"I don't know whether Chuang Chou dreamed he was a butterfly, or a butterfly is dreaming that he is Chuang Chou!"[72]

AFTERWORD

The theoretical issues raised by this essay remain unresolved. For an example of the practical, interpretative questions which require a theory of truth, see the closely related report from the Machiguengas of the Amazon who believe that various birds are incarnate "spiritual tribes". For example, concerning the "tribe" Shiguriite: "Some of them descend here in the form of birds, and those are which the Machiguengas call *shiguiri* . . . Although they are seen as birds, they are people; and although their nests appear as nests, they are large houses like those of the Machiguengas. They are hunted and eaten because, although they are people, they appear as birds. After they raise their chicks, which also are people, they prepare to return [to their celestial river home] with all their children . . . When they arrive [on high] they take their old form again, and their children also receive human form." See S. García, "Mitología Machihuenga," *Misiones Dominicanas Perú*, XVIII (1936), esp. pp. 173-179. I have taken the quotation from p. 176.

I have not been able to obtain the unpublished paper by J. Christopher Crocker, "My Brother, the Parrot," delivered at the American Anthropological Association Symposium on "The Social Use of Metaphor" (San Diego, California).

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[72] J. R. Ware, *The Sayings of Chuang Chou* (New York, 1963), p. 28.

This paper was presented as part of a symposium on "Theory in the Study of Religion" at the 1971 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. I have retained the oral style of the original and its necessary brevity. I am especially grateful to Prof. Hans Penner for his detailed critique of an earlier draft. The research for this paper was begun in 1968 with the aid of a fellowship from the Institute of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MAP IS NOT TERRITORY *

Due to the present fuel crisis, it has not been possible for me to thoroughly repeat the Cartesian initiatory scenario and cogitate on this lecture in a stove heated room. Yet, despite the chill, it seemed appropriate to seize the occasion of this address as an opportunity for self reflection.

Without advocating some odd breed of nominalism, the first item this process of introspection yielded was the pattern of conjunctions that follows the listing of my name in the Faculty Directory: Religion and the Human Sciences, Religion and the Humanities, History of Religions. Each of these terms, taken by themselves, are difficult to define and controversial. Joined together, the difficulties are compounded. Yet such a series of pairings is, I trust, not accidental. It is symptomatic of a direction in contemporary scholarship about religion, a direction which my own work seeks to advance and affirm. Therefore it seemed appropriate to begin by exploring some of the implications of these conjunctions.

I take the terms "Human Sciences", "Humanities" and "History" to function synonymously and to serve as limiting perspectives on my understanding of religion. They play the same rôle as that stubborn stone in Doctor Johnson's fabled retort to Bishop Berkeley, that is, as boundaries of concreteness over against which to judge more speculative and normative inquiries in religious studies. As I have written in another context, the philosopher or the theologian has the possibility of exclaiming with Archimedes: "Give me a place to stand on and I will move the world". There is, for such a thinker, the possibility of a real beginning, even of achieving The Beginning, a standpoint from which all things flow, a standpoint from which he may gain clear vision. The historian has no such possibility. There are no places on which he might stand apart from the messiness of the given world. There is, for him, no real beginning, but only the

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* This paper was delivered as my inaugural lecture upon receiving a chair as the William Benton Professor of Religion and the Human Sciences in the College of the University of Chicago in May, 1974. I have retained the oral style of the original and added a minimum number of references.

plunge which he takes at some arbitrary point to avoid the unhappy alternatives of infinite regress or silence. His standpoint is not discovered, rather it is fabricated with no claim beyond that of sheer survival. The historian's point of view cannot sustain clear vision.

The historian's task is to complicate not to clarify. He strives to celebrate the diversity of manners, the variety of species, the opacity of things. He is therefore barred from making a frontal assault on his topic. Like the pilgrim, the historian is obliged to approach his subject obliquely. He must circumambulate the spot several times before making even the most fleeting contact. His method, like that of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, is that of the digression.

The historian's manner of speech is often halting and provisional. He approaches his data with that same erotic tentativeness expressed in the well known colloquy from the "Circe" episode in Joyce's *Ulysses*:

> You may touch my . . .
> May I touch your?
> O, but lightly!
> O, so lightly!

And having shyly addressed and momentarily touched the object of his attention, he must let it go and return it to its place, unexhausted and intact.

The historian provides us with hints that remain too fragile to bear the burden of being solutions. He is a man of insights: not, preeminently, a man of vision.[1]

The second implication that I derive from the limiting effect of these conjunctions is that religion is an inextricably human phenomenon. In the West, we live in a post-Kantian world in which man is defined as a world-creating being and culture is understood as a symbolic process of world-construction. It is only, I believe, from this humane, post-Enlightenment perspective that the academic interpretation of religion becomes possible. Religious studies are most appropriately described in relation to the Humanities and the Human Sciences, in relation to Anthropology rather than Theology.

What we study when we study religion is one mode of constructing worlds of meaning, worlds within which men find themselves and in which they choose to dwell. What we study is the passion and drama

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[1] I have taken these paragraphs, in slightly revised form, from the beginning of my article, "The Influence of Symbols upon Social Change: A Place on Which to Stand," chapter 6, above.

of man discovering the truth of what it is to be human. History is the framework within whose perimeter those human expressions, activities and intentionalities that we call "religious" occur. Religion is the quest, within the bounds of the human, historical condition, for the power to manipulate and negotiate ones 'situation' so as to have 'space' in which to meaningfully dwell. It is the power to relate ones domain to the plurality of environmental and social spheres in such a way as to guarantee the conviction that ones existence 'matters'. Religion is a distinctive mode of human creativity, a creativity which both discovers limits and creates limits for humane existence. What we study when we study religion is the variety of attempts to map, construct and inhabit such positions of power through the use of myths, rituals and experiences of transformation.

Allow me to illustrate these reflections with a story. A number of years ago, in preparation for entering an agricultural school, I worked on a dairy farm in upstate New York. I would have to rise at about a quarter to four and fire up the wood burning stove, heat a pan of water and lay out the soap and towels so that my boss could wash when he awoke half an hour later. Each morning, to my growing puzzlement, when the boss would step outside after completing his ablutions, he would pick up a handful of soil and rub it over his hands. After several weeks of watching this activity, I finally, somewhat testily, asked for an explanation: "Why do you start each morning by cleaning yourself and then step outside and immediately make yourself dirty?" "Don't you city boys understand anything?", was the scornful reply. "Inside the house it's dirt; outside, it's earth. You must take it off inside to eat and be with your family. You must put it on outside to work and be with the animals." What my boss instinctively knew is what we have only recently discovered through reading books such as Mary Douglas', *Purity and Danger*, that there is nothing that is inherently or essentially clean or unclean, sacred or profane. There are situational or relational categories, mobile boundaries which shift according to the map being employed. As my boss used to observe: "There's really no such plant as a weed. A rose bush, growing in my cornfield, is a weed. In my flower garden—thistles, mullen and goldenrod—make right smart plants, if you keep them under control."

My boss' remarks, which I jotted down at the time in a diary we were required to keep, returned to me vividly during the process of

introspection that has led to this address. They have been in the background of my work for the last fifteen years. And while he is no longer alive to render an undoubtedly caustic judgment on what follows, my subsequent teaching and research has represented the attempt of a city boy to understand.

There was nothing 'natural' about my farmer's activities. Rather, he had created a world by gestures and words in which he, his family and farm gained significance and value. There were certain 'givens' which limited his creativity and there were elements of freedom—even of arbitrariness—in his creation.

The world of the home and the world of animals and plants were perceived as being intersecting realms. Each had its own ordering principles, rules of conduct, boundaries and relations of exclusivity and inclusivity. My boss, as homemaker and as organizer of his farm's world of domesticated plants and animals, was required to determine and map the given limits and structures of each domain. As homemaker, he had to adhere to the rules of social intercourse which constituted the community of Holland Patent, New York. As husbandman, he was not free to violate the seasonal rhythms in deciding when to plant his crops or breed his animals. What he established within the walls of his house and within the fences that surrounded his farm was the carving out of a space which was separate from other spaces and yet in harmony with his perception of the larger social and natural environments. By limiting the space over which he had dominion, he strove to maximize all of the possibilities of that space. He sought to create, in both his home and farm, a microcosm in which everything had its place and was fulfilled by keeping its place. If his ordering grid was of sufficiently tight mesh, all anomalous elements would be forced to the periphery (for example, the garbage dump which stood on his property line, the weeds which were allowed to grow beneath his fences). My boss had achieved power through his skill in compartmentalization. He had dispensed power by allowing each being within his realm the freedom to fulfill its assigned place. He conferred value upon that place by his cosmology of home and farm and by the dramatization of his respect for the integrity of their borders.

I would term this cosmology a locative map of the world and the organizer of such a world, an imperial figure. It is a map of the world which guarantees meaning and value through structures of congruity and conformity.

Students of religion have been most successful in describing and interpreting this locative, imperial map of the world—especially within archaic, urban cultures. It was first outlined by members of the Pan-Babylonian School at the end of the nineteenth century as centered in five basic propositions: "there is a cosmic order that permeates every level of reality; this cosmic order is the divine society of the gods; the structure and dynamics of this society can be discerned in the movements and patterned juxtapositions of the heavenly bodies; the chief responsibility of priests and kings is to attune human order to the divine order."[2] Subsequent inquiry by a succession of creative scholars such as Paul Mus, Stella Kramrisch, René Bertholet, Werner Müller, and Giuseppe Tucci has added further features culminating, for the present time, in the studies of Mircea Eliade on "primitive ontology" and the parallel work of Paul Wheatley on the city as a ceremonial complex. Yet, the very success of these topographies should be a signal for caution. For they are largely based on documents from urban, agricultural, hierarchical cultures. The most persuasive witnesses to a locative, imperial world-view are the production of well organized, self-conscious scribal elites who had a deep vested interest in restricting mobility and valuing place. The texts are, by and large, the production of temples and royal courts and provide their raison d'être—the temple, upon which the priest's and scribe's income rested, as "Center" and microcosm; the requirements of exact repetition in ritual and the concomitant notion of ritual as a reenactment of divine activities, both of which are dependent upon written texts which only the elite could read; and propaganda for their chief patron, the king, as guardian of cosmic and social order. In most cases one cannot escape the suspicion that, in the locative map of the world, we are encountering a self-serving ideology which ought not to be generalized into the universal pattern of religious experience and expression.

I find the same conservative, ideological element strongly to the fore in a variety of approaches to religion which lay prime emphasis upon congruency and conformity, whether it be expressed through phenomenological descriptions of repetition, functionalist descriptions of feedback mechanisms or structuralist descriptions of mediation. Therefore it has seemed to me of some value, in my own work, to explore the dimensions of incongruity that exist in religious materials. For I do believe that religion is, among other things, an

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[2] C. Loew, *Myth, Sacred History and Philosophy* (New York, 1967), p. 13.

intellectual activity—and, to play upon Paul Ricoeur's well-known phrase, it is the perception of incongruity that gives rise to thought.

In our quest to distinguish cultural man from natural man, emphasis has rightly been laid on those activities of man which are unique, especially language and historical consciousness. But it has been one of the ironies of our intellectual history that we also use these faculties and this vision of human culture and creativity to dichotomize the world into human beings (who are generally like-us) and non-human beings (who are generally not-like-us), into the "we" and the "them" which are the boundaries of any ethnic map.

In classical Greek anthropology, this distinction was made on the basis of language. To be human was to be a Hellene, to speak intelligible, non-stuttering speech (that is to say, Greek). To be, in a cultural sense, non-human was to be a barbarian, to speak unintelligible, stuttering, animal or child-like speech (*bar, bar, bar* from which the word "barbarian" is derived). In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, growing out of Western imperialist and colonialist experience and ideology, we have distinguished between those who have history and those who have no history—or, to put it more accurately, between those who make history whom we call human or visible beings and those who undergo history whom we call non-human or invisible beings.

This dichotomy (whether it be expressed in terms of primitive/modern, East/West, closed/open societies or what have you) has resulted in much mischief. It is frequently defended in terms of importance? But ... important to whom? Judged by what criteria? Most of you would repudiate the declarations of the great art connoisseur, Bernard Berenson, when he wrote in *Aesthetics and History*:

> Significant events are those events which have contributed to making us what we are today ... art history must avoid what has not contributed to the mainstream no matter how interesting, how magnificent in itself. [Art History] should exclude, for example, most German, Spanish, and Dutch art. It should dwell less and less on Italian art after Caravaggio and end altogether by the middle of the eighteenth century ... [it may dismiss all art] from Western Kamchatka to Singapore, from Greenland's icy mountains to Patagonia's stormy capes, in Africa and on the islands of the sea ... [it may ignore] all the arts of China and of India [for] they are not history for us Europeans ... [they] are neither in the mainline of development nor of universal appeal to cultivated Europeans.[3]

[3] B. Berenson, *Aesthetics and History*, 2ed. (New York, 1954), pp. 257f.

You may laugh or you may be enraged by so Olympian and so myopic a vision. And yet anyone who is devoted to understanding cultural phenomena can testify to meeting variants of it daily, both within and without the academy.

You are all familiar with the usual portrait of the "mainstream" of world history (understood, of course, as 'our' history). It began in the Near East (need I emphasize the question: near to whom?) and flowed first to Greece, then to Rome, then to the Christians of Northern Europe. During the Middle Ages, Islam temporarily held in passive storage Western culture until it could be reclaimed by its rightful owners. Returned to Western Europe, the mainstream reached its culminating point in American civilization.

If the cartographer is sophisticated (and of liberal disposition), he will admit that India, China, Indonesia, Africa and Meso-America had ancient cultures; but these, he will maintain, were 'isolated' from the mainstream until 'opened' by the West.

The moral of this oft repeated tale is obvious. The West is active, it makes history, it is visible, it is human. The non-Western world is static, it undergoes history, it is invisible, it is non-human. At times, this contrast is revealed in telling semantic shifts, for example, the Classical Greeks are "Western"; the Byzantine Greeks are "Eastern".

The same sort of mapping occurs within the field of religious studies, especially with respect to the dubious category of "World Religions". A World Religion is a religion like ours; but it is, above all, a tradition which has achieved sufficient power and numbers to enter our history, either to form it, interact with it, or to thwart it. All other religions are invisible. We recognize both the unity within and the diversity between the "great" World Religions because they correspond to important geo-political entities with which we must deal. All "primitives," by way of contrast, may be simply lumped together as may be so-called "minor religions" because they do not confront our history in any direct fashion. They are invisible.

Let me emphasize that I do not mean this word "invisible" in any merely hyperbolic fashion. I mean, quite literally, that they may as well not exist. For example, a recent almanac gives the following statistics for members of the "principle religions of the world":

Christian	888 million
Muslim	430 million
Hindu	332 million

Confucian	300 million
Taoist	50 million
Shinto	50 million
Jewish	12 million
Primitive	121 million
Others or none	524 million

More than one fifth of the world's population has just been informed that religiously they have no identity and might as well not exist.

My colleagues in the academic study of religion have done much to address and counter this view of "importance" and the "mainstream" by exploring and, above all, by valuing the religious life of other men. But I grow increasingly troubled by the suspicion that we may not have truly advanced. We have set forth a new cartography, but it remains uncomfortably close to being a mirror image of the "mainstream" map I have just described.

In the nineteenth century it was common to speak of the "savage" as lacking all intellectual faculties and therefore being unable to make distinctions. Herbert Spencer summarized the general characteristics of the "savage" as one who lacks conceptions of generalized facts, who is unable to perceive difference, who lacks notions of truth, scepticism and criticism. He is, in short, a creature of rigid beliefs. James George Frazer employed a Biblical analogy: "haziness is the characteristic of the mental vision of the savage. Like the blind man at Bethsaida, he sees men like trees and animals walking in a thick intellectual fog."[4] There was even a technical German term coined to denote this "fog"—*Urdummheit*—primordial stupidity.

In the twentieth century, in conscious reaction against this portrait, it has become fashionable to insist on the holistic character of primitive culture. Religion for the primitive, we are told, includes everything and, therefore, to experience incongruity would be to deny existence itself.

The logic of this interpretation is inescapable—it is also circular. If, as W. E. H. Stanner declares, the mode, ethos and principle of primitive life are "variations of a single theme—continuity, constancy, balance, symmetry, regularity, system or some such quality as these words convey"—then there can be, by definition, no experience of the incongruous. If, to continue Stanner's oft-quoted statement, life,

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[4] H. Spencer, *Principles of Sociology* (London, 1876), Vol. I, *passim*; J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. IV, p. 61.

for the primitive, "is a one-possibility thing" where the myths "determine not only what life is but what it can be"— then there can be no discrepant experience and, hence, no theodicy or soteriology.[5] What was done in the mythic age must be good or it would not be paradigmatic; there can be no gap between ideal and real or repetition would be impossible. Indeed, Evans-Pritchard has gone so far as to declare:

> If in such a closed [primitive] system of thought a belief is contradicted by a particular experience this merely shows that the experience was mistaken or inadequate . . .[6]

What troubles me is that these two portraits of the primitive—the nineteenth century negative evaluation and the twentieth century positive (even nostalgic) appreciation—are but the two sides of the same coin. They are but variations on the even older ambivalence: the Wild Man and the Noble Savage. Both see the primitive as essentially not-like-us. To the degree that we identify change, historical consciousness and critical reason with being human (and we do), the nineteenth century interpretation maintained that the savage was non-human; the twentieth century interpretation suggests, at best, that the primitive is another kind of human. Both interpretations take the primitive's myths literally, and believe him to do the same, the nineteenth century holding that anyone who believes such stuff is a fool, a child or subhuman; the twentieth century arguing that the myths are true, although possessing another kind of truth than that which we usually recognize.

Such interpretations have severely limited our capacity for understanding the worlds of other men. On the conceptual level it robs them of their humanity, of those perceptions of discrepancy and discord which give rise to the symbolic project that we identify as the very essence of being human. It reduces the primitive to the level of fantasy where experience plays no role in challenging belief (as in the Evans-Pritchard passage just quoted), where discrepancy does not give rise to thought but rather is thought away.

I find the practical consequences of this consensus to be even more

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[5] W. E. H. Stanner, "The Dreaming," in W. A. Lessa and E. Z. Vogt, editors, *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, 2ed. (New York, 1965), pp. 161, 166.

[6] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology and Other Essays* (New York, 1962), p. 99.

severely limiting. It has skewed both our interpretive strategies and the formulation of our hermeneutic categories. Ernest Gellner has offered a devastating critique of what he terms the "liberal", "sympathetic", "tolerance-engendering contextual interpretation of indigenous assertions" in anthropological literature, declaring that the social-functional theory of religion appears to have as its chief aim: "to enable us to attribute meaning to assertions which might otherwise be found to lack it". He calls attention to the self-conscious use of verbal ambiguity, to the "logically illicit transformation of one concept into another", to those elements of verbal and conceptual manipulation and exploitation which are as characteristic of primitive as of more developed societies.[7] Gellner restores the capacity for thought, for rationality and rationalization to the primitive and, by so doing, restores their recognizable humanity. A similar critique should be made of the phenomenologist's preoccupation with replication.

Allow me to shift my mode of speech from the theoretical and critical to the anecdotal and homiletical. I should like to suggest some new possibilities for religious studies by narrating some stories. I do so to remind you that the work of the professional scholar of religions does not consist primarily of reading our colleagues works but in reading texts, in questioning, challenging, interpreting and valuing the tales men tell and the tales others have told about them. We are, at the very least, true anthropologists in the original Greek sense of the word—gossips, persons who delight in talking about other men.

My first story is about the Marind-anim of South New Guinea. Paul Wirz reported that it is a popular pastime among the Marind-anim to attempt to determine the relationship of a man to his clan by examining his belly-button. If the navel is slightly convex, then it resembles a betal nut and the individual is related to the betal clan. If the bearer possesses a bulging navel or hernia, it resembles a coconut and its owner is related to the coconut clan. Wirz goes on to state, without offering an explanation, that "all this is mere play" and describes the gales of laughter produced by each new identification.[8] It is, of course, play and laughter provoking. If there is one

[7] E. Gellner, "Concepts and Society," reprinted in D. Emmet and A. MacIntyre, *Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis* (New York, 1970), pp. 115-149. Compare my article, "I am a Parrot (Red)," *History of Religions*, XI (1972), pp. 391-413.

[8] P. Wirz, *Die Marind-anim von Holländisch-Süd-Neu-Guinea* (Hamburg, 1922-5), Vol. II, pp. 34f.

thing that is well known to the Marind-anim, it is the precise clan lineages of each individual. What is funny, what is interesting, what is provocative is the juxtaposition between the actual clan membership and the "theoretical" clan membership induced by the empirical science of navel-study.

A Dutch anthropologist, Jan van Baal, has recently confirmed Wirz's description and goes on to provide additional examples:

> When cattle were introduced rather recently into the region, the Sapi-ze, a pig clan, claimed the cow because of the verbal associations between their name (*Sapi*) and the Malay word for cow (*sapi*).[9]

Van Baal reports the same process of joking and punning accompanied by laughter, but within what appears to be a more "serious" situation. Something new has been encountered which must be related to the existing classificatory system if it is not to be rejected as a chaotic threat. The classification system depends on myths about objects produced by the ancestors in the beginning. The Marind-anim know very well that the ancestor of the Pig clan did not originally produce cows. At the same time, they know very well that, being divine, there is no reason why the ancestor of the Pig clan could not have originally produced cows. There is nothing more natural, more credible about pigs over against cows. The porcine limitation of the creativity of the ancestor was merely accidental. But, nevertheless, he did not originally produce cows. The pun, at once both serious and playful, asserts and denies the identification. And the discrepancy becomes the occasion for reflection upon the nature of divinity.

There is a leading school of scholarship which, drawing upon Romantic theories of language and survivals, has sought to maintain a distinction between the primal moment of myth and its secondary application, between its original expression and its "semantically depleted" explanation. I would propose, drawing upon the Marind-anim example, that there is no pristine myth; there is only application. Myth is (to slightly emend Gilbert Ryle's well-known formulation) a self-conscious category mistake. That is to say, the incongruity of myth is not an error, it is the very source of its power. Or (to borrow Kenneth Burke's definition of the proverb) a myth is a "strategy for dealing with a situation".[10] And, therefore, I expect that scholars of

[9] J. van Baal, *Dema: Description and Analysis of Marind-anim Culture* (The Hague, 1966), p. 196 quoting an oral report by Father J. Verschueren.

[10] K. Burke, *Philosophy of Literary Form*, rev. ed. (New York, 1957), p. 256.

religion in the future will shift from the present Romantic hermeneut-
ics of symbol and poetic speech to that of legal-exegetical discourse.

My model of application has been much influenced by recent studies
of African divination. The diviner, by manipulating a limited number
of objects which have an assigned, though broad, field of meaning
and by the rigorous interrogation of his client in order to determine
his situation, arrives at a description of a possible world of meaning
which confers significance on his client's question or distress. The
diviner offers a "plausibility structure"; he suggests a possible "fit"
between the structure he offers and the client's situation and both the
diviner and client delight in exploring the adequacy and inadequacy,
the implications and applicability of the diviner's proposal.

Myth, as narrative, is the analogue to the limited number of
culturally determined objects manipulated by the diviner. Myth, as
application, represents the complex interaction between diviner,
client and situation.

There is something funny, there is something crazy about myth for
it shares with the comic and the insane the quality of obsessiveness.
Nothing, in principle, is allowed to elude its grasp. The myth, like
the diviner's objects, is a code capable, in theory, of universal applica-
tion. But this obsessiveness, this claim to universality is relativized
by the situation. There is delight and there is play in both the fit and
the incongruity of the fit between an element in the myth and this or
that segment of the world or of experience which is encountered. It is
this oscillation between "fit" and "no fit" which gives rise to thought.
Myth shares with other forms of human speech such as the joke or
riddle, a perception of a possible relationship between different
"things". It delights, it gains its power, knowledge and value from
the play between.

Some societies appear to have ritualized the perception of incongrui-
ty as part of their initiatory scenarios, as part of a process of education
into the categories of mature thought. We have tended to understand
initiation as a disclosure of sacred realities, a disclosure "earned"
and reenforced by undergoing a series of ordeals. But there are other
dimensions. There are elements in the initiation which remind me
of that famous passage in *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*:

> "Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"
> "To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time."
> "The dog did nothing in the night-time."
> "That was the curious incident," remarked Sherlock Holmes.

In religious disclosure, the unexpected is not only the surprising
occurrence (a burning bush), it may be as well the lack of occurrence of
an expected event which, as in the case of Sherlock Holmes, provides
a "clue" to which ones thought and attention may be directed.

For example, among almost every Australian tribe the central act
of initiation is the displaying of the bull-roarer, a little piece of wood
with a slit in it that is whirled around at the end of a string to produce
a loud humming noise that is identified as the voice of a deity.[11]
Among the Aranda, the initiants had been previously taught that
this sound was the voice of Tuanjiraka—a monstrous being who lived
in a rock, walked with a limp carrying one leg over his shoulder,
and eats little boys and girls. Tuanjiraka is responsible for all pain,
including the pain of circumcision which the young boy has just
undergone. Now that he has become a man, the tribal elders show him
the bull-roarer and disclose its secret:

> We have always told you that your pains are caused by Tuanjiraka,
> but you must abandon belief in Tuanjiraka and understand that
> Tuanjiraka is only this piece of wood which you have just seen . . .
> there is really no Tuanjiraka.[12]

We might argue that such rituals are degenerate and witness to a
people who no longer remember the true meaning of what they do,
that is to say, a religious experience has degenerated into a mere
form of social discrimination maintained by deception. We might
argue that the bull-roarer is apprehended as a real symbol by its
believers—that it is only to the outside observer that it appears to be a
fraud. We might argue that initiation, as a process of maturation,
teaches the youth the difference between what is worthy of belief
and what is make-believe. But I would want to insist that it is precisely
the juxtaposition, the incongruity between the expectation and the
actuality that serves as a vehicle of religious experience. The normal
expectation has been suspended and the unexpected intrudes relativiz-
ing all previous modes of thought. The practical joke (and this, after
all, is what most initiations are whether they occur in primitive
societies or in college fraternities) structurally resembles that sudden
breakthrough which scholars of religion have termed an epiphany or

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[11] For a wide-ranging collection of examples, see A. M. di Nola, "Demythiciza-
tion in Certain Primitive Cultures: Cultural Fact and Socioreligious Integration,"
History of Religions, XII (1972), pp. 1-27.

[12] C. von Strehlow, *Die Aranda und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*
(Frankfurt, 1913), Vol. IV, pp. 25f.

hierophany, but it does not, thereby, lose its character as a joke. The tradition has been applied, and the problematics of its application function as a religious experience and as an occasion for thought.[13] (Although space does not permit so complex a presentation, I would refer you to Victor Turner's monograph, *Chibamba, The White Spirit: A Ritual Drama of the Ndembu* [1962] for a stunning example of this process).

In my most recent work, I am attempting to develop this understanding of myth in two quite different groups of materials. I am working with a variety of Mediterranean religious texts from late antiquity in which incongruity is expressed through motifs of transcendence, rebellion and paradox.[14] I am also attempting to study a diverse collection of primitive materials—a set of traditions which are usually labeled "hunting magic" in which a discrepancy exists between what the hunters say they do when they hunt and what they actually do, a discrepancy that is raised to thought in rituals which enact a perfect hunt; a group of cargo cult materials in which the indigenous situation is rendered problematic by the incongruous presence of the white man; and a group of archaic myths which share the theme of a fundamental rupture between the world of the ancestors and the present human condition.[15] While it would be of some importance to indicate how these different sets of studies have reenforced each other as an indication of my commitment to the comparative enterprise, I shall obey the strictures of space and confine myself to one example drawn from the final group.

Perhaps the best known example of the mythologem of rupture is the story of Hainuwele, a tale that was first collected from the Wemale tribe of Ceram (one of the Moluccan islands, immediately west of New Guinea) in 1927. As this myth has been a favorite text for those who have insisted upon a radical separation of the primal myth from its application, its reconsideration will provide a test case for the adequacy of my proposal.

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[13] I have been much influenced by M. Douglas' important article, "The Social Control of Cognition: Some Factors in Joke Perception " *Man*, III (1968), pp. 361-376.

[14] On this theme in Hellenistic literature, see J. Z. Smith, "Birth Upside Down or Right Side Up?," chapter 7, above and "Good News is No News: Aretalogy and Gospel", chapter 9, above.

[15] I have developed these themes at some length in my Arthur O. Clark Lectures for 1974 at Pomona College entitled "No Need to Travel to the Indies", which will be published in expanded form under the title, *The Disruptive Presence: Studies in Myth and Ritual*.

The text is too long to quote, so I shall offer only a brief summary. It begins "Nine families of mankind came forth in the beginning from Mount Nunusaku where the people had emerged from clusters of bananas" and goes on to narrate how an ancestor named Ameta found a coconut speared on a boar's tusk and, in a dream, was instructed to plant it. In six days a palm had sprung from the nut and flowered. Ameta cut his finger and his blood dripped on the blossom. Nine days later a girl grew from the blossom and in three more days she became adolescent. Ameta cut her from the tree and named her Hainuwele, "coconut girl". "But she was not like an ordinary person, for when she would answer the call of nature, her excrement consisted of all sorts of valuable articles, such as Chinese dishes and gongs, so that Ameta became very rich". During a major religious festival, Hainuwele stood in the middle of the dance grounds and excreted a whole series of valuable articles (Chinese porcelin dishes, metal knives, copper boxes, golden earings and great brass gongs). After nine days of this activity, "the people thought this thing mysterious . . . they were jealous that Hainuwele could distribute such wealth and decided to kill her". The ancestors dug a hole in the middle of, the dance ground, threw Hainuwele in and danced the ground firm on top of her. Ameta dug up her corpse, dismembered it and buried the cut pieces. These pieces gave rise to previously unknown plant species, especially tuberous plants which have been, ever since, the principal form of food on Ceram.[16]

The chief interpreter of this myth, Adolf Jensen, has understood the tale to describe the origins of death, sexuality and cultivated food plants—that is to say, as a description of human existence as distinct from ancestral times. While I cannot within the scope of this lecture treat each detail, I find no hint in the text that sexuality or death is the result of Hainuwele's murder nor that the cultivation of plants are solely the consequence of her death.

Death and sexuality are already constitutive of human existence in the very first line of the text with its mention of the emergence of man from clusters of bananas. It is a widely spread Oceanic tale of the origin of death—found as well among the Wemale[17], that human

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[16] See A. E. Jensen, *Hainuwele: Volkserzählungen von der Molukkeninsel Ceram* (Frankfurt, 1939); *Das religiöse Weltbild einer frühen Kultur* (Stuttgart, 1938) and, in English translation, *Myth and Cult among Primitive Peoples* (Chicago, 1963), esp. 83-115, 162-190.

[17] For the Wemale version, see Jensen, *Hainuwele*, pp. 39-43 (text 1).

finitude is the result of a choice or conflict between a stone and a banana. Bananas are large, perennial herbs which put forth tall, vigorous shoots which die after producing fruit. The choice, the conflict in these tales is between progeny followed by death (the banana) and eternal but sterile life (the stone). The banana always wins. Thus Jensen's interpretation collapses with the very first line. Man as mortal and sexual, indeed the correlation of death and sexuality, is the presupposition of the myth of Hainuwele, not its result. Ameta's dream, before the birth of Hainuwele, indicates that the cultivation of plants is likewise present. Jensen's interpretation rests on only a few details: that Hainuwele was killed, buried, dismembered and that from pieces of her body tuberous plants grew. This is a widespread motif, rendered more "plausible" by the fact that this is the way in which tubers such as yams are actually cultivated. The yam is stored in the ground, dug up and divided into pieces and these are then planted and result in new yams. That tropical yams can grow to a length of several feet and weigh a hundred pounds only furthers the analogy with the human body.

If Jensen's exegesis must be set aside, what then is the myth about? *Our* sense of incongruity is clearly seized by her curious mode of production—the excretion of valuable objects—and it is this act which clearly provides the motivation for the central act in the story, her murder. We share our sense of incongruity with the Wemale, for "they thought this thing mysterious . . . and plotted to kill her".

There is, in fact, a double incongruity for the objects Hainuwele excretes are all manufactured trade goods—indeed they are all goods which are used on Ceram as money. Using the phrase literally, the myth of Hainuwele is a story of the origin of "filthy lucre", of "dirty money".

The text is not an origin of death or an origin of tubers tale. It is not primarily concerned with the discrepancy between the world of the ancestors and the world of men. It is, I would suggest, a witness to the confrontation between native and European economic systems. The text is important not because it opens a vista to an archaic tuber-cultivator culture but because it reflects what I would term a "cargo situation" without a cargo cult. It reflects a native strategy for dealing with a new, incongruous situation, a strategy that thinks with indigenous elements (the diviner's pot). The myth of Hainuwele is not a primal myth (as Jensen insists), it is rather a stunning example of application.

In Oceanic exchange systems, the central ideology is one of "equivalence, neither more nor less, neither 'one up' nor 'one down' " to quote a recent field report.[18] Foodstuffs are stored, not as capital assets, but in order to be given away in feasts and ceremonies that restore equilibrium. Wealth and prestige is not measured by either resourceful thrift or conspicuous consumption, but by ones skill in achieving reciprocity. Exchange goods are familiar. They are local objects which a man grows or manufactures. Theoretically everyone could grow or make the same things in the same quantity. The difference is a matter of "accident" and therefore must be "averaged out" through exchange.

Foreign trade goods and money function in quite a different way and their introduction into Oceania created a social and moral crisis that we may term the "cargo situation". How could one enter into reciprocal relations with the white man who possesses and hoardes all this "stuff"; whose manufacture took place in some distant land which the native has never seen? How does one achieve equilibrium with the white man who does not appear to have "made" his money? If the white man was merely a stranger, the problem would be serious but might not threaten every dimension of Oceanic life. But in Oceanic traditions, the ancestors are white and, therefore, the native cannot simply ignore the white man (even if this was a pragmatic possibility)—he is one of their own, but he refuses to play according to the rules or is ignorant of them. The problem of reciprocity cannot be avoided. What can the native do to make the white man (his ancestor who has returned) admit to his reciprocal obligations? His ignorance and refusal to recognize the rules and his obligations is a problem for native theodicy. The strategies for gaining his recognition of reciprocity is a question for native soteriology.

A variety of means have been employed to meet this "cargo situation". In explicit cargo cults, it is asserted that a ship or airplane will arrive from the ancestors carrying an equal amount of goods for the natives. Or that the European's goods were originally intended for the natives, but that someone has readdressed their labels. A native savior will journey to the land of the ancestors, correct the labels or bring a new shipment, or the ancestors will redress the injury on their own initiative.

In other more desperate cults, the natives destroy everything that they own as if by this dramatic gesture to awaken the white man's

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[18] K. Burridge, *Mambu* (New York, 1970), pp. 82-85.

moral sense of reciprocity. "See, we have now given away everything. What will you give in return?" Both of these solutions assume the validity of exchange and reciprocity and appeal to it.

Other solutions, not part of cargo cults, but part of what I have termed the cargo situation appeal to mythic resources which underlie the exchange system rather than to the system itself.

Kenelm Burridge, in his classic studies *Mambu* and *Tangu Traditions*, has shown how, among the Tangu in the Australian Trust Territory of New Guinea, a traditional pedagogic tale concerning the social relations between older and younger brother has been reworked to reveal that the difference in status between the white man (younger brother) and the native (older brother) is the result of an accident and is therefore, in native terms, a situation of disequilibrium which requires exchange.[19]

I should like to make a similar claim for Hainuwele. That a "cargo situation" existed in the Moluccas is beyond dispute. After a period of "benign neglect", the Dutch embarked on a policy of intensive colonialist and missionary activities during the years 1902-1910 which included the suppression on ancestral and headhunting cults and (important for my interpretation) the imposition of a tax which had to be paid in cash rather than labor exchange. A number of nativistic, rebellious cults arose, known collectively as the Mejapi movements (i.e., "the ones who hide").

In traditional Moluccan society this term had applied to the gesture of a disaffected villager who would withdraw from his community and live alone in the forest in protest against a village chief. Such a gesture shamed the chief and upset the equilibrium of the village. A complex series of exchanges was required in order to restore harmony.

In their cargo form, the Mejapi movements constructed separate villages which sought to achieve direct contact with the ancestors and which would be fed by a "ship from heaven".[20]

The Mejapi cults represent an attempt to appeal to a traditional pattern of socio-political relations applied to a new, non-traditional

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[19] Burridge, *Mambu*, pp. 154-176 and *Tangu Traditions* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 113f., 229f., 330, 400-411.
[20] For the classic description of the Mejapi, see A. C. Kruyt and N. Adriani, "De Godsdienstig-Politieke Beweging 'Mejapi' op Celebes," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, LXVII (1913), 135-151; for a brief English description, see J. M. van der Kroef, "Messianic Movements in the Celebes, Sumatra, and Borneo," in S. L. Thrupp, ed., *Millennial Dreams in Action* (New York, 1970), especially pp. 80-91.

situation. But the white man failed to receive the "signal". He was not shamed and did not enter into exchange.

I would date the present version of the Hainuwele tale from the same period. Hainuwele disrupts a major ceremony which celebrates traditional values and exchange and produces imported objects, produces cash, in an abnormal way, objects which have so great a value that no exchange is possible.

But the Ceramese have a mythic precedent for this situation. "In the beginning", when Yam Woman, Sago Woman or some other similar figure, mysteriously produced a previously unknown form of food, the figure was killed, the food consumed and thereby acculturated. The same model, in the Hainuwele myth, is daringly applied to the white man and his goods.

I am suggesting that Jensen and others were essentially correct in calling attention to the theme of creative murder in these societies, but that their lack of sensitivity to incongruity and application has led them to ignore what is most creative in Hainuwele. They have been also led astray by Judaeo-Christian presuppositions. The murder of Hainuwele does not result in a loss of Paradise where food was spontaneously at hand (as in our Western Fall story)—spontaneity and endless productivity are not virtues in an exchange economy. The deed does not result in mortality, sexuality and agricultural labor (again as in the Fall story)—I have argued that these elements are presupposed by the myth. Rather murder and eating is a means of making something "ours", is a means of acculturation.

The myth of Hainuwele is an application of this archaic mythologem to a new "cargo" situation. The killing of Hainuwele does not represent a rupture with an ancestral age; rather her presence among men disrupts traditional, native society. The setting of the myth is not in the "once upon a time" but in the painful post-European "here and now".

The Ceramese myth of Hainuwele or the Tangu tale of the Two Brothers does not solve the dilemma, overcome the incongruity or resolve the tension. Rather it provides the native with an occasion for thought. It is a testing of the adequacy and applicability of native categories to new situations and data. As such, it is preeminently a rational and rationalizing enterprise, an instance of an experimental method. The experiment was a failure. The white man was not brought into conformity with native categories, he still fails to recognize a moral claim of reciprocity. But this is not how we judge the success

of a science. We judge harshly those who have abandoned the novel and the incongruous to a realm outside of the confines of understanding and we value those who (even though failing) stubbornly make the attempt at achieving intelligibility, who have chosen the long, hard road of understanding.[21]

The position I have sketched in this lecture was an attempt to achieve what one of my old professors used to term "an exaggeration in the direction of the truth". It seemed worth undertaking at this juncture as there is no description about which so many different schools agree as the congruency of native thought and religion. I believe that this assumption has prevented us from seeing the craft, the capacity of thought and imagination, the impulse towards experimentation that is awakened only at the point where congruency fails.

I have suggested that myth is best conceived not as a primordium, but rather as a limited collection of elements with a fixed range of cultural meanings which are applied, thought with, worked with, experimented with in particular situations. That the power of myth depends upon the play between the applicability and inapplicability of a given element in the myth to a given experiential situation. That some rituals rely for their power upon a confrontation between expectation and reality and use of perception of that discrepancy as an occasion for thought.

All of this is to say that the usual portrait of the primitive (the non-human "them" of our cultural map)—whether in the nineteenth century negative form or our more recent positive evaluation—has prevented us from realizing what is human and humane in the worlds of other men. We have not been attendant to the ordinary, recognizable features of religion as negotiation and application but have rather perceived it to be an extraordinary, exotic category of experience which escapes everyday modes of thought. But human life—or, perhaps more pointedly, humane life—is not a series of burning bushes. The categories of holism, of congruity, suggest a static perfection to primitive life which I, for one, find inhuman.

To return to my starting point. Those myths and rituals which belong to a locative map of the cosmos labor to overcome all in-

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[21] For a more complex analysis of Hainuwele in relation to Cargo Cult materials, see J. Z. Smith, "A Pearl of Great Price and A Cargo of Yams: A Study in Situational Incongruity," *History of Religions*, XVI (1976), 1-19 which introduces the key notion of *rectification*.

congruity by assuming the interconnectedness of all things, the adequacy of symbolization (usually expressed as a belief in the correspondence between macro- and microcosm) and the power and possibility of repetition. They allow for moments of ritualized disjunction, but these are part of a highly structured scenario (initiation, New Year) in which the disjunctive (identified with the liminal or chaotic) will be overcome through recreation. These values, within the great, urban, imperial cultures will frequently become reversed. What I have termed a utopian map of the cosmos is developed which perceives terror and confinement in interconnection, correspondence and repetition. The moments of disjunction become coextensive with finite existence and the world is perceived to be chaotic, reversed, liminal. Rather than celebration, affirmation and repetition, man turns in rebellion and flight to a new world and a new mode of creation. (The gnostic revaluation of ancient Near Eastern mythology, the yogic reversal of Brahmanic traditions would be good examples of such utopian cosmologies).

The dimensions of incongruity which I have been describing in this paper, appear to belong to yet another map of the cosmos. These traditions are more closely akin to the joke in that they neither deny nor flee from disjunction, but allow the incongruous elements to stand. They suggest that symbolism, myth, ritual, repetition, transcendence are all incapable of overcoming disjunction. They seek, rather, to play between the incongruities and to provide an occasion for thought.

Such are three maps of the worlds of other men. They are not to be identified with any particular culture at any particular time. They remain coeval possibilities which may be appropriated whenever and wherever they correspond to man's experience of the world. Other maps will be drawn as the scholar of religions continues his task. The materials described in this paper suggest that we may have to relax some of our cherished notions of significance and seriousness. We may have to become initiated by the other whom we study and undergo the ordeal of incongruity. For we have often missed what is humane in the other by the very seriousness of our quest. We need to reflect on and play with the necessary incongruity of our maps before we set out on a voyage of discovery to chart the worlds of other men. For the dictum of Alfred Korzybski is inescapable: "Map is not territory"—but maps are all we possess.