p. 67.

mating behaviours that are undoubtedly linked to a previous phase in a history marked by peculiar socio-structural, economic, ecological, demographic, and ethical conditions and racial attitudes. It is one thing to posit how a particular phenomenon originated, and quite another to demonstrate why its acquired characteristics persist even under radically different conditions. It would appear that this is the crux of the sociological problem in contemporary Caribbean ethnology.

More than twenty years ago William Goode drew attention to the primacy of societal norms in the definition of individual behaviour and value conformity. Goode argued that high illegitimacy rates cannot be "survivals of native customs" for:

> It is the *community*, not the individual or the family, that maintains conformity to or deviation from the norm of legitimacy. The community defines legitimacy. The individual decision ... determines whether illegitimacy will be risked, ... but there is little stigma if the community itself gives almost as much respect for conformity as for non-conformity. ...Individual conformity to a given norm ... is dependent on *both* the commitment of the community to the cultural norm and the strength of its *social* controls (Goode, 1961: 917-918, emphasis original).

It is thus clear that a sociologically valid theoretical and methodological approach to research on Caribbean mating patterns is to place them squarely in the societal context in which they developed as demonstrated by the evidence of the archival record. Explanations of their persistence in contemporary Caribbean societies, similarly, have to be sought in the socially conditioned behaviours shared by the whole society with regards to mating practices including white Creole concubinage.

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# The Process of Making
# and the Importance of the Ekpo Mask

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RÉSUMÉ

Eko est une association traditionnelle des Ibidio du Sud-Est du Nigéria.
Il s'agit d'une société qui est en relation avec les ancêtres et qui les
représente pour leur assurer l'obéissance des gens. Les membres de cette
société portent des masques qui représentent ces ancêtres. L'article décrit les
processus de fabrication de ces masques, relate les rituels qui assurent leur
efficacité et en analyse les fonctions. Le masque est essentiel à l'association
parce qu'il est le lieu rituel de rencontre avec les ancêtres et permet aux lois
ancestrales d'être renforcées.

Ekpo is one of the traditional associations[1] of the Ibibio of southeastern
Nigeria, which until colonial rule had made its impact felt by the people,
performed the functions of the government of the land. So powerful was
Ekpo even under colonial administration that Rev. Hodgett (1927)
screamed that "There still exists... a powerful society known as the Ekpo
Society. It is a Secret Society and with it are associated devilish rites and
ceremonies. It is a society which is still silently but powerfully wielding a
tremendous influence over the lives of the unsophisticated heathens. Its
word is law and its commands with all the sacrosanctity that surrounds its
members dare not be disobeyed." In the 1950s Eva Stuart Watt (1951: 23)
could still write, "although the presence of the British government has to

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[1] In my article "The Functions of the Ekpo Society of the Ibibio of Nigeria," *African
Studies Review* (1984) (in press), I argued strobgly that Ekpo was (and is) not a secret society
and then justified my preference for calling it a traditional association.

some extent checked their gross outrages, yet this order Ekpo still exerts considerable power." As late as 1983, 23 years after Nigeria became independent, Ekpo remains a very powerful institution and its members often take laws into their own hands.[2] People are afraid of Ekpo and in the villages they dare not disobey Ekpo laws because of the grave consequences that would follow such disobedience. People are heavily fined or severely beaten for disobeying Ekpo laws. In yesteryears certain violations carried death penalty.

Ekpo association relies on masks to enforce its orders and the masks are the most sacred of all the Ekpo paraphernalia. This paper describes the making of the Ekpo mask as a process, the religious rites associated with the making of the mask, and the significance of the mask to the Ekpo association.

This paper is the result of a field work carried out in the summer of 1983. Although this writer had earlier studied and written on Ekpo, the particular aspect discussed in this paper never occurred to him until he recently read Messenger's (1975) work on the Annang carver. The reading of the essay forced the writer back to the field to investigate the process of carving the Ekpo mask and the rites involved. As an indigene of Ibibio, the writer had himself prepared and used the mask for Ekpo Ntok Eyen (Ekpo for young boys) which does not require much effort and the process involved in the mask making for Ekpo for adults. Besides, this kind of mask is prepared from a kind of wild fern in the area. During the field work, however, it was quite clear that there was a lot about the making of the mask that the writer did not know about. For example, from the start to the finish, there are rites that are religiously and meticulously performed in order for the final product – the mask – to be habitable by the spirits of the ancestor. Furthermore, it was discovered that the making of a mask is a long and tedious process that passes through stages. Before getting into all this, however, it is important first to establish the origin of the Ekpo association;

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2 The *Sunday Chronicle* (Calabar) of 23 Octobre 1983 carries a story of how Ekpo masquerades stormed a church and beat up the members, destroying property and leaving a number of people wounded. The reason for this attack was that the preacher had said some obnoxious things about the association. The following day, as reported by the *Nigeria Chronicle* (Calabar) of 24 October 1983, Ekpo masquerades stormed the premises of the Queen of Apostles Seminary, Afaha Obong in Abak Local Government Area, and the result was that a 13-year old student had one of his eyes shot with an arrow.

the association of Ekpo with the ancestors largely accounts for the religious rites that we shall describe in subsequent pages.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE EKPO ASSOCIATION

Webster (1968) has noted that in several parts of the world especially in Africa and Melanesia, a puberty institution would grow into an association exercising police functions, "ruling by terror it inspires," using religious mysteries as instruments of social control, and imposing stiff penalties of fines or death for violations of their rules. In the particular case of Ekpo, the way it functioned in precolonial and early colonial times but much less so today suggests that its origin is similar to that suggested by Webster. It seems that Ekpo arose out of the necessity for communities to get a means of enforcing their norms and of getting people to conform. They needed an agent of social control of a nature and type which once its presence or approach was announced, the offending individual or party would immediately sit up.

Ekpo in the Ibibio language means "ghost" and all ancestors are ghosts. Ancestors are the invisible rulers of their communities. As observed by Mair (1974: 210), the spirit of dead ancestors, particularly house heads, are very much involved in the activities of their living descendants, and are believed also to control their fortunes, afflict those who ignore to give them offerings or violate the norms of kinship. As the individual spirit "steers" its owner through life, so the ancestors spirits "steer" their descendants as a body, and the rise and fall of a house's fortunes are attributed to them. It is a general belief that ancestors are vested with mystical power and authority. Although dead, they still retain a functional role in the world of the living, rewarding obedience and punishing filial impiety. African kingroups are often referred to as communities of both the living and the dead (Kopytoff, 1971: 129). Because of the special position of the ancestors (*ikan*) in the community, men decided to establish the Ekpo association, that is, masked ghosts or ancestors, and to enforce norms on their behalf.

Ekpo members disguise by carved wooden masks, raffia capes, and other accoutrements impersonate the ancestors and other dead members of the Ekpo association. The disguised members are in the paper referred to as the Ekpo masquerades or simply as *ekpo* (masked ghost). The masquerade paints his hands and legs with charcoal; holds a matchet, a bow and arrows, and sometimes a gun. The mask instills fear and terror in the noninitiates, women and children. Women are barred from membership in Ekpo. Lieber

(1971: 56) has noted that "this in turn has considerable cathartic effect and hence a tranquillizing influence on the performance of the rituals" that the Ekpo members constantly perform.

The general belief is that disobedience to ancestors causes infertility of husband and wife, the death of children, the birth of only female children, sickness, accidents and many other misfortunes. This belief serves to remind us that the relation of African ancestors to the living kinsmen is both punitive and benevolent and also at times capricious. One ensures ancestral benevolence through obedience by way of propitiation and sacrifice; neglect or filial impiety incurs punishment. Not surprisingly, Ekpo exacts obedience and compliance from both members and nonmembers in the name of the ancestors. One obeys because if he did not he would be punished by *ikan*. The ability of Ekpo to exact obedience from men and women alike also stems from the violent way in which Ekpo masquerades impersonating the ancestors are licensed to behave. In precolonial and even in colonial times, *ekpo* could descend with irresistible force upon any individual or group bold enough to disobey Ekpo orders.

*Ekpo* supposedly live in certain sacred forests or groves set aside for them. Since Ekpo is graded, each grade has a forest where its *ekpo* reside. In other words, these forests are inhabited by the spirits of the ancestors and other dead Ekpo members. Non-Ekpo members can enter such forests but they are out of bounds to women. In those days a woman caught inside any of the forests was summarily dealt with. Thus, the ability of Ekpo to enforce compliance derived partly from the violent and severe nature of its punishment or penalty and partly from the tremendous influence which *ikan* are believed to exert upon human affairs. The crucial importance of not offending the *ikan* is always made abundantly clear to new initiates. Since the elders are the intermediaries between the living and the ancestors, the young initiates must remain obedient to them (elders), who normally dominate the political, religious and economic role of Ekpo, and they are very close to the *ikan*.

Since the ancestors or *ikan* are immaterial beings the masks become the medium through which they (ancestors) are able to take material form and communicate with the living. No wonder, then, the making of the mask takes a highly religious process (to be discussed later). The process must be religiously followed otherwise somebody could be punished for filial impiety. For example, the wearer of the mask can fall down during acrobatic shows, can get hurt or even the mask maker can fall sick, lose his customers and then fold up.

## THE MAKING OF THE MASK

The making of the mask is a very sacred affair. The information presented by Messenger (1975: 111-114) carries the impression that anybody can make any kind of Ekpo mask. This is obviously not the case. Ekpo is ranked from Ekpo Ntok Eyen to the highest level which may be Ekong Ekpo, Ama Ama Ekpo, or Ayara (the ranking varies from place to place). Members of a particular rank must make and possess only the masks associated with their rank. For example, nonmembers of the rank of Ekpo Nyoho, Ayara, Iyun, Ekong Ekpo, Inan Ekpo and so on cannot make and possess let alone wear the masks of these ranks. Ekpo operates at village level and members of Ekpo in Village A can dance, eat and drink with Ekpo members in Village B during initiations and other occasions but they cannot share in the initiation fees. At the village level each extended family is in charge of a particular rank of Ekpo and each rank has its own kind of mask. The masks represent offices, their function continuing from one generation to another and without any interruption. If the person in charge of a particular rank of Ekpo and its masks dies, some other person from the same extended family is picked to take his office. Or in the absence of some other person from the same extended family, somebody from the village takes over. This assures continuity. This is very similar to the way the Poro masks of Liberia are arranged and kept (Walter, 1969). It is, however, important to note that on Ekpo parade day (*nyogo ekpo* and *udat ekpo*) young boys who are non-Ekpo members are allowed to mask themselves as children (daughters and sons) of Ete and Eka Ekpo (father and mother of Ekpo). This is the only type of mask that anybody can make; it is not made to resemble the mask of any of the ranks of Ekpo: the face simply depicks a boy or a girl. The process of mask making described below is that of the special ranks of Ekpo. A number of masks can be made without going to a carver and this type of mask consists of raffia only. However, Ekpo ranks like Ayara must of necessity have what they call *iso ekpo* (the face of *ekpo*) which must be carved by an expert. In order to demonstrate the entire process from start to finish, we describe the making of Ekpo mask with *iso*.

The starting point is for the would-be owner of the mask to approach a carver who will make the *iso ekpo* for him. Each carver has his reputation and the amount of money one is willing to pay determines the carver he picks, since the higher the reputation the higher the amount of money charged. Having picked his carver, the mask buyer settles the price, which is usually settled after a hard bargain and the face measurement of the buyer is

taken. Of course, the customer must describe, in meticulous detail, how he wants the mask to look like, and the carver must carve it to the specifications given. Apart from the fee that the customer pays to the carver, he in addition must give him (the carver) a bottle of *ufofop* (a kind of gin brewed from palm wine), and a cock. These will be used for the sacrifice to the ancestors who will inhabit the mask as well as consulting *ndem uso* or *obot uso* (the spirit that protects carvers). It is also a way of saying "thank you" to the *obot uso* and the ancestors for bringing a customer to the carver. This leads us to what *ndem uso* or *obot uso* is.

The Ibibio are monotheistic worshipping an all-powerful deity (Abasi) who rules over the physical universe, other supernatural entities of lesser stature, and humankind itself. This deity is of gigantic proportions, invisible to human eyes, and inhabits the sky and earth, signifying its omnipotence. The deity is assisted by a multitude of spirits (*ndem*), who act as intermediaries between him and humans; they are viewed as his helpers, or assistants, or messengers, rather than as deities in their own right. These spirits possess normal human male and female bodies and are visible only to religious specialists in a state of possession. They carry out certain tasks for Abasi and inhabit shrines (*iso idem*) where prayers are sacrifices are rendered; these sacrifices are passed on to Abasi, who in turn sends power (*odudu*) for the desired ends – if the supplicants merit it. The ancestors work with the spirits to present the case of their lineage to Abasi. Ancestors therefore serve as intermediaries between their lineage members and the spirits. *Obot uso* is one of the spirits serving Abasi and it controls carving and thus protects carvers (*mme oso uso*). Any carver who wants to continue in it must constantly sacrifice to this spirit in order to be assured of its blessings.

Of significance is the fact that most of the carvers this writer talked to are either illiterates or people who never completed primary education. Most of the carvers are located in Ikot Ekpene and Aback, both Annang areas. Regardless of where they are found in Ibibio, they have a familiar story to tell and that is, that they were born with carving as their occupation. Six of those interviewed narrated how at a very tender age they have taught carving in dreams and how they also started carving in the real world when they were real young; they never served any apprenticeship. There are others who having been convined (through dreams) that they are carvers by birth serve an apprenticeship. There is a very strong belief among them that any person who was not selected in the other life to be a carver will not be a successful one, no matter the length of training and how hard the person may try.

Certainly carving deals with the making of images of ancestors and since there is a spirit that selects and teaches people carving it deserves to be honoured with a shrine. Thus at a corner of the carver's room is a shrine (*iso uso*) where he makes sacrifices to the spirit of carving, *obot uso*. From each customer, as already noted, the carver collects *ufofop* and a cock (*ekiko unen*) with which he offers sacrifices to *obot uso*, thanking it for its generosity for picking him as a carver and for bringing him customers. The carver cannot deny the ancestors their proper recognition at this point. In making the sacrifice to the *obot uso*, the carver invites the ancestors to join in and then thanks them for liaising with the spirit to make things so good for him. At the same time he may appeal to the ancestors, deity (Abasi) for protection, prosperity, success in his trade, and longevity for himself and his household. He may then call on the ancestors, spirits and Abasi to avenge his enemies and he will then pour a cupful of palm wine or some quantity of *ufofop* before the *iso uso* shrine. He then cuts the head of the cock and sprinkles the blood on the *iso uso* shrine. He does not do this daily but must to it as regularly as possible; at least he must remember the spirit and ancestors each time he drinks *ufofop* or palm wine by pouring libation and calling on them to come and drink. Also during his prayer, the carver will not forget to ask that he be guided in his carving to carve to specification and that the ancestor represented by the *iso ekpo* should be pleased to inhabit it and once the mask is put on, the wearer should be possessed by the spirit of the ancestor and should act true to character.

Having booked an order for the *iso ekpo*, the customer next meets the person reputed for making the raffia custume (*nkono* or *mbobo*) that will go with the *iso ekpo*. The maker of *nkono* will tell him how much raffia (depending on the height and size of the customer) will be needed. The customer will either produce it from raffia palm (if he has them) or buy it. The quantity required is not such that one person can produce in a week. This reminds this writer of how members of his age grade (Esop Ntok Eyin) were paid in the 1950s to produce raffia from palm fronds (*ekpin ukot*) for the purpose of making *nkono*.

Producing raffia from *ekpin ukot* is a very laborous job and this must be done in such a way that women do not see it. Thus the work of producing raffia is done away from home, in Efe Ekpo, a bush house where Ekpo members drink together and discuss matters affecting Ekpo. The place is out of bounds to women. For the period it takes to produce the raffia, palm fronds (*ekpin*) as well as *oton* leaves are displayed at the entrances leading to the Efe Ekpo and this is a warning to all females to stay away

from the area. In precolonial and even early colonial Ibibio, any woman strayed into such a place was beheaded instantly; but today she would be fined very heavily.

Before the production of the raffia begins, the owner must pour libation, inviting the ancestors to be present and that when the mask is completed the particular ancestor represented by it should be happy to inhabit it. He further prays that when the mask is put on, the ancestor should possess the masker. He then pours the palm wine or *ufofop* on the ground and work now starts. The next stage is for him to carry the raffia to a person who will dye it black. Here again he pays money and in the process of dying there is a libation calling on the ancestors to drink and be happy that their son is an Ekpo member and has been dutiful enough to decide to make a mask that will represent the identity of an ancestor (whose name is here mentioned). The ancestors are called upon to protect the person and his family and be rewarded with all kinds of good things for his filial piety.

At this point the owner of the mask must have gone back to the carver to collect his *iso ekpo* and if the carver is not also a painter, he will have to carry it to a painter who will paint it real black. From here the *iso ekpo* reaches the person who will then prepare the raffia costume or *nkono*. By the time the process is completed the person may have spent close to 100 or even more. A mask can last for more then 20 years if it is properly cared for. When the process is finally completed, there must be performed a sacrifice, usually by the head (*obon*) of that Ekpo rank, and each time the mask is to be worn there must be some libation performed by the wearer, calling on the ancestor represented by the mask and others to guide the wearer, take him out and bring him back safely.

Once a year, Ekpo members decide to bring to this planet dead Ekpo members. This practice is known as *udat ekpo*. They way they do this is by going to the sacred forest or grove set aside for that rank of Ekpo and after hours of drumming and acrobatics, some Ekpo members will mask themselves impersonating their ancestors and other dead Ekpo members. For about three months *ekpo* will stay on this planet and certain days of the week will be reserved for *ekpo*. On such days women and male nonmembers must stay indoors or be attacked with bows and arrows; they are often mercilessly beaten and sometimes machetted. It is better for women to be escorted by Ekpo members when going out. In years gone by, membership in the association was absolutely essential for purposes of status in the community. Even today people still pay the required fees to become

nominal members in order to avoid embarrassments. The meticulous observance of the rites in the process of making the mask reminds one of the distinction made by Durkheim between the sacred and the profane. We briefly revisit this distinction as it applies to the Ekpo mask.

## THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

According to Durkheim, the sacred concerns those things men set apart – such as deities, rites, religious beliefs, or anything socially defined as meriting special religious treatment. The sacred thing is par excellence that which should not be touched by the profane and cannot be touched with impunity. Thus, the prime importance of the sacred lies in its special distinction from the profane. One notes that there are thousands of masks worn by the Ibibio. But those worn by the Ekpo members (and such like associations) are sacred and are treated as such by the people. They are specially set aside from other ordinary masks. It however must be noted that Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane is not synonymous with good and evil. Certainly, there are "sacred" objects essentially evil in their conceived relation to man and society, and there are "profane" objects acceptable and obviously useful to both man and society. In the words of Emile Durkheim (1915: 27):

> The division of the world into two domains, the one containing all that is sacred, the other all that is profane, is the distinctive trait of religious thought; the beliefs, myths, dogmas, and legends are either representations or systems of representations which express the nature of sacred things, the virtues and powers which are attributed to them, or their relations with each other and with profane things. But, by sacred things, one must not understand simply those personal beings which are called gods or spirits; a rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house – in words, anything – can be sacred. A rite can have this character, in fact, the rite does not exist which does not have it to a certain degree.

Naturally, sacred things are by way of dignity and power superior to profane things, as can be demonstrated in their relation to man himself. Man depends on them, immolating himself in one degree or other. His relation to the sacred may be at one time that of awe, of love, or even of measureless dread, while at another it may be one of ease and pleasure. Man does not always find himself in a state of absolute inferiority before his gods, for he often jokes with and about them, and he may flog the fetish which has caused him some misfortune. But in all this, the superiority of sacred things is sacrosanct (Nisbet 1966; 1974). Thus members of Ekpo constantly make

sacrifices and also pour libations to the masks, which when worn become ancestral spirits. They make certain observances, like not allowing the father of twins to touch the masks, lest the ancestors represented by the masks become angry. Any such filial impiety is punished by the ancestors.

Durkheim makes it abundantly clear that the distinction between the sacred and the profane is absolute. "In all the history of human thought there exists no other example of two categories of things so profoundly differentiated or so radically opposed to one another. The traditional opposition of good and bad is nothing beside this; for the good and the bad are only two opposed species of the same class, namely morals, just as sickness and health are two different aspects of the same order of facts, life, while the sacred and the profane have always and everywhere been conceived by the human mind as two distinct classes, two worlds between which there is nothing common" (Durkheim 1915: 38-39).

This passage highlights the division between the sacred and the profane. It must, however, be noted that things and beings can pass from one sphere to the other. For example, purification rites, as in the case of imitation or eucharistic ceremonies, provide the means through which a person or thing passes from the profane state to the sacred. This is clearly the situation in the case of the sacred masks. These masks are bought from makers and all through the process of the making of the masks, there are all kinds of purification rites; the rites are designed to turn the masks from profane objects to sacred ones and therefore fit for ancestral habitation.

On the other hand, the passage from the sacred state to the profane is usually the result of an erosion of values or the dislodging of deities and entities by the appearance of new manifestations of the sacred or from the spread of skepticism (Nisbet 1974: 174). This appears to have been the case with Ekpo when in the early part of this century some Christian converts gave their masks to be burned, as a sign that they had abandoned the old way.

Finally, the concept of "purification rites" underscores the importance of the Ekpo sacred masks. Masks are found everywhere in the area but the difference between the ordinary masks found everywhere and those used by the Ekpo members lies in the fact that one is considered sacred and the other profane. The masks are specially ordered from the makers and they must meet certain specifications. The rites associated with the process of the mask making supposedly transform them from the realm of the profane to that of the sacred; they are now endowed with certain supernatural powers

and are fit for ancestral habitation. These masks when put on represent ancestral spirits, and members of the association claim to act in the name of the ancestors.


## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MASKS TO THE EKPO ASSOCIATION

Whether the ancestral spirits inhabit the masks or not is absolutely immaterial; what is important is the use of the masks, their importance to the Ekpo association. As already pointed out, Ekpo members exact obedience and compliance from people in the name of the ancestors. The ancestors must appear and live on this planet for certain periods of time each year. During such occasions the ancestral spirits must make themselves visible and the masks provide the medium for this visibility. The masks which cover both the face and body of the wearer are hidden away from women; they are the most sacred of the Ekpo regalia. The masks are worn during *udat ekpo* and *uyono ekpo* as well as during important events, such as stopping village quarrels or fights, catching, trying, condemning, punishing or even executing social criminals; intensifying the holiday spirit of great occasions; promoting fertility of the fields and bountiful harvest; cultivating public sentiments, regulating hygiene, building roads, bridges, sacred houses, etc., and at the death of important members. On all such occasions the masks make it possible for the ancestral spirits to become visible.

Ekpo is a kind of invisible government and Ekpo masquerades represent agents from an invisible realm intervening in ordinary life at moments of crisis of solemnity, even carrying out certain administrative functions. Ekpo members normally meet in secret to formulate their policy but intervene in the civil order by means of masks. The masks present different faces and also bear many functions; they are understood to represent images of ancestral spirits but they are generally employed as ceremonial leaders, messengers, police, judges, and are treated as living gods. Just like in the case of the Poro of Liberia, "the atmosphere of fright inspired by certain masks (is) based on their cultural significance – their meaning in the tradition – and the emotional reaction (amount) to nothing less than a terror by convention" (Walter 1969: 91). The effect of the terror has the tendency "to make the power of the mask unilateral and free of reciprocal influence, in stark contrast to the limited powers of every public official" (Walter 1969: 91). A chief in the visible, secular realm experiences reciprocal controls and limitations imposed upon his elders and public

opinion, but the masquerades are not to be challenged or influenced by ordinary folks. What Kenneth Little (1973: 264) has said about the Poro is quite germane here, namely, that the terrifying effect of the spirits represented by the masquerades derive largely from the violent way in which the individuals impersonating them are licensed to behave. Such an Ekpo party of masked officials descend with irresistible force upon any community rash enough to ignore the association's dictates.

As an invisible government and dissociating itself from the social relations of life, systematic terrorism is made possible. By attributing their acts to the work of spirits, the masquerades are absolved from ordinary responsibility for those acts, but they are not absolved from the responsibility to the highest orders of the association. As masquerades representing ancestral spirits, they are not bound by the ordinary connections of family, clan, or civil hierarchy. The masquerades are able to enforce the rules impartially. Disorders and controversies in the secular realm almost always invite the masked intervention of a spirit, and any issue critical enough could attract the intervention of Ekpo Ndem Isong, a group made up of all extended family heads, constituting the highest village court. In the past all of them were members of the Ekpo association. They constituted (an in some cases still constitute) the judiciary while Ekpo acted (and still acts) as the executive branch of the government.

In precolonial and even in early colonial days the boundaries of social behavior were maintained by the stipulated functions of the rank of Ekpo and in its representative masks, and by the terror they inspired. This was done in the absence of formal laws or declaration of policy. Those charged with the responsibility for maintaining the boundary were themselves kept in bounds by their peers. In accord with the spirit, the masqueraders could not rely on his discretion; his interpretation of the situation was very much determined by the traditional concept of what a particular mask represented. Any attempt to act out of character would make the masquerader liable to severe and final punishment at the hands of Ekpo members. It was (and is) a most serious offence not to behave according to the stereotype of each of the Ekpo ranks. For example, there is a rank known as Ayara (the brave) and this is certainly the wildest of them all. It is very destructive and wherever it goes there must be a trail of destruction behind it. Not to behave this way would lead to a fine (of a goat and drinks) to the masquerader.

As masquerades, the masqueraders have no control over the violence and terror of their actions; they are completely dissociated from their social identities and attributed to the spirits that they represent. By the same token

he is dissociated from the same day-to-day activities of the association. Since the person is masked he can commit acts of violence against his kinsmen, ven though such acts are taboo on the basis of the rules of public life. Ekpo creates relationships and obligations that are dissociated from the ties of kinship and neighborhood. For example, when a boy is initiated into Ekpo Ntok Eyen he is warned that he must be willing and ready to flock his sisters is they disobey the curfew on Ekpo Ntok Eyen days. In the final analysis, therefore, the mask is an indispensable instrument for the Ekpo association.

## CONCLUSION

It may not be an exaggeration to say that without the mask there will be no Ekpo. The mask is the very essence of the association. The people are fully aware of it and thus dramatize it by the rites associated with the making of the mask. The people stubbornly believe that the ancestor represented by the mask possesses the wearer of the mask; but this is not the issue, since the point is supraempirical. The process the mask making and reverence with which it is handle testifies to its sacrosanctity.

The masks are prepared to correspond to their stereotyped and mythical images that represent ancestral devices for dissociating their acts carried out as agents of Ekpo from their individual roles in public life. This makes it possible for a humble, benevolent gentleman to become a violent, terroristic masquerader. Masks carry in them real emotional force that can and do inspire expected patterns of behavior. Masks enable the wearers to commit acts of violence against people, even members of their families. The Ekpo association establishes relationships and obligations that have no regard for kinship ties. The wearer must carry out his duties without favoritism.

Finally, in precolonial and early colonial Ibibio, the Ekpo association assumed various roles including political and the maintenance of law and order. To successfully carry out these functions, Ekpo members resorted to the use of masks; here too, success depended on their ability to represent and reinforce belief in and fear of the supernatural beings, ancestral spirits and deity thay both symbolized traditional values and in themselves possessed power to punish those whose behavior deviated from traditionally sanctioned norms. The masks both in the past and in the present represent the medium through which ancestors are able to take material form and communicate with men.

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# De la catégorie du genre en Cris

## LOUIS-PHILIPPE VAILLANCOURT, O.M.I.

### SUMMARY

The Cree language recognizes two genders which are usually referred to as animate/inanimate. This article explores the meaning of this distinction which cannot be reduced to living/non-living.

On divise habituellement les noms cris en deux genres: les noms animés et les noms inanimés. Sont tenus pour animés les esprits, les héros mythiques, les humains, les animaux, les arbres et les pierres. Les autres choses, comme l'eau, la rivière, la maison, etc., sont inanimées. Cependant, il y a quelques objets qui sont considérés comme animés, tels que la pipe, la raquette, le pain, etc.

Cette appellation «animé/inanimé» ne vient pas des Indiens eux-mêmes. Ce sont les missionnaires qui l'ont adoptée pour désigner la catégorie du genre dans les langues algonquines[1]. Ils voulaient par là marquer la différence grammaticale qui existe entre ces deux classes de noms. Ce faisant, ils ont sans doute été influencés par leur propre culture qui distingue les êtres qui ont la vie de ceux qui ne la possèdent pas.

Le but de ce mémoire est de démontrer que la notion d'«animé» contient, en cris, un sens bien particulier qu'on ne peut simplement associer à tout ce qui est vivant. Nous sommes conscients du danger qu'il y a de relier les catégories grammaticales à des valeurs culturelles. Néanmoins, nous croyons que cette relation existe vraiment dans la mentalité des

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[1] En 1634, le Père Paul Lejeune, s.j. emploie cette terminologie «animé/inanimé» (Lejeune 1972). En 1666, John Eliot fait lui aussi usage de la même appellation «animé/inanimé» (Eliot 1966). De son côté, le Père J.-B. de la Brosse, s.j. se sert des termes «noble et ignoble» (de la Brosse 1768).

Indiens, même si, selon nous, elle semble vouloir se grammaticaliser. Au cours de ce travail, nous nous inspirerons d'une étude que A. Irving Hallowell a faite sur le sujet[2].

1. Quel est le trait commun, pour les Indiens cris, à tous les êtres dits animés? C'est un comportement caractéristique des personnes humaines. En effet, tous: pierre, arbres, animaux et humains pensent, parlent, se meuvent, agissent et ont des relations sociales. Or, il est clair, comme l'explique Hallowell (1969: 69), que le seul fait d'avoir la vie animale ou végétale, d'être animé, ne donne pas aux animaux et aux arbres la capacité de raisonner et de parler. À plus forte raison, ce fait n'explique pas pourquoi les pierres peuvent elles aussi parler et se mouvoir. Si donc nous voulons retenir le terme «animé», nous devons lui donner le sens d'une «capacité de manifester des comportements caractéristiques des personnes humaines» plutôt que simplement d'être «doué de vie». C'est que cette «capacité» est relative aux différentes cultures des peuples de la terre. En français, nous la limitons ordinairement aux seules personnes humaines. Cependant, dans notre mentalité chrétienne, nous lui donnons une extension plus grande en l'appliquant à Dieu et aux anges. Nous disons que Dieu et les anges parlent, raisonnent et agissent. En parlant ainsi, nous ne faisons qu'attribuer à Dieu et aux anges des comportements qui nous sont propres, sans pour autant vouloir les identifier ontologiquement aux personnes humaines. Si donc cette notion peut connaître une telle amplitude en français, il ne faut pas se surprendre de la voir prendre une extension encore plus grande en cris. En effet, dans la mentalité de ces Indiens, «la capacité de manifester des comportements caractéristiques des personnes humaines» n'est pas limitée aux seules personnes humaines. Les animaux, les arbres et les pierres en sont aussi capables. Ce pouvoir n'est pas nécessairement lié à la forme extérieure humaine. De plus, il est métamorphique, ce qui signifie que les êtres peuvent changer de forme tout en demeurant eux-mêmes (Hallowell 1969: 64, 65, 69).

Pouvons-nous démontrer que, dans la culture indienne crise, il en est bien ainsi, que les animaux, les arbres et les pierres peuvent agir comme de

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2 Hallowell 1969. Hallowell a étudié les comportements des Indiens Ojibwas. Nous croyons que ses conclusions valent autant pour les Ojibwas que pour les Cris. En effet, ces deux langues appartiennent à la famille linguistique algonquine. Elles se ressemblent sur plusieurs points. La culture de ces deux tribus est pratiquement identique. Enfin, la plupart des récits mythiques sont communs aux deux groupes ethniques.

vraies personnes humaines? Nous croyons trouver la confirmation de notre énoncé dans les récits mythiques et le comportement des Indiens.


2. Les Indiens cris ont deux sortes de récits: les *atiyohkān* et les *tibāchimōn*. Les *tibāchimōn* relatent des événements historiques de la vie présente ou passée. Par contre, les *atiyohkān* sont des contes à caractère mythique. Ils rapportent les hauts faits de personnages légendaires qui auraient existé il y a très longtemps et qui auraient accompli des exploits extraordinaires. Hallowell (1969: 57-58) affirme que les Indiens considèrent ces *antiyohkān* comme véridiques:

> The significant thing about these stories is that the characters in them are regarded as living entities who have existed from time immemorial... As David Bidney has pointed out, "The concept of 'myth' is relative to one's accepted beliefs and convictions, so that what is gospel truth for the believer is sheer 'myth' and 'fiction' for the non-believer or skeptic... Myths and magical tales and practices are accepted precisely because pre-scientific folk do not consider them as merely 'myths' or 'magic'.

Ces *atiyohkān* sont nombreux. Nous n'en donnerons que quelques exemples.

a) *L'animal et les arbres qui parlent.* Le premier de ces *atiyohkān* nous fait assister à la conversation qu'un animal a eu avec trois arbres différents. Il nous fut raconté par un Indien d'Eastmain, Allen Mayappo. Nous traduisons du cris au français.

Autrefois, il y a très longtemps, le putois était aussi gros qu'un ours noir. Or, pendant ce temps-là, vivait aussi le glouton, animal vorace et carnivore, mais de taille plutôt restreinte. Un jour, le glouton attaqua le putois avec l'intention de le tuer. Il n'y réussit pas. Pour le punir de son insolence, le putois «l'arrosa» si bien qu'il en perdit la vue et presque complètement l'usage de la parole. Le glouton alla chercher d'autres compagnons. Ils se ruèrent sur le putois impoli et le tuèrent. Pour se venger de son manque de savoir-vivre, ils le coupèrent en petits morceaux qu'ils lancèrent aux quatre coins cardinaux. C'est pour cette raison que le putois est si petit de nos jours... Mais, cette vengeance ne guérit pas le glouton de sa cécité et de son mutisme. Il décida d'aller se laver à la grande eau (la Baie James), car cet événement se passait très loin à l'intérieur des terres. En tâtonnant, il se mit en marche. Il heurta un arbre. D'une voix rauque, il lui dit: «Arbre, qui es-tu»? Celui-ci répondit: «Je suis le bouleau qui croît à l'intérieur des terres». Il continua son chemin. Après un certain temps, un autre arbre lui barra la route. Il lui posa la même question: «Arbre, qui es-tu»? L'arbre répliqua: «Je suis le sapin qui croît entre la grande eau et

l'intérieur des terres». Il comprit qu'il était dans la bonne direction et poursuivit son chemin. Une troisième fois, il se buta à un autre arbre. Il l'interpella dans les mêmes termes: «Arbre, qui es-tu»? Ce dernier répondit: «Je suis l'épinette qui pousse sur les bords de la grande eau». Il touchait enfin au terme de son long voyage. Arrivé à la grande eau, il y pénétra et se lava les yeux et la bouche. À sa grande satisfaction, il recouvrit la vue et l'usage de la parole. Mais, conséquence fâcheuse, l'eau devint salée. Voilà pourquoi l'eau de la Baie James est salée de nos jours...

Cet *atiyohkān* nous fait assister à plusieurs scènes intéressantes. Le glouton parle aux arbres et ceux-ci répondent. Tous se conduisent comme de vraies personnes humaines. Cependant, ils conservent leur propre apparence extérieure. Cela démontre que cette «capacité de manifester des comportements caractéristiques des personnes humaines» n'est pas réservée aux seuls humains.

b) *La pierre qui parle.* Il n'y a pas que les animaux et les arbres qui peuvent penser et parler. Les pierres sont aussi capables de le faire. Voici un autre *atiyohkān*, celui de la pierre qui parle. Nous empruntons ce récit à Alex Grisdale (1972: 1-3). Nous en donnerons une traduction plutôt large, ne retenant que les éléments essentiels.

Jadis, vivait une Indienne qui était veuve. Elle avait deux jeunes garçons. Pour les habituer à leur métier de chasseur, elle leur fit à chacun un arc et des flèches et les enyoya à la chasse. Les premiers jours, il eurent de la chance et rapportèrent plusieurs oiseaux au campement. La mère était contente. Vers le milieu de la journée, nos jeunes chasseurs avaient pris l'habitude de s'asseoir près d'une grosse pierre pour manger. Un jour, cette dernière se mit à parler pendant qu'ils mangeaient. Elle leur raconta des histoires d'autrefois. À la fin de son entretien, elle demanda les oiseaux qu'ils avaient tués. Ils les lui donnèrent. En retournant chez eux, ils tuèrent un couple d'oiseaux. La maman fut surprise du petit résultat de leur chasse. Ils prétextèrent que, ce jour-là, ils n'avaient pas eu de chance. Comme la chose se répéta plusieurs fois, la mère se douta de quelque chose. Elle alla trouver le chef pour lui faire part de son appréhension. Ce dernier décida d'aller espionner les deux chasseurs le lendemain. Il les vit s'asseoir près de la grosse pierre pour prendre leur repas et entendit le discours de l'interlocutrice. À la fin, il s'approcha et la pierre lui dit: «Que tous les gens du village viennent ici demain et je vous raconterai des contes intéressants au sujet des Indiens d'autrefois». Le lendemain, tout le monde fut fidèle au rendez-vous. La pierre parla longtemps. En terminant, elle dit: «Voilà ce que j'avais à vous dire. Désormais, je ne vous parlerai plus».

Dans ce récit, la pierre parle comme le ferait une vraie personne humaine. Cependant, elle ne change pas de forme extérieure. C'est que cette «capacité de manifester des comportements caractéristiques des personnes humaines» n'est pas la propriété exclusive des gens de l'espèce humaine.

c) *L'oiseau-tonnerre qui se transforme en femme.* Nous allons maintenant rapporter un cas de métamorphose (Grisdale 1972: 62-63). Une fois, il y avait dix frères non encore mariés qui vivaient ensemble. Une mystérieuse ménagère coupait du bois et préparait le feu, de sorte qu'à leur retour de la chasse, ils trouvaient le feu prêt pour faire cuire leur viande. Mais, cette femme n'apparaissait jamais en personne. Un jour cependant, le cadet la découvrit et l'épousa. L'ainé en fut très jaloux et la tua. Elle serait ressuscitée si son mari n'avait pas enfreint un interdit qu'elle lui avait imposé. Il advint toutefois qu'elle n'était pas un être humain, mais un oiseau-tonnerre. En conséquence, elle était immortelle et volait dans les airs avec les autres oiseaux-tonnerre. Après beaucoup de difficulté, le cadet réussit à la rejoindre là-haut. Il se trouvait ainsi le beau-frère des oiseaux-tonnerre. Cependant, il n'aimait pas la nourriture qu'on lui servait. Un jour, l'oiseau-tonnerre père lui dit: «Je vois que tu t'ennuies ici, tu dois vouloir retourner sur la terre. Tu as neuf frères qui ne sont pas mariés, et moi, j'ai neuf autres filles. Tu peux les prendre avec toi pour qu'elles deviennent les femmes de tes frères». Il consentit. Ils se mirent donc en route pour la terre... Une fois arrivés, ils se rendirent chez l'aîné. Alors, les oiseaux-tonnerre se transformèrent en personnes humaines, en femmes. On organisa une fête pour célébrer le mariage des neuf frères avec les filles de l'oiseau-tonnerre. (La traduction est de nous).

Ces êtres fonctionnent aussi bien comme oiseaux-tonnerre que comme personnes humaines. L'apparence extérieure n'a pas d'importance pour leur fonctionnement individuel. Il semble donc bien vrai, que d'après les *atiyohkān*, «la capacité de manifester des comportements caractéristiques des personnes humaines» n'est pas restreinte aux seuls êtres humains et qu'en plus elle est métamorphique.

d) *Le comportement des Indiens.* De nos jours, est-ce qu'on croit encore à ces *atiyohkān?* Ce qui est important, à notre avis, ce n'est pas tant l'attitude des Indiens actuels que le comportement de ceux d'autrefois, des temps très anciens, alors que se formaient la langue et la culture et que celle-ci a influencé la langue dans le sens que nous mentionnons ici. Même si les Indiens contemporains ne croyaient plus à ces récits mythiques, nous croyons que cela ne changerait rien à l'origine culturelle des genres en cris. Il appert toutefois qu'au moins la génération adulte actuelle accepte encore ces

contes comme «true accounts of events in the past lives of living persons» (Hallowell 1969: 57). Comme preuves, nous pourrions citer les faits suivants.

Selon un autre *atiyohkān*, il y a un Indien, *Chigāpāsh*, qui habite la lune depuis les temps immémoriaux. Le fait que des astronautes s'y soient rendus a beaucoup intéressé les Indiens. Quelques-uns sont venus nous demander s'ils avaient vu *Chigāpāsh*. Ils croient aussi à l'existence de sirènes, de femmes-poissons, qui vivent dans l'eau. En 1945, un Indien d'Eastmain nous a affirmé en avoir vu une dans la rivière Eastmain, en face du village. C'était un poisson qui avait une tête de femme avec de longs cheveux.

De plus, ils pensent que les rapides sont des endroits dangereux où se cachent des êtres redoutables. Voilà pourquoi, lorsqu'ils descendent un rapide, ils ont l'habitude de jeter du tabac dans l'eau afin de s'attirer les bonnes grâces des habitants de ces lieux. Sinon, ceux-ci pourraient s'en offusquer, faire chavirer le canot, et tous les occupants périraient. Un jour, une famille campa au haut d'un rapide de la rivière Eastmain. L'Indienne eut l'imprudence de jeter son eau de vaisselle dans la rivière. Le maître du rapide en fut insulté et fit monter l'eau de la rivière à un tel degré que toute la contrée environnante en fut inondée.

Ils ont aussi une grande considération pour l'ours noir et le pensent capable de comportements humains. Il comprend quand on lui parle. Aussi, lorsqu'on tue un ours, il ne faut pas jeter la tête au chiens. Ce serait mécontenter l'Ours, le Gardien-Ours, qui ne permettrait plus aux ours de se montrer dans la région. Au contraire, on l'attache aux branches d'un arbre afin qu'aucun animal ne puisse l'atteindre.

Les personnes âgées racontent encore à leurs petits enfants des *atiyohkān* où les arbres, les animaux et les pierres se conduisent comme de vraies personnes humaines et ont des relations sociales avec les humains.

Faut-il conclure que ces Indiens sont animistes, en ce sens qu'ils attribuent une âme humaine aux animaux, aux arbres et aux pierres? Avec Hallowell (1969: 54-55), nous ne le croyons pas. Un jour, nous avons posé la question suivante à un Indien d'Eastmain: «Penses-tu que l'ours doit être considéré comme un être humain?» Sans hésiter, il nous a répondu: «*Nemowī, mouk chāgat*, non pas, mais presque». Pourquoi alors les pierres, les arbres et les animaux sont-ils placés dans le même genre que les humains, dans le genre «animé»? Cela n'implique pas que ces Indiens, en principe, considèrent tous ces êtres comme ontologiquement égaux. Il

semble que ce soit plutôt le résultat d'une constatation pratique et concrète. Des arbres, des pierres, des animaux ont manifesté des comportements caractéristiques des personnes humaines. Les *atiyohkān* et l'expérience nous le démontrent. Si donc ils peuvent fonctionner comme des humains, on les met dans le même genre, le genre «animé», sans pour autant vouloir les identifier aux personnes humaines. Voici l'opinion d'Hallowell (1969: 54-55) à ce sujet:

> ...They are not animists in the sense that they dogmatically attribute souls to inanimate objects as stones... It does not involve a conscious formulated theory about the nature of stones. It leaves a door open that our orientation on dogmatic grounds keeps shut tight... It is part of a culturally constituted cognitive «set».

Les choses, comme la rivière, l'eau, la maison, etc., sont inanimées parce que ni l'expérience, ni les récits mythiques ne nous les présentent comme pouvant manifester des comportements caractéristiques des personnes humaines.

Qu'en est-il alors des «exceptions»? Pourquoi certaines choses, comme le pain, la pipe, la raquette, etc., sont-elles considérées comme animées? Ces objets sont classés dans le genre «animé» par analogie avec d'autres êtres animés ou pour toute autre raison particulière. Nous avons demandé à un Indien pourquoi la raquette est animée. Il nous a dit que la raquette est animée parce qu'elle permet à l'homme de marcher sur la neige, parce qu'elle se déplace comme lui. Ce qui nous semble arbitraire peut, dans la mentalité de l'Indien, être motivé d'une certaine manière.

La question que nous nous sommes posée au début de ce mémoire était la suivante: Quand on parle de «l'animé et de l'inanimé» en cris, quel sens devons-nous donner au mot «animé»? En analysant les *atiyohkān* et la vie des Indiens, nous avons découvert que ce terme doit plutôt signifier «avoir la capacité de manifester des comportements caractéristiques des personnes humaines» que simplement «être doué de vie». Nous avons là, à notre avis, un bel exemple des relations intimes qui existent entre la langue et la culture de ces Indiens cris.[3]

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# Note on Ethnoanthropological Notions of the Guiana Indians*

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RÉSUMÉ

Les Indiens Caribes et Arawaks du nord-ouest de l'Amérique du Sud croyaient connaître un très grand nombre de tribus qui nous semblent aujourd'hui bizarres et monstrueuses (des hommes sans tête, des hommes à longues oreilles, etc.; Pline étant le premier à faire un catalogue de ces peuples imaginaires, on les appelle aujourd'hui 'des races pliniennes'). Ces races extraordinaires, pourtant, n'étaient pas conçues comme étant extraordinaires dans le sens que nous donnons à ce mot et elles étaient classifiées au même niveau que les tribus historiquement connues. Cette constatation faite, l'étude approfondie des 'ethnologies' des Indiens américains pourrait nous apporter des données supplémentaires pour réfléchir sur la nécessité apparemment universelle des ethnologies imaginaires. Après une brève discussion de ce qu'on pourrait définir comme 'ethno-ethnologie', l'auteur analyse quelques notions ethnoanthropologiques des Indiens de la zone, en particulier celles d'homme, animal, nature et culture.

"Et vidimus ihi multos homines ac mulieres capita non habentes, sed oculos grossos fixos in pectore, cætera membra æqualia nobis habentes [...] Vidimus et in inferioribus partibus Æthiopiæ homines unum oculum tantum in fronte habentes..." (Saint Augustine, in Latifau 1724).

"Il est certains détails que je crois ne pas devoir omettre, surtout au sujet des peuples qui vivent loin de la mer. Je ne doute pas que plusieurs de ces détails ne paraissent prodigieux et incroyables à beaucoup. Qui, en effet, a cru à l'existence des Éthiopiens avant de les voir? Et quelle est la chose qui ne nous paraît pas étonnante quand elle vient à notre connaissance pour la première fois? Que d'impossibilités supposées avant d'en avoir vu la réalisation!" (Pline, *Histoire Naturelle*, Livre VII)

"El nombre de este libro justificaría la inclusión del príncipe Hamlet, del punto, de la línea, de la superficie, del hipercubo, de todas les palabras

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genéricas y, tal vez, de cada uno de nosotros y de la divinidad" (Jorge Luis BORGES and Margarita GUERRERO, *El libro de los seres imaginarios*, 1967).

Until recently, the Caribs, Arawaks, and other Indian tribes of northern and northeastern South America have classified other groups inhabiting their territories or beyond according to their unusual physical features or unusual customs. Among them, they told of the *aku:ri:yana* (*aku:ri* = aguti (*Dasyprocta aguti*); *yana* or *yano* = people, tribe), a tribe whose members had two-fingered hands and feet; the *aku:si:yana* (*aku:si* = acuchi (*Dasyprocta acuchi*)), men not taller than acuchies and whose language had only one sound: *pit-pit-pit;* the *aruto*, a wandering tribe whose diet consisted of fish, seasonal fruits, and their own feces; the *haibohe*, men whose feet grew directly from under their jaws and who had jaguar's teeth; the *Kainemo*, a tribe of warriors whose shoulders were higher than their heads so that their arms hung down along their ears; they were nocturnal and like the *aruto* ate people's feces or even people's behinds; the *ka:mbo:yana* (*ka:mbo* = barbecued fish), a people who slept on wooden grills; the *ko:ko:yana* (*ko:ko* = night), a group of nocturnal Indians who became tools during daylight, the *kuwa:ta:yana* (*kuwa:ta* = spider monkey, *Ateles paniscus*), hairy men who slept among tree branches; the *le:re:yana* (*le:re* or *re:re* = bat), people who slept like bats, i.e. hanging down from tree branches or people who became bats at night; the *me:ku:yana* (*me:ku* capuchin monkey, *Cebus appella*), people who lived in trees and had no gardens; the *no:no:yana* (or *popoyana; no:no* = earth, ground), nocturnal Indians who dwelt in subterranean caves during the daytime; the *paira:ndïpo*, men whose mouths were on their stomachs and whose eyes were in their chests; sometimes they are believed to have more then one mouth; the *pake:ru:yana* (or *palikuyana; pake:ru* = donkey), a race of men who brayed like asses at fixed times of the day; they unually slept in hollow tree trunks; the *paki:ra:yana* (*paki:ra* = collared peccary, *Tayassu tayacu*), people who wandered day and night, had no fixed place of residence and, like the peccaries, fed from everything; the *pa:nali:yana* (*pa:na* = ear), people with long ears resembling those of deer; their ears were, however, so large that they used them to protect themselves from the rain; the *pa:yawa:ru:yana* (or *paiwariyana; pa:yawa:ru* = cassava-beer), Indians who never slept; the *pi:ri:yana*, people not taller than 3 feet; the *poñ-poñ-poñ:yana*, a tribe of men whose language was like the call of a bird: *poñ-poñ-ponñ;* the *tu:na:yana* (*tu:na* = water, river), Indians who lived underwater; the *waiyokule* (*waiyo* = salt), long-eared Indians with white eyes and who ate only salt; the *warakuyana*, read Indians who went around naked; the *wo:rïi:yana* (*wo:rïri* = woman), a tribe of women. Other

tribes included people with tails, white hair, their feet turned backwards, one-eyed people, dog-headed people, bald people, one-legged people, men with oversized penises, and so on[1]. This list and the summary description of the main features of these tribes constitutes only a small fraction of the reports that have been gathered concerning 'unusual' men' among South American Indians. Basically, all these tribes deviate from a standard anatomical definition of Man or are characterized by unusual customs; most of them can become 'things', or 'animal' and 'vegetal species', and native views vary over some of them as to whether they are 'supernatural beings', 'animals', 'men', etc. Although these distinctions – and the doubts about the status of these tribes – are important, they were (are) thought of as pertaining to the same 'order of things' as the historical peoples with which the Guiana Indians have been in contact since the 16th century (neighbouring indigenous tribes, Dutch, African slaves, Spaniards) (Penard and Penard 1907: 58-64). Some of these tribes were (are) said to live far away in unknown countries or to have lived in times past and are now extinct. Nearly all of them should be (and are) classified as 'wild tribes' (Labat informed us that Caribs called all 'wild tribes' *'ticoyennes'* (1730: 353) though de Rochefort (1658: 575) claimed that the Island Caribs applied the word *'savage'* – he did not give us the native word – only to 'animals' and 'wild fruits').

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Perhaps one of the most striking things about these unusual men of the South American Indians is their similarity with the peoples described in European classical and medieval ethnology. Some of these men can indeed be found in Herodotus, Ctesias, Pliny, Benjamin of Tudela, etc., etc., and their study in the context of the history of Western art and thought and in the history of Western anthropology constitutes a growing field of research since the beginning of this century (Chinard 1911; Bernheimer 1952; Adams 1962; Vázquez 1962; Hodgen 1964; Tinland 1968; Elliot 1972; Poliakof 1975; Vigneras 1976; Kappler 1980; Block Friedman 1981). Earlier and more recent studies in this area, however, concern the idea of man as expressed implicitly or explicitly in classical Greece and Italy and in medieval Europe. None of those concerned with the 'idea of man' in Europe after the 16th century fails in attributing the reports sent back by

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1 Cf. E. MAGAÑA, "Hombres salvajes y razas monstruosas de los indios Kaliña de Surinam." in *Journal of Latin American Lore* 8 (1), 1982.

travellers, explorers, and missionaries in the New World regarding the 'Plinian races' – as Block Friedman has appropriately chosen to call these unusual men – to the 'medieval mental exuberance'. Ethnographic evidence from South America, however, definitely proves that many – if not most – of these accounts were based upon native informants' reports. Schomburgk heard the same stories about the South American *Blemmyae* that Raleigh had reported in 1596 (Raleigh 1596: 85) and Tylor dealt extensively with non-Western myths and tales about unusual men, analysing materials from the most diverse cultures of the world (1870, I: 368-416). As for the Indians of Surinam, the brothers Penard compiled a list of more than 90 tribes, real and imaginary, that the Caribs, Arawaks, and Warrau professed to know at the beginning of this century (1907-1908). Such unusual peoples often appear in myths from throughout South America and many of them, as Tylor had already noticed, are practically universal: the anthropophagous, of course, but also the *Blemmyae* and the men with the feet turned backwards.

Though we usually assume that anthropology, as we now understand it, could not have developed in the same way in all societies, it is unthinkable for us that any society could do without an implicit or explicit idea of Man as Man. South American tribal Indians, (despite a lack of writing), seem to have gone beyond myths: ethnological concern has always been present among them. We know by very early reports that Caribs made use of some kind of ambassadors that were sent to distant places and that they "cherchaient à se former une idée d'ensemble du peuplement du pays" (Hurault 1972: 60). Contemporary reports recounting native ethnological preoccupations can also be found in Lévi-Strauss (1955), Huxley (1956), and Reichel-Dolmatoff (1975). On the basis of what we know, however, the reports on distant peoples by native explorers/ethnologists must have included, in addition to practical information on historical tribes, travel routes, commercial items or products to be found elsewhere, etc., descriptions of Plinian races of the kind expounded upon at the beginning of this paper. In fact, I have collected some of these ethnographic descriptions among the Kari'na of Surinam myself but, as I have dealt with them elsewhere, I will only focus here on more general aspects.

Lukesch recorded a myth among the Cayapo of Central Brazil that looks very much like an ethnographic report of the kind we are discussing. This myth tells us that:

> The place where stands the tree trunk that holds up the sky is also the place where all evil and wicked creatures live. The Indians had never seen these creatures until one of them left his village and kept on wandering until he reached the foot of the sky at the

end of the world, where the sky rests on the earth and where the tree stands which
supported the firmament above. After the man returned home safely and reported all that
he had experienced and seen, many Indians departed, curious to see with their own eyes
the strange and eerie things of which the other had spoken and to find out whether he
had told the truth. They found that everything was just as he had described it, and when
they went back home they took with them a child of the ugly, frightening creatures they
had seen. The whole village marveled at the child, who was the offspring of a frog-man.
The head was that of a frog and the legs were those of a frog; only the body was that of
an Indians [...] [Another excursion follows]. There [in the East] the Po-po people live,
along with the frog-people and many other strange creatures. The Po-po people are
bird-men who, with human bodies and heads, look just like Indians, but their call sounds
like "Po, Po, Po", the call of a bird [...] [Another excursion follows]. This time the
Po-po people met them, and the sight frightened the Indians so badly that all their
longing for adventure left them. Gone was their desire to push on to the limits of the
earth and explore the most distant land. What they had already seen of it was more than
enough, and they wanted to have nothing more to do with it. They fled head over heels
toward home, and when they arrived they told the other villagers about their adventure
(in Wilbert 1978: 29-31).

Many similar myths where 'Plinian men' appear are told by the Gê
and they are also connected, as in the myth just quoted, with cosmological
ideas (cf. the red-haired men, etc.; cf. Wilbert 1978). What is striking here is
that the image of man that these myths give does not differ much – at least
on a formal level – from that of European medieval and 'classical'
ethnology. In 1870 Tylor had indeed already pointed out that until recent
times (mid-19th century) anthropology "classified among its facts the
particulars of monstrous human tribes" (1870, I: 385). He dealt at length
with these Plinian races, using several approaches in order to explain why
there seemed to be a universally felt need for imagining such unusual men
(ethnocentrism, fear of the unknown, lack of positive ethnographic and
geographic knowledge, etc., etc.) and why they seemed *believable* not only
to 'primitive' peoples but 'even' to his own countrymen. I definitely do not
believe that the primitive mind can be equated with classical or pre-logical,
mind as has been assumed by several anthropological schools in the past;
what I want to point out here is merely that on the level of possibility both
concepts envisioned man as much more than we could now possibly do. It
is also striking that man, as defined by Tylor, and as we still define him, is
believable for us while the man of the Gê or of the Caribs is not. Perhaps
Foucault is right when he says that before the 17th century man simply did
not exist (1966: 343-387). Whatever the case, he did not look like what he
does now and he was still much more hypothesis than fact.

Tylor felt the need to state that "[...] uncivilized men deliberately
assign to apes an amount of human quality which to *modern* [my emphasis]

naturalists is simply ridiculous" (1870, I: 379). He also observed that while 'savages' attributed too many human qualities to animals, 'civilized' men attributed too many animal qualities to humans (ID.; 380). In both cases, the shape and the content of man remained a fertil ground for discussion. As this theme has already been dealth with by other researchers I will simply cite a few examples.

In his *The City of God Against the Pagans*, Saint Augustine devoted an entire chapter to the discussion of the status of several monstrous races of men. He wrote:

> Another question is whether we are to believe that certain monstrous races of men described in pagan history were descended from the sons of Noah, or rather from that one man from whom they themselves sprang. Among such cases are certain men said to have one eye in the middle of their foreheads, others with the soles of their feet turned backwards behind their legs, others who are bisexual by nature, with the right breast male and the left female, who in their intercourse with each other alternately beget and conceive. Then there are some with no mouths, who live only by breathing through their nostrils. There are men only a cubit high whom the Greeks call pygmies from their word for cubit. Elsewhere there are said to be females who conceive at the age of five and do not live beyond the eighth year [...] [He describes other tribes]. To be sure, we do not have to believe in all the types of men that are reported to exist. Yet whoever is born anywhere as a human being, that is, as a rational mortal creature, however strange he may appear to our senses in bodily form or color or motion or utterance, or in any faculty, part or quality of his nature whatsoever, let no true believer have any doubt that such an individual is descended from the one man who was first created (1965: 41-45).

We know in addition that Saint Augustine the apocryphal preached among the *Blemmyae* (see epigraph; for the discussion about this see Block Friedman 1981) and that Saint Christopher himself was a dog-headed man (ID.). Another strange and beautiful description is found in Mandeville:

> [...] In one of these isles be folk of great stature, as giants. And they be hideous for to look upon. And they have but one eye, and that is in the middle of the front. And they eat nothing but raw flesh and raw fish. And in another isle toward the south dwell folk of foul stature and of cursed kind that have no heads. And their eyen be in their shoulders. And in another isle be folk that have the face all flat, all plain, without nose and without mouth. But they have two small holes, and round, instead of their eyes, and their mouth is plat also without lips. And in another isle be folk of foul fashion and shape that have the lip above the mouth so great, that when they sleep in the sun they cover all the face with that lip. And in another isle there be little folk, as dwarfs. And they be two so much as the pigmies. And they have no mouth; but instead of their mouth they have a little round hole, and when they shall eat or drink, they take through a pipe or pen or such a thing, and suck it in, for they have no tongue; and therefore they speak not, but they make a manner of hissing as an adder doth, and they make signs one to another as monks do, by the which every of them understand the other. And in another isle be folk that have great ears and long, that hand down to their knees [...]

And in another isle be folk that go upon their hands and their feet as beasts. And they be all skinned and feathered, and they will leap as lightly into trees, and from tree to tree, as it were squirrels or apes [...] Many other diverse folk of diverse natures be there in other isles about, of the which it were too long to tell, and therefore I pass over shortly (1499: 133-135).

The last long quotation I will indulge in brings us closer to our subject. As late as the beginning of the 18th century Latifau, who was previously convinced that reports on unusual races were mere fables of ancient authors and modern explorers, felt the need to revise his scepticism when two reports concerning these fabulous peoples reached him. One of these came from America:

Le second fait est arrivé en Canada, où un bruit semblable se répandit l'an passé parmi les Sauvages [...] Un Iroquois, disent-ils, étant dans le païs de chasse pendant l'automne de 1721 [...] apperçut un de ces hommes monstrueux; et soit que ne se distinguant pas assez ce que ce pouvoit être, il le prit de loin pour un bête feroce, soit que la vûe d'une objet si extraordinaire lui eut causé quelque frayeur, il tire et le tua. S'étant ensuite approché pour le considerer plus à loisir, il vit un homme, tel que j'ai dépeint ces Acephales; et ce qui augmenta sa surprise, c'est qu'il le trouva lié et attaché à un arbre [...] La chose neanmoins paroît très-réelle, et il a apparence que ce miserable ayant été fait esclave par des Sauvages de quelque Nation éloignée, aura été ainsi attaché et abandonné dans les bois par ces Sauvages qui l'avoient pris, et que se trouvant en païs ennemi, et se sentant peut-être découverts, auront été obligez de fuir et de pourvoir à leur sureté. Quoiqu'il en soit, ces faits se rapportent fort les unes aux autres, en (supposant leur verité) ils peuvent donner idée des transmigrations des peuples Barbares. Car ces Acephales étoient autrefois habitans de l'Afrique aux environs du Nil ou de la Mer Rouge. Aujourd'hui, selon ces Relations, il doit en avoir au moins deux Nations, l'une qui est celle des Chevelus que Walter Ralegh place sur le fleuve des Amazones et dans le centre de la Guyane, et l'autre qui est située au Nordest de la Chine et du Japon, où l'Asie confine avec l'Amérique. Il y a même apparence que c'est de-là que seroit venu celui qu'on suppose avoir été tué par l'Iroquois dont je viens de parler. Cela même peut confirmer que l'Amérique et l'Asie sont jointes ensemble (1724: 65-67).

I could go on quoting reports such as this of Lafitau – almost all travellers' books and ethnographers' reports on South America contain some notes on such unusual men believed in by the travellers themselves or by native informants – but this brief survey will suffice for my purposes: what I want to show is how much the criteria of possibility regarding man have changed in Europe in the course of time and how much our 'man' does indeed differ from that of classical and medieval thinkers. All of the reports quoted attest to the fact that their authors deemed it *conceivable* that 'Plinian man' with all his odd features could exist somewhere and beyond this, when classical/medieval as well as South American native ethnology is taken into account, to how fragile and ephemeral the concept of man has been. It would now be a matter of common sense to state that every culture

has its own conditions and limits of possibility and necessarily its own 'man', 'nature', 'culture', 'animals', and so on, but it is rather astonishing to observe that in our field no systematic efforts have been made to handle these topics. I think it is now time to deal with them in a more systematic way. As a tentative definition of what I would like to call ethno-ethnology I propose it to be the study of the way in which man has implicitly or explicitly defined himself in all of his cultural settings and as the anthropological approach to the conditions determining what is 'possible' and what is not in man's conception of himself in any given culture. I know this is a somewhat restricted definition but, as a starting point, I think we can work with it[2]. Let us now turn to the idea of man of the Indians of northern South America.

<p style="text-align:center">*     *     *</p>

When we consider all these tribes (I left many unmentioned) of unusual men that Caribs, Arawaks, and other native nations claimed to have known, the following common attributes can be discerned: many have physical features that deviate from the standard shape of man and/or they are assigned animal characteristics (the two-fingered men who, due to this, cannot cultivate the ground and have to rely on seasonal fruits for food; the dwarfs – from those who are 3 feet tall to those not taller than acuchies; the howler-monkey men who live in trees; the jaguar men; the men whose feet grow directly from under their jaws; the men with mouths on the stomach; the spider-monkey men; the bat-men; the crab-men; the capuchin-monkey men; the bird-men; the peccary-men; the longeared men; the tailed men; the fish-men, and so on); many on them can become tools, torches, or even 'meat'; others invert the normal daily cycle as they are nocturnal and sleep during the day, live in a country where there is no daylight but eternal night, others never sleep; some are characterized by the unusual places they inhabit (trees, subterranean caves, caves in the mountains, hollow tree trunks, underwater); others lack articulate language; some go around entirely naked; many walk in odd ways: jumping, with hands and feet, and

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2 Pierre VIDAL-NAQUET sums up in the following way the proposal by Poliakof: "[...] il propose une vaste enquête anthropologique comparative où interviendraient les spécialistes des différentes disciplines qui entrent en ligne de compte, pour essayer d'analyser quelles sont dans les différentes cultures les représentations sur les rapports entre l'homme et les animaux, et, en définitive, sur l'hominisation" (Poliakof 1975: 8). Leaving aside the last sentence and limiting ourselves to the study of the idea of man in all cultural settings, I feel pretty much at home with this definition.

one tribe cannot sit down as they have no knees; many are characterized by
their diet: they eat only seasonal fruits, raw fish or meat or feces; some hunt
on men; many do not form villages and are always wandering around in the
forest, they do not know agriculture, etc., etc.

All these traits seem to indicate that the basic categories at the root of
this ethnology are the distinctions between 'man' and 'animal' and/or
between 'culture' and 'nature' since all these men share animal attributes or
lack what we call 'cultural goods'. Block Friedman, when discussing the
basic categories sustaining the Greek-Roman accounts of the 'Plinian races'
listed the following: food and dietary practices (Appel-Smellers, Straw-
Drinkers, Raw-Meat-Eaters, snake-eating men, dog-milking men, parent-
eating anthropophagi, Panphagi who devour anything); the possession of
articulate language and later on the distinction between those who spoke
Greek and those who did not; the forming of villages and cities and
connected with it the practice of 'urban faculties': law, social intercourse,
worship, art, philosophy; industry (textile, metals, wood) or the lack of it
(1981: 26-36). All of these categories can be found in Guiana ethnology,
although – as with the Greek-Roman materials – some of these must be
inferred. On some accounts the South American materials are richer than
those collected from classical sources. For instance, for many 'races' it is
specified that they eat raw food, since they lack fire and cooking
implements, and almost all 'hunting tribes', besides eating raw flesh, lack
hunting instruments and so, prey on their victims in the same way as
carnivorous fish or mammals or birds of prey do. On the other hand, while
'food specialization' (which also denotes lack of commerce) carried negative
connotations for the Greek-Roman Plinian races, it is the dependence upon
seasonal fruits – and especially the lack of food discrimination – that marks
the South American Plinian races in negative terms. One of the unusual
tribes described in most negative terms by the Caribs is precisely that of the
peccary-men, who eat everything, and while one of the most common
features of the American Plinian men is anthropophagy, among the Greek-
Roman materials this custom appears only in a few races. But it is not my
purpose here to compare classical with native ethnology[3]. What I want to
point out is that whenever we apply categories like 'culture' or 'man' as
opposed to 'nature' or 'animal', the apparent facility with which the
materials fit into these categories leads us to forget to explore the possible
native definition of these and like concepts.

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[3] Cf. POLIAKOF 1975. All the articles compiled by him concern the idea of 'man' and
'animal' in classical and medieval Europe and in some cultures of the Middle East.

I am not implying that these categories are of no use in contemporary ethnology. We have proof enough that they reflect real intellectual processes taking place in many cultures. Lévi-Strauss himself, who preferred this approach, said in 1971: "On m'a souvent dit que l'opposition de la nature et de la culture [...], dont je fais un si grand usage, était une création des ethnologues et qu'on ne pouvait pas la plaquer sur les systèmes de pensée qu'ils étudient: je crois que rien n'est plus faux. Les ethnologues n'ont pu concevoir cette opposition que parce qu'ils l'ont empruntée à leur objet d'étude. Bien entendu, elle ne s'exprime pas toujours de façon aussi directe; ce peut être aussi bien sous la forme d'une opposition entre le village habité et la brousse, la forêt et le terrain défriché, la cuisson et la crudité, etc., mais elle nous est toujours donnée par la matière de nos études" (in Bellour 1978: 384-385). A little earlier, however, he had warned that this opposition was of a methodological nature rather than the expression of real processes: "Dans *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*, j'avais eu tendance à considérer que l'opposition nature-culture relevait de l'ordre des choses et exprimait une propriété du réel. J'ai pas mal évolué depuis sous l'influence des progrès de la psychologie animale et de la tendance à faire intervenir dans les sciences de la nature des notions d'ordre culturel [...] Aujourd'hui l'opposition nature-culture me semble moins refléter une propriété du réel qu'une antinomie de l'esprit humain: l'opposition n'est pas objective, ce sont les hommes qui ont besoin de la formuler. Elle constitue peut-être une condition préalable pour la naissance de la culture" (ID.: 37-38; see too Lévi-Strauss 1962). Lévi-Strauss himself has convincingly shown that the passage from 'nature' to 'culture' is the major theme of native American thought.

Will respect to Carib societies, this approach has proven to be equally fruitful. Rivière, analysing a Trio myth, for instance, informs us that "the main theme of the myth is quite clear; Pereperewa was living in a state of nature, without cultivated food, fire, and artifacts" (1969: 261) and then he goes on at length to show how, among the Trio, nature : culture :: incest : marriage rules :: moon : sun :: chaos : order :: periodic : routine :: individual : co-operative :: death : birth :: sky : water :: *entuhtao* : earth :: soul : body :: above : below :: night : day :: black : red (ID.: 263). Dumont (1972) has interpreted Panare views on the passage from nature to culture in a similar way. To look at one theme, that of incest, Dumont writes: "The mere idea of incest provokes a strongly emotional reaction among the Panare. They say *'arkon monkay usotnö"* ('to have sex like monkeys'), therefore meaning that incest is essentially natural, not cultural" (ID.: 98). Although the analyses by Rivière and Dumont are far more refined than

what I can convey here, and while I believe there must certainly be, as Lévi-Strauss puts it, an 'initial capital' (1952: 408) in mythic materials as well, what strikes me is the 'solidity', the 'concreteness' into which these concepts ('nature', 'culture', 'man') appear embedded. In our field, these concepts are now *ce qui va de soi*. We know, however, that even in the history of Western thought, these concepts have had a hazardous, constantly changing, and frequently challenged existence (Moscovici 1972; Poliakof 1975). The very notion of 'nature' has no less than 66 applications (Boas in Wiener 1968, III: 346-351) and that of 'culture' 164 different meanings (Barnard in Wiener 1968, I: 613-621). The reliability of these concepts seems to be illusory[4].

Returning to the Plinian peoples of the Guiana Indians, can we say that since they lack 'culture goods', they are, in the native mind, on nature's side? Are they assimilated into that which is 'animal', 'bestial', or 'natural'? Do they stand for that which is non-'human' or non-'cultural'? Are they thought of as being 'pre-human'? Are they headed towards 'culture'? Or are they conceived of as reverting to 'nature'? What do they tell us when considered as part of the natives' discourse on man?

These are truly not rhetorical questions but I will not be able to answer all of them. I shall limit myself to exploring some possible approaches. A study of each of the South American Plinian races and of its particular theoretical foundations (i.e. what makes them *possible* and *believable* in the natives' mind and what explains their particular features) being beyond the scope of this paper, I will deal in general with trying to ascertain what they might tell us concerning the ontological status of man among native Americans. All conclusions are tentative.

Though we usually equate 'nature' = 'animal' as opposed to 'culture' = 'man', the Guiana Indians seem to have had other conceptions regarding the differences between men and animals. Roth observed that among them all birds and forest beasts "are represented as thinking, talking, and acting as do sentient human beings. They are also believed to possess spirits just like those of human folk [...] To put the matter shortly, these creatures with human ideas were born so: they 'growed' [...] The Indian [...] is firmly convinced himself that animals and birds associate with man; that they are all of one and the same breed; that they may equally live, eat, drink, love,

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4 See SCHINDLER'S criticism of Dumont (1972). In spite of my reservations I think that to simply abandon these concepts will lead us nowhere. For our purposes, they should be taken as a starting point.

hate, and die. It is small wonder then that the Indian folklore is so largely crammed with this same idea of Man and Animal (used in its widest sense) being so intimately interchangeable" (1915: 199). De Goeje, however, later wrote that the Caribs considered all animal species as materialized passions and explained that some animal met with in myths were indeed human beings transformed into the animals that represented their passions (1943: 95). I don't know if de Goeje was right about this. Some of the Plinian races can transform themselves into a wide array of animal species, but also ordinary men can (or could) become 'animals', 'things', and even phenomena such as rain. Shamans of course can adopt many shapes. And men and animals can even become 'something else' unwillingly: during lunar eclipses such transformations are said to occur.

But the idea of 'animal' is not similar to the contemporary Western ones. Generally speaking, Caribs distinguish between *tono:mî* (land quadrupeds including turtles and iguanas) and *tunadano tono:mî* (aquatic *tono:mî;* this category includes the manatee and the dolphin); *tono:ro* (large birds) and *wansi:ri* (little birds), with an additional distinction between *aurindono* (flying birds) and *auripuman* (land birds). *Wo:to* includes all fish. there are other categories which are not included in any of these: *oko:mo* (wasps), *oko:yu* (snakes), etc. Some authors have emphasized the fact that at the root of these conceptualizations there is a culinary distinction (edible and non-edible species) but this is no longer tenable (Jara n.d.).

Many of the forest animals, eaten or not, appear in Carib zoology, as Roth had formulated in the language of his time, as having what we now call 'cultural goods': To begin with, 'Language', since animals can, according to the Caribs, communicate among themselves; 'Social organization', 'social order', or the recognition of categories like 'chief' and 'followers', 'shamans', etc. It is said of the *meku (Cebus appella)* that they form groups of about 20 individuals who live forming monogamous couples; no sexual indiscrimination or incest is attributed to them. The *alawa:da (Mycetes seniculus)* reportedly form groups of about 12 individuals; they form monogamous couples and then choose to live alone or in the group although the 'chief' has two or more 'wives'; again, no sexual indiscrimination and no incest is apparent. The *pîiñgo (Dycotiles labiatus,* white-lipped peccary) form hierarchical groups with a 'male chief' who leads the group and a 'female chief' who must always be accompanied by an escort; she does not die. The howler monkeys also have a kind of 'religious cult': every morning they 'chant' – led by their 'shaman' – to the Morning Star. It its assumed that 'animals' love and hate; more explicitly,

they fall in love: a *me:ku* (Capuchin monkey) can fall in love with an *akarima* female *(Chrysotrix sciurens)* and then follow the squirrel monkeys group till he finds the opportunity of raping and/or kidnapping her; the new couple thus formed lives then among the capuchin monkeys. 'Animals' also mourn (I have in mind what Pliny said of man: the only animal who can mourn): Caribs explicitly state that the *Kuwa:ta (Ateles paniscus)* mourn their dead. I am not certain regarding agriculture: Caribs know some species of 'agriculturalist' ants and state that those manioc-eating species 'cook' the tubers: they put them to dry under the sun till the poisonous juice evaporates. Regarding 'incest', the only species that the Caribs characterize as being incestous is the tapir: they are monogamous in the breeding season and the offspring (if a male) can become the next 'husband' of his 'mother'.

This brief excursion into Carib zoology shows that 'animals' for them are rather 'cultural' or 'cultured beings'. I am not certain that the re-examination of the opposition between nature and culture by Dumont and Monod would be of much help here ("The latter asserts as a rule what the former asserts as a law..."; Dumont 1972: 164) since, as we see, in Carib zoology or animal ethology many species are definitely part of the 'realm of the rule', a number of them being able to break some of these, and on the whole animals are not thought of as reproducing behavior patterns of which they should be unaware. In addition a certain species is explicitly characterized as relating to the 'super-natural' since it communicates (or tries to) with the Morning Star. Again, I do not know if the concept just introduced, conveys the same meaning to each of us nor if there is any concept of super-nature among the natives similar to ours. 'Super-nature', in the sense of the belief in a 'superlunary world' associated with (predicted) invariability or long periodicity (stars), and/or associated with life after death, is part of the native symbolic views; on the other hand, 'super-nature' in the sense of 'that which is beyond man's control' also exists (many Plinian races are seen as being indifferently beneficial or mischievous spirits) but then, as the Plinian men are on *this side*, they are also doomed to die and therefore belong to the 'sublunary world'.

Not everything thus conveys the meaning of 'nature' in the sense already known to us, since for the Caribs and other Guiana groups animals appear endowed with almost all of the properties that in Western thought have served to differentiate men from animals. On the other hand, the distinction between men and animals, or rather among some of them, is clearly present in mythic materials: the opposition between men and tapir (the incestous animal), between men and white-lipped peccaries (the

voracious and demanding animals) (Kloos 1971: 226-233), between men and cultures (those which eat rotten or decaying flesh) (Thomas 1982: 187-226). What this indicates is that the opposition between 'nature' and 'culture' operates along rather different lines than it does among us, or that it operates at another level or embedded in another set of categories since men and animals share almost all features in native thought and since men can be as demanding and as incestous as peccaries and tapirs. By this account, the Guiana Plinian tribes are on an equal footing with men and animals.

Now the Plinian tribes share a feature that form a Carib point of view seems to be a possibility only for man himself: many of these tribes are 'anthropophagous' or rather 'endophagous' since man is apparently the only species that can consider other members of the species as food. I do prefer the term 'endophagous' over 'anthropophagous' in describing these tribes since Caribs recognize many species that 'hunt' on men (carnivorous fish, jaguars, etc., as well as imaginary men-eating animals) and yet I am not certain that the Caribs would agree that this category ('endophagi') should only include man as species. In any case, the man-eating Plinian peoples of the Caribs can be divided into two groups: the first is composed of those men who become carnivorous animal species and therefore eat men only because they are carnivorous (I would define this category as 'natural men'): the second group includes all tribes that are properly 'endophagous' since, whether or not unusual in their physical appearance and not lacking cultural goods, they have made men part of their diet (this category would include the 'wild men').

Though we lack sufficient materials concerning the native views on the origin of these imaginary tribes, some myths where 'cannibalism' or some form of it takes place indicate the path we must follow to define their status. Some man-eating forest or river spirits were 'normal' men who became men-eaters after having been hurt or ill-treated by the villagers. Thus one man-eating water-spirit became an ogress after her neighbours cooked her child and gave it to her as food. A forest spirit became mischievous toward men when a group of hunters threw its eyes into the fire. A legend narrating the origin of war between Caribs and Arawaks tells that a Carib (or an Arawak) killed and roasted his wife (an Arawak or a Carib); when the crime was discovered, war ensued. There is a myth in which a young man feeds his mother-in-law to carnivorous fish when he discovers that it was she who stole the fish from his fish-weir. In another myth, a man kills and roasts his wife and gives her to his mother-in-law to eat. Common to all these myths and tales is the fact that a man considers other men (other

villagers, affines) as food (though generally he does not eat them) and therefore equates them with 'edible animals' ('nature') although his act is wholly on the side of 'culture' since he is the only species with this possibility at his disposal. But what is more noteworthy here is that the 'wild men' of the Caribs are neither to be seen as Man in a state preceding 'culture' nor in a state of 'nature' to which they should have arrived at *from* 'culture': these 'wild men' derive from 'social or cultural corruption' or from the 'breakdown of a social contract', for men reach at this state when the conditions for social life threaten to be or are disrupted by one of the 'poles' engaged in the building up of the social network. In the case of the last two myths mentioned the 'wife-givers' group disrupts the equilibrium they should maintain with that of the 'wife-takers': in the first myth, a mother-in-law demands too much from her son-in-law; in the second, a wife and her brothers interpret literally what a man means metaphorically or, when considering other versions of this myth, kills and roasts his wife due to his anger with the continous demands of his mother-in-law. A more refined analysis of these myths could readily lead us to the opposition between nature and culture once again, and would force us to consider the more specific sociological context in which they acquire their full meaning, but this is beyond the scope of this paper. I only want to point out the general direction that native thought seems to follow when considering the wild state of men. What the materials so far considered do indeed indicate is that it is 'civilization' itself (i.e. the social network formed by 'wife-givers' and 'wife-takers') that threatens man with death at the hand of his fellow men or with the prospect of being considered as food. The fragility of the concept of man must probably be sought in this context.

The myths I am referring to are far more complex and have far deeper connotations than my brief account of them implies. The last two myths, in fact, purport to explain the origin of some constellations and connect violent death at the hands of men with the long periodicity of stars, the 'supernatural' 'superlunary' world of the ancestors, the annual cycle of seasons, etc., etc. They are not at all explicitly concerned with the nature of man. There are however some myth whose apparent purpose is to explain man's origin (descended from the sky through a hole in the clouds or out of the rotten body of a snake) but we are already entagled enough not to be able to withstand the temptation of analizing them.

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*Conclusions.* I close this discussion here with a feeling of uneasiness. I have not dealt with the Plinian tribes in connection with the realm of the supernatural (especially when all indications point to men's disruption of the social order as at the root of it) and have not even attempted to explain (in the context of Guiana cultures) their particular features (i.e. why they are *thinkable* for the native mind and why they are – with all their odd features – *believable* for the Indians). I have left aside a discussion of their origin myths and, I did not even mention that villagers actively engage in discussing these kinds of topics: 'Since when are men agriculturalists?' 'How did we cook the meat when we had no fire?' 'Why do we have the names we have?' In fact until now I have not mentioned that many villagers simply refuse to talk about these unusual men – the mere utterance of their names would be harmful – and they reserve this sort of talk to shamans. And, yet, all these themes are central to our discussion. It is thus with the utmost reservation that I dare to propose some conclusions: in Carib ethnology the 'Plinian races' seem to be divided into those who are 'natural' (those who become carnivorous animal species, who have odd physical or 'cultural' features but who are not necessarily 'anthropophagous') and those who are 'wild' (having made other men part of their diet). The first group is on an equal footing with the historical tribes. Animals are thought of as 'cultural' or 'cultured beings', in our terms, since they possess all that we call 'cultural goods' (articulate language, social rules, religious cults, etc.). Men differ from animals in that man as a species is the only one with the potential for becoming predator of himself. This notion seems to be at the root of the fragility of the concept of man since it is this pessimistic view of man which underlies the possibility of the 'Plinian wild men' as well as the possibility of attributing to them features of carnivorous species (jaguar's teeth, prey birds breaks, etc.). The notion of 'supernature' (super- an sublunary) as opposed to 'culture' (including animals and men) seems a better approach to the native view than what we usually call the opposition between nature and culture. In any case, we must make an effort to (re)-define these concepts in their cultural contexts. My (general, and) final suggestion is to define *ethno-ethnology* as the anthropological approach to what has been (is) possible for man to think of himself and ultimately to give an account – from a cross-cultural perspective – of the fragility of the concept of man.

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# Recensions – Book Reviews

This short book reconstructs traditional means of land management practiced by the Algonkian and Dené peoples of Northern Alberta. Its author spent the summers of 1975 to 1977 interviewing elderly men who remembered traditional means of improving landscapes by controlled burning. Controlled burning ended when the forest rangers and RCM police arrived, as late as World War II in some parts of Alberta.

This was very much a project of urgent anthropology, since a number of the elderly men Lewis interviewed died before the book saw print. The author's sense of urgency was no doubt heightened by a scholarly climate of opinion which seldom credits foraging peoples with any sort of resource management. In the popular imagination also, the myth of noble savagery has given place to the Indian as 'ecological hero', who co-exists intimately but *passively* with nature. Lewis has shown commendable persistence in bringing his project to fruition, overcoming practical difficulties and the skepticism of colleagues and public alike.

Let us touch on the author's findings. Lewis found that his subjects used controlled burning to improve the browse available to game animals and livestock, to maintain trails, to open up campsites and homesteads, to improve garden plots, and as a preventive measure to forestall dangerous summer fires. Furthermore, nearly all his informants felt that Northern Alberta's landscape had grown worse since they were forced to stop burning parts of it. They noted that it is now more difficult to travel through the bush, that gardens were less productive, there was less feed for game, livestock and migratory waterfowl, and more blackflies and mosquitoes! Orators nowadays like to declaim on how much Indians can teach the rest of us about living in harmony with nature. Lewis shows that natives indeed have much to teach us on this score, though 'harmony' may be found in the midst of fairly active intervention in the landscape. Author and publisher are to be commended for enlarging our view of resource management among hunting peoples.

Bruce Cox
*Carleton University*

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1955 *La vie quotidienne au temps des Aztèques.* Paris: Hachette.

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1966 "Structuring Ignorance: The Genesis of a Myth in New Guinea", *Anthropologica N.S.* 8: 315-328.

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