Cave of the Jagua

World of the Tainos
The Mythological

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Contents

In collecting the materials for this work on the mythology and religious system of the pre-Columbian inhabitants of the Caribbean, I have used many of the abundant materials written in Spanish while integrating relevant data from scholarly articles published in English. What makes this book different from others written on the Taínos is the use of a methodology derived from the field of Comparative Religions to analyze data from several different academic disciplines. Thus, while anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians will find some familiar citations from each of their fields, I have adopted an original perspective that should provide new insights. Besides providing grounds for comparing Taino religion to other pre-Columbian belief systems, this is the first extensive analysis of any native Latin American mythology using Jungian archetypes. Moreover, I believe that this volume will serve to widen the English-speaking audience for the study of the original peoples of the Caribbean.

As often happens with a scholarly book, I was tempted more than once to demonstrate the depth of my research on this subject over the past fifteen years by smothering every sentence with extensive footnotes. I have chosen not to do so, and I think the final version is more

readable as a result. Ultimately, I decided it was best to let the Taíno speak for themselves. Whenever possible, references from hard-to-find sources have been presented by citing other works that reproduce them. In the case of the key text, which is a compilation of Taíno myths, I have listed it as *"Relación,"* since many of the materials are not taken from the original work but from the editor's extensive notes in the edition cited. As this translation varies substantially from previous translations, I feel it important to refer to it as the definitive edition.

I have freely used terminology taken from my own field of Comparative Religions. Thus, words like "supernatural," "magical," "superstitious," "animistic," are not often employed in the text, although they may be perfectly acceptable to some readers. Instead, I have opted for the term "numinous" to refer to an experience of transhuman power. Nor have I hesitated to compare the Tainos' religious experience to those of other peoples of the world. The book treats all encounters with the numinous as essentially valid religious experiences. On that premise, the Taino myths have been reproduced as scripture, a procedure that will be explained below.

In citing the works of Claude Levi-Strauss, I have decided upon a lettering system to designate his books rather than the conventional listing by date of publication. In this way, I hope to avoid the confusion of French and English publication dates. The pagination, nonetheless, will be from the versions cited in the bibliography.

Perhaps the stylistic decision that most merits explanation-especially for those who are familiar with this area of study-is my use of the term "Taíno" to describe these Indians of the Greater Antilles. The name "Taíno" has been used sometimes in archaeology in reference to artifacts produced at a particular time of cultural development of these Native Americans. "Taíno" is a derivative *of"nitaíno,"* which is not a proper name but the adjective Taínos used to distinguish themselves from the Cariban people (Figueroa:44, n.21.). A good case can be made for "Island Arawaks" as a more accurate designation, as this describes a linguistic group and the location of its historical presence (Rouse in Olsen).

After more than a decade as a university professor who lectures on these pre-Columbian peoples, however, I find that "Taino" is generally easier to use.[1] Most of the historical chronicles written by the

1. Arrom places an accent on the "i" to insure that each vowel is pronounced in English as **it** is in the o~igina1 Indian language.

Introduction

Spaniards use "Taíno," so this means that shifts from the many historical sources to contemporary data do not require a change in terminology. Also, "Taíno" designates precisely those who first encountered Columbus nearly 500 years ago and avoids confusion with groups of Arawaks living in present—day Surinam. Moreover, for the sake of historical clarity, I have utilized "Taino" to designate the makers of ceramic styles originating in the Orinoco Basin only after their arrival in the Greater Antilles (ci A.D. 200) and up to the successful insurrection by the Christianized chieftain, Enriquillo, 1519—1533. While it may be argued that the Tainos had a history both before and after those dates, I feel that a focus on this epoch is sufficient for the purposes of this book.

For similar reasons, I have chosen *"yuca"* over "manioc" to describe the tuber crop cultivated by the Taínos. They called it *"yuca"* and also named villages and spirits with cognate forms of the word; these associations would be lost if the term "manioc" were to be used. Since Carl Sauer makes the same choice in favor of *"yuca"* (Sauer:53), I feel myself to be in good company

In general, I have attempted to use spelling that corresponds as closely as possible with the phonetic pronunciation of the Tainos. In this I have been guided by Professor José Juan Arrom, who knows far more than I about these matters. Hence, I have used *"cazabe"* instead of "cassava" or "casabi," *"cemies"* instead of *"cemis"* or *"zemis,"* and *"cemieism"* instead of *"zemiism."* I am told by Professor Arrom that such spellings can be verified by reference to Las Casas, who precisely recorded the pronunciation of native words, placement of accents, and formation of plurals in the Taino language. I have reproduced the name of the Italian historian at the Spanish Council of the Indies as "Pietro Martire d'Anghiera," since this was in fact his name, although Spanish sources usually refer to him as "Pedro Mártir" or "Angleria." These few stylistic points involve little or no scholarly dispute, and offer greater clarity to the reader.

A more substative issue, however, concerns the debates over population estimates of the Tainos in the Antilles at the time of the European arrival. Since the exact number has only indirect importance to the conclusions of this book, beyond some general recognition of gradual demographic increase, I have left the issue of Taino population for others to settle. Similarly, except for directly historical citations, I have avoided "Carib" to designate the Cariban—speakers of the Antilles. As will be described in the text, the accuracy of"Carib" has come under scrutiny in recent years. Rather than involve this work in

academic polemics, I searched for a neutral term. Just as Lokono, an Arahuacan language, is considered the closest surviving tongue to the sixteenth-century Taino, "Karma" (or "Kalina," cf. Rouse, 1986:177), describes a contemporary language derived from the Cariban groups. "Island Karma," I think, can be used to describe the descendants of sixteenth-century Cariban-speakers in the Antilles. It ought to be quickly added, however, that this designation is largely a cultural description, rather than a linguistic one (See Chapter 2:22-27)2.

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the study, it has been necessary to pay some attention to this and to other theoretical issues. I have tried to distinguish what is generally agreed upon by most scholars, from what is based upon my own reading of the evidence. In making a case for my own point of view, however, I have tried to explain why I have come to these conclusions. I recognize, of course, that scholarly debate is a necessary consequence of such an approach. Even those who disagree with the conclusions offered here will I hope find useful the information garnered by my research.

2. For a taxative list of Cariban languages see Marshall Dubin in Basso (23—38), especially Table 2.1. Dubin comments: "It is well known that Carib speakers once made great incursions into the Caribbean islands as far north as Cuba—onto Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, and the Lesser Antilles. ..While the native Arawak speakers on these islands borrowed heavily from the invading Caribs, ***it*** *is our contention that there was no Carib language in the islands outside of that spoken by invading Carib males for a generation* or *so after the invasions* ... (29). Italics added.

Key to Bibliographical Abbreviations for the Works of Claude Levi-Strauss

T	*Totemism,* 1963
SM	*The Savage Mind,* 1966
SA	*Structural Anthropology,* 1967
ESK	*Elementary Structures of Kinship,* 1969
RC	*The Raw and The Cooked,* 1969
HA	*Honey to Ashes,* 1973
OTM	*The* Origin *of Table Manners,* 1978
NM	The Naked Man, 1981

CHAPTER ONE

Deciphering the Artifacts of Belief

The Tainos of the Caribbean islands are extinct. That simple declarative sentence states the magnitude of the methodological problem faced in this study. How can the religious culture of an extinct people be analyzed? For some 350 years there have been no persons who call themselves Tainos, fashion their artifacts, or worship in their rituals. That is not to say that no data are available concerning these peoples who encountered the European colonizers at the beginning of the modem age, when Columbus first sailed Spanish ships into the Sunny South Atlantic. The Admiral, his companion Dr. Chanca, and the host of discoverers who followed in the wake of the 1492 expedition kept diaries and wrote reports made vivid by details about the inhabitants of the newly discovered lands. But without a referent or some external evidence of the Tainos, the study of these documents can lose its focus. Instead of an examination of certain Native American peoples in the fifteenth century, it easily becomes historical research about a fifteenth—century European writer's perceptions (cf. Sued Badillo,1978:1—32 et passim).

Perhaps on account of the difficulty of analyzing the Taínos, they have been relegated to obscurity in the study of pre-Columbian

people. It certanly is easier to research the religion and beliefs of the Mayans and Aztecs of Mexico, for instance, since the impressive archaeological evidence and contemporary testimony of Nahuatland Quiche-speaking peoples are available as supplements to Spanish historical documents. But a study of the religious culture of the Tainos, as will be shown, is not impossible; moreover, there are good reasons to focus upon these native peoples and attempt to understand how they reacted to Spanish colonization.

The Tainos confounded Columbus, who in his romantic medieval vision initially perceived them as vassals of the Emperor of China and eventually sought to make them feudal subjects of the Spanish Crown (Todorov: 8-13, *22-23* et passim). When these natives declined to be either, Columbus' grand design began to unravel, eventually leading to his replacement as governor of the Indies (Floyd: 15, 20, 28-35; Köning:63-66). Bartolome de Las Casas (1484-1566) is rightfully considered the defender of not only the Tainos but all Indians, and precursor of anti-colonialism" (Freide), but the good friar had to minimize some unsightly Taíno practices, such as bloody reprisals against their enemies and enslavement of their war victims, to paint his picture of these Indians as "most submissive, patient, peaceful and virtuous" (cited in Hanke, 1965:11).

. These examples of misunderstanding and ideological blindness about the Taínos served as whetstone for the sharpening of Spanish colonial policy (Hanke, 1959). The Tainos were the first examples to be cited in support of either the Black or the White Legend (Gibson). As the first American Christian martyrs (Floyd: 38—39), the first slaves, and the first Americans to rebel against the invasion of their homelands (Oliva:19—48), their blood was shed. The Tainos were the first Americans to die from European illness, the first to be brought to Europe for inspection as curiosities of the royal court (Floyd: 38). They were the first "Malinches," serving as translators for the Spaniards attempting to subdue the Indians of the continent (Köning: 75-76), but they also schooled runaway African slaves in the arts of armed resistance (Díaz Soler: 35-39 cf. Deren:271—86).

The Taino language is preserved in such familiar words to English-speakers as canoe, potato, maize, barbecue, and maraca, all of which came from these peoples. Sailors all over the world have used the hammock, which was first discovered among the Tainos. Moreover, scholars consider that the Tainos provided more vocabulary for the Spanish language than any other Native American group

(Arrm,1975:13). The European imagination speculated that the land of the Taínos could be turned into a utopia, where a rationally planned society would practice socialistic values (More; Manuel). Yet this society ideal society had no Taíno inhabitants. Eventually, it was not noble social planning, but exploitation of land and peoples in the brutal, capitalistic pursuit of sugar and slaves that came to characterize the area's history. Within a century, at the dawn of the modern age, all the major European powers were at war to establish themselves strategically the West Indies, making the area the "cockpit of Europe" (Williams :69-94).

Yet for all that, it has not been customary for the writers of Latin American history textbooks to devote much space to the Taínos, except as bit actors or stagehands in the scenario presented by Columbus or Las Casas. Thus denied their own historical and cultural reality, the Taínos are easily dismissed as unimportant: "If they [the Tainos] had been all there was to America, then Spain would have done nothing and America would not have been born. . The Spanish could not evangelize this culture because its extremely low level did not allow for dialogue" (Dussel:86). This book is written to add to the scholarship that disproves this facile oversight of the Tainos. Moreover, in the "dialogue" between natives and invaders, it was not only the Spaniards who influenced the Taínos—the process worked the other way as well (Todorov: 15-33; 108-133). The challenge of the Tainos brought out both the best and the worst in the Spaniards. Hence it is simplistic to assert that it was the "extremely low level" of Taíno culture that "did not allow for dialogue." A case could be made for the opposite premise—namely, that the obstacle to dialogue between the cultures was the low level of Spanish moral and ethical behavior.

As far as the Taíno religion is concerned, the naïveté of the Spaniards fueled Old World myths. In these cases, the subtlety of Taíno symbolic thought was wasted on the literal-minded invaders. The Taínos spoke to the Spaniards, for example, of an island inhabited entirely by women, who lived in a society that did not require men. The explorers interpreted this testimony as corroboration of the Greek myth of the Amazon women. Rather than analyze the article of religious creed to better understand the Tainos, the Spaniards jumped to the conclusion that the New World was a warehouse for Old World legends. Hence, the Spaniards departed the Caribbean islands, convinced they would find Amazons somewhere. The interested reader

can find several discussions of the role of this myth in the naming of the Amazon River in Brazil and the Pacific Coast province of California (Arciniegas:80—82).

A second Spanish myth sprang from the Taíno use of golden ornaments. Columbus took one of these pieces, called *"guanin,"* to Spain. The piece was found to be a composite alloy of fifty-five percent gold, twenty—five percent copper, and nineteen percent silver. The Tainos did not forge metals, and such a mixture of copper and gold is unlikely to be found in nature (Vega:40). Not surprisingly, therefore, the Spaniards asked the Tainos how they had obtained these precious metals. When they were told that there was an island filled with such gold, they recalled the legend of the seven refugee Portuguese bishops who had fled with golden church ornaments from the Iberian peninsula in previous centuries in order to escape the oncoming Moors. The conquistadores subsequently explored Mexico, Peru, and the North American continent as far north as Nebraska in search of these legendary cities of gold (Arciniegas:83—87).

Finally, there was recurring testimony from Europeans that ritualized human sacrifice was practiced in the Caribbean. This became the basis for belief in people who ate human flesh, or "cannibals." Even today, there is constant dispute concerning whether this practice was confined to the Cariban neighbors of the Taínos (Alegría in Cárdenas Ruiz:67—77), was a part of the religion of both peoples (Figueroa: 46—47), or existed at all (Sued Badillo, 1978:33—53). But, in any case, such a notion reenforced the concept of Native Americans as savages meriting punishment and enslavement (Sued Badillo, 1982).

All these elements of Taino belief were sensationally publicized in Europe, where Columbus' reports were mixed with popular expectations of monsters and mythic creatures. The orgy of fantasy generated by the Caribbean discoveries has resulted in many distortions about the Tainos that have endured to the present day. I believe it is time to place the beliefs of the Tainos in context and attempt to understand them in their own terms. Since the first studies by León Portilla on the Mexican Indians, scholars have generated important books that capture the sense of pre-Columbian religion. Studies like Brundage's recently published *The Fifth Sun* and Reichel-Dolmatoff's *Amazonian Cosmos* have increasingly moved towards reconstructing "world views," a task I have set for myself with the Tainos.

As I have suggested, the Tainos were not merely passive onlookers

at colonial history but active participants in the encounter of two worlds. No less than the Spaniards, they were men and women with the full dignity of human nature, with hopes and aspirations, with passions and desperations. The purpose of this book is to explore the nature of Taíno religious beliefs and to suggest the importance of their belief system in shaping their history.

In the search for facts about the religion of the Tainos, it would be a mistake to rely solely upon the historical commentaries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Although written by eyewitnesses or drawn from such accounts, these documents—which shall be referred to as "chronicles" in this book-are certainly not written according to modem scientific criteria. They are historical documents, requiring a historian's interpretive skills in order to sift through self— serving statements and ethnocentric exaggerations. Obviously, most of the writers lacked the comparative historiographical tools available today despite the privilege of being eyewitnesses of much of what they reported. A greater obstacle to the facile acceptance of their testimony, however, is presented by the contradictory prejudices which permeate the writings of the period. These prejudices have become the basis of the White and Black legends of Spanish colonization (Gibson; Hanke, 1965:11; Todorov:146-182).

An example of how direct eyewitnesses of the Tainos contradict each other may be found in the narration by the official royal historian, Oviedo, and the cleric, Las Casas, on the rite of marriage:

> when someone takes a wife, if it is the cacique, all the caciques found at the feast sleep with her. And if the bridegroom is a notable, all of the other important people sleep with her first; and if it is an ordinary fellow, then all the all the other neighbors come to the party to take her first. And after many have taken her, she comes out, shaking her arms, the fist closed and held on high, stating, *"*Manicató*,* Manicató*!* Which means "strengthened" or "fortified" in a loud voice and very spiritedly, almost praising herself that she is good enough for all of them (Oviedo:I:371.-72).

Las Casa, on the other hand, perceives a different religious meaning:

The ceremony was constituted when all of the invited of the same rank tried to violate the bride and she opposed them, making much of her triumph with the words, *"Manicató, manicató!,'* 'Strengthened and Invincible!'" *(Apologética* 11:467). While both Spaniards observed the

same marriage ritual, their interpretations of its significance to Taino practice diverge. Is there any scientific way to decide between these two radically different interpretations of the same event?

In my opinion, the contradictory interpretations hinge upon the meaning of the word *"manicató."* Linguistic scholar Douglas Taylor has employed his knowledge of extant and related Indian languages to translate the root *",maní"* as "to abstain; to restrain" (1961:24). Referring to the texts cited above in a later book, he observes, "it is suspiciously like Arawak *'manikatho,,'* 'she is silent; she says/does nothing' (which might, of course, have been employed in the sense of 'forbearing, patient')" (Taylor, 1977:22). I believe Taylor's linguistic analysis can be accepted as a reliable scientific tool. On the basis of what the bride said in the ritual, therefore, I conclude that she repulsed rather than sexually welcomed the men of the village. Since she proclaimed that she had been silent and had neither said nor done anything when she was approached by men other than her husband, it would seem that the purpose of the ritual was to dramatize the chastity of the marriage exchange. The woman who was thus betrothed personally demonstrated her married fidelity for all to see and was publically acclaimed on that account. Such meaning would lend more weight to Las Casas's understanding of Taino marriage than to Oviedo's interpretation, even though the friar was probably mistaken in his translation of *"manicato."*

This bit of scientific detective work on two short but pointedly divergent passages reported by eyewitnesses is the kind of research required to decipher Taíno religion. Las Casas' understanding of the marriage ceremony colored other descriptions of Taino sexual mores. In all of his writings, the friar sees the Indian women as pure, before and after marriage, and states that adultery was severely punished (cited in Sued Badillo, 1975:14—17). This knowledge is central in piecing together the Taino world view, since their religious attitude towards sexuality is an important basis upon which their culture was built (see Chapters 4 and 10). 1 have offered the example in my treatment of methodology both to show why analysis of the chronicles must be matched with other scientific data and to suggest the fruitfulness of such attention to detail.

Archaeology has become one of the principal means of verifying reports of the chronicles. None of the Greater Antilles is without archaeological reminders of Taíno society. Through patient recon-

struction of these remains, scientists have obtained precise data regarding the size and location of Taino settlements and the historical stages of cultural development. But even in these areas, as will be seen in the next chapter, there are difficulties of interpretation and polemics about ideology Nevertheless, the increasing objectivity of modem archaeology has proven to be invaluable for assessing the accuracy of historical data. In particular, questions of number, size, and frequency of pottery styles as well as their periodization have been provided by recent archaeological scholarship.

A third mode of interpretation is the comparison of historical and archaeological data with practices of contemporary peoples. Fred Olsen has adopted this approach in his book on the Taínos. The method consists of reconstructing the use of the artifacts or economic activities of agriculture and fishing based on the practices of contemporary prescientific peoples. It is supposed, for instance, that the mode of straining and preparing *yuca* mush for baking into *cazabe* was virtually the same for the Tainos as it is for Arawaks in South America today (Olsen:9—11). Olsen's use of comparative methods, which has been called "ethnoarchaeology," is a fruitful field for research, although not without its dangers of misapplication (Kramer).

Also important is the enrichment of historical and archaeological study by comparative linguistics. A great service has been performed by Cuban professor José Juan Arrom of Yale University. In his analysis of historical accounts of Taino religion, he has attempted to translate Taino proper names, which the Spanish chroniclers had merely reproduced phonetically, without always understanding their meaning. Arrom's findings *(Relación;* 1975) are crucial to understanding Taino religion. Equally important is the linguistic connection between the Tainos and the Caribbean languages studied by Douglas Taylor (1977), as can be seen in the example of the marriage rice offered above.

Linguistic studies also provide a means of evaluating similarities of cultures. Given the premise that peoples who are related linguistically are also related culturally, the task of deciphering Taino belief is much easier. Research becomes a sort of forensic science. Archaeology provides the skeleton, as it were, of Taino life, historical accounts describe what practices appeared to be before the Tainos became extinct, and linguistics helps to interpret ritual meaning. Thus, through drawing on these different sciences, Taino culture can be

recreated for scrutiny. Much like a police artist's portrait of a missing child based on descriptions provided by others, the Taino religion can be reassembled by this interdisciplinary approach.

A more difficult correlation to establish is that of mythological similarities. This book relies on the work of Lévi—Strauss, who asserts that all mythologies can be reconstructed by the use of structuralist methods. Certainly, because of sheer volume alone, his writings on Latin American Indian myths cannot be ignored by any serious researcher in this field. Moreover, Mercedes López Baralt has shown the similarities between myths recorded by Levi-Strauss in South America and those of the Tainos that have been preserved in historical chronicles. But Levi—Strauss is not simply another resource in this study. As both a structuralist and a Marxist, his methodology is controversial. Hence, it seems appropriate to outline Levi—Strauss' approach to the study of mythology[1] and to indicate how his approach will be used in this analysis of the Tainos.

Reinterpreting Rousseau, Levi—Strauss sees mythmaking as a collective human accomplishment. He asserts that a myth is destined for others, not for oneself; human self-consciousness is possible only when one belongs to a group and is capable of employing metaphor as an instrument of contrast and comparison (T:1O1). And it is because the structure can be understood by all, even if the symbols are not, that myths acquire great permanence and emotional power.

For Levi—Strauss, structuralism rests on the premise that what is known is not reality itself, but the mind's construction of reality He utilizes concepts from the linguistic theories of Roman Jakobson, who focuses upon grammar and not words as the carriers of meaning (Hayes:5). Levi—Strauss suggests that myths are like grammar, delivering coded messages beyond the symbols utilized and based upon a logical thought pattern. The study of structure enables one to under- stand much more than a specific myth, just as the study of grammar makes it possible to understand all kinds of poetry and not merely the words of a single poem.

The task of structuralism may be compared to the effort to decipher

I. Much of Levi—Strauss' theoretical explanations can be found in *The Savage Mind* and scattered in parts of his correspondence and later works, especially *The Naked Man:500—695.* The citations provided here refer to studies of his thought in which these concepts are summarized.

the rules of a card game one has never played. By concentrating on how the cards are played instead of the numerical value printed on each face, one may come to understand the rules of the game. The same deck of cards may be used in different games, with the symbols, i.e., the cards, changing value each time depending on the structure, i.e., the rules of the game (Hayes:4). Thus, for instance, one knows the rules of the poker game have changed if in one hand a pair of deuces are discarded as an unimportant pair, while after another deal they can be combined with two aces to make four of a kind, because now "the deuces are wild."

For somewhat the same reason, if a part of a myth is missing one can analyze the overall logical structure and deduce the nature of the missing part. Myths are a sort of "semantic algebra" for Levi—Strauss (Leach, 1970:33), wherein the interpreter may eventually come to know the value of unknown symbols by rearranging the myth so that the symbols may remain constant. Suppose one version of a myth describes a man walking on a road who encounters a woman carrying honey, while in another version it is the woman who walks on the road where she encounters a man whose description is incomplete because that part of the myth is garbled or lost. If in both versions they wind up married, then—according to Levi-Strauss' methodology—it should be possible to suggest that the man was carrying honey in the second version and that the social context for both versions is courtship. This procedure may be employed even if there is no clear cultural or historical contact between the two peoples from which the versions of the myth derive.

This departure from standard anthropological method is possible for sti-ucturalists because the similarities are not based on culture, but on biology According to the anthropologist, the logic of putting together the symbols is the same in all humans, even if the meaning of the symbols may vary. This is attributed to the biological functions of the mind, which by nature must act in the same way for all:

> If ...the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing forms upon content, and if these forms are fundamentally the same for all minds—ancient and modern, primitive and civilized ...—it is necessary and sufficient to grasp the unconscious structure underlying each institution and each custom, in order to obtain a principle of interpretation valid for other institutions and other customs" (cited in Hayes:27 n. *4)*.

Levi-Strauss' notion of the unconscious will be examined in Chapter 11, but what must be stressed here is the structural logic of myths.

Since every human has a brain that is biologically like all others, the intelligence required to create myths is equal to that of modern scientific thinkers. But for prescientific peoples, the principal mode of expressing causality is analogy. Levi—Strauss insists that anthropologists like Lévy-Bruhl were wrong in attributing a childlike understanding of nature to the primitive mind. Myth is not concerned with the explanation of natural phenomena, substituting magic for science. Rather, mythmaking deals with establishing logic, using natural phenomena to explain a people's epistemology (Hayes:143). Night does not follow day because "the sun goes to sleep," but the passage of time logically produces fatigue in living organisms. To attribute "sleep" to the sun is a coded expression of this general principle of fatigue and not merely naïve anthropomorphism.

I agree with Levi-Strauss that analogous thought, such as is found in myth, does not equate with inferior mental capacity One may argue that the sun and other stellar bodies are not "living organisms" and therefore are not subject to the fatigue described in the myth. But looked at from the structuralist perspective, the relevant issue is whether the passage of time produces fatigue. Ironically, some environmentalist thinking about the cosmos suggests that the sun may indeed be more of a "living organism" than nineteenth-century scientific categories could express.

Despite the importance Levi-Strauss places on the meaning of mythology, he also maintains that his methodology is Marxist. Since the materialism developed by Karl Marx generally rejected religion as a basis for social behavior, Levi—Strauss' position as a "Marxist mythologian" would seem contradictory Many questions have been raised about the depth of Levi—Strauss' Marxism, and there is ample literature on the issue. What is of primary concern for understanding Taino mythology is not the Marxist orthodoxy of Levi-Strauss, however, but questions of common sense.

Like Marx, Levi-Strauss focuses upon human relations. Since social-economic classes, defined by Marx in terms of the means of production, do not exist in the societies Levi-Strauss studies, he substitutes for capitalism the process of exchange that takes place among prescientific peoples. He recognizes that an exchange of women as wives, of vegetables for shells, etc., is never really an equal

exchange but involves some use of analogy, wherein the mind's perceptions create equality by making the items exchanged into symbols (Rossi:326). Social relationships, therefore, are not mediated by things, but by symbols. Unfortunately, the same human intellects that create symbols eventually must also recognize that they are only representations of reality. Hence, such exchanges are the seedbed of a philosophical alienation not unlike what Marx has described using a Hegelian framework (Avinieri:96; Ollman:131—35 et passim).

Levi-Strauss points out that Marx's materialism is at the root of his understanding of the mythmaking process. The creation of symbols cannot be understood, Levi-Strauss says, without grasping the total context of the concrete reality of a people's environment. The symbolism of a bird, of a bush, of a burning fire cannot be interpreted except by adopting the Marxist premise that all reality is material. Thus Levi—Strauss' structural study of myth entails consideration of even the slightest of ethnographical details (cited in Hayes:19).

But it must be asked whether the gulf between this support of a materialist analysis of reality is consonant with Levi—Strauss' assertion that "Myth is explained as myth" (NM:561—62: cf. Rossi:457). What is the sense of basing mythological study on material reality, if myth is made of mental constructs? Levi—Strauss insists that dialectical thinking is not always the mode of human thought and that myth is "an unreflecting totalization," a means to achieve objective thinking but not itself an object for the mythmaker (SM:252—54; cf. Marx as cited in Ollman:11O—13).

As I understand Levi-Strauss' methodology, the materialist process helps us to enter into the myth by explaining the value of the symbols. But once within the conceptual structures of the myth, the symbols offer no return to reality:

> All of the models considered so far, however, are "lived—in" orders: they correspond to mechanisms which can be studied from the outside as a part of objective reality. But no systematic studies of these orders can be undertaken without acknowledging the fact that social groups, to achieve their reciprocal ordering, need to call upon orders of different types, corresponding to a field external to objective reality and which we call the "supernatural." These "thought-of" orders cannot be checked against the experience to which they refer, since they are one and the same as this experience. Therefore, we are in the position of studying them only in their relationships with the other types of

> "lived-in" orders. The "thought-of" orders are those of myth and religion. The question may be raised whether, in our own society, political ideology does not belong to the same category (SA:306).

For Levi—Strauss, then, it is not particularly surprising to discover that some human ideas have no direct relationship to reality. Indeed, he remarks that politicians seem to engage in this sort of thing all the time.

Like political ideology, however, certain "thought-of" orders legitimate unjust social relations and become the explanation for situations that would not naturally exist, unless imposed by social forces. This is satisfactorily explained by Levi-Strauss in his structuralist examination of the geography of a Bororo village (SA:1 16—27; Shalvey:86— 95). He shows that the apparent division of the village into two halves by an east-west axis, permitting exogomous marriage, is exactly the opposite of a real north-south dichotomy according to wealth and prestige. Hence the upper Bororo marry upper Bororo and the lower Bororo marry lower Bororo, and the mental device of exogamy preserves the wealth and prestige for one social grouping while ensuring cultural unity with the less privileged.

However impressive Levi-Strauss is in this analysis, I have found it difficult to exactly imitate him in my own sthdy of the now extinct Taino society. Not only are data lacking to engage in the kind of interpretation Levi-Strauss conducted among the Bororo; I also believe that his explanation of the dichotomy between mythological concepts and material reality is too sharp. Perhaps I can best make my point by discussing cannibalism, a topic frequently debated by anthropologists.

The evidence of cannibalism as an actual practice in the Caribbean is hard to ignore. Why would cannibalism be referred to so frequently by European observers if it were merely a "thought-of order" with rio basis in reality? On the other hand, reference to the eating of flesh and blood is usually in the context of religion. Ultimately, I have settled for a compromise position. I will suggest in Chapter 6 (cf. Chapter 11) that Taino mythic cannibalism refers to territorial rights in the process of tribal fissure and the prohibition against return migration rather than to anthropophagy. Mythic cannibalism among the Tainos, I think, serves as a culturally coded symbol for demographic pressures on the social fabric. But I hasten to add that such a mythological use of cannibalism does not constitute proof that the consumption of human

flesh was not practiced. In fact, it may be suggested that cannibalism actually practiced by their neighbors may have provided a stimulus for conceptualizing anthropophagy as a symbol for social relations.

Finally, one comes to the prickly questions of Marxist historicity and praxis in Levi—Strauss. For Marx, "life determines consciousness," not the other way around as proposed by Idealism. Through the dialectical process of history praxis is realized for humankind, a "species—being" (Avineri:133—49). Maurice Godlier has corroborated the congruence between the basic ideas of Levi—Strauss and the general theory of the Marxists (1971; 1974). He also makes the important observation that much of Marx's theories on prescientific peoples. came from sources that would be considered erroneous today (Godlier, 1971:74—75, 119—30). What are the connections between the mental constructs of mythology supposed by Levi-strauss and the historical praxis described by Marx? If Taino myths can be understood through structuralism, i.e. through ahistorical mental constructs, does this rob the people who created the myths of their history? Are such people doomed to live without normal human consciousness, as Jaynes has suggested?

Levi—Strauss answers that history is easily mythologized, since it can become a mode of abstracting from concrete paraxis in order to postpone action upon society (Hayes:243; see SM: 249, 254—55 etpasim). For him, history is "the irreducible contingency without which necessity would not even be conceivable" (HA:408). But the mental constructs that are produced in the telling of myth do not depend upon a historical understanding of society on the part of the mythmakers. Structure is independent of reality. Once again, Levi-Strauss would leave us with the meaning ***of*** myth divorced from history

I interpret Levi-Strauss as saying that once an analogous mode of thought is adopted, history in the classic Marxist sense is not logically compatible. But this is not the same as alleging that prescientific peoples are incapable of historical thinking; they merely express it differently:

> The characteristic feature of the savage mind is its timelessness; its object is to grasp the world as both a synchronic and a diachronic totality and the knowledge which it draws therefrom is like that afforded of a room by mirrors fixed on opposite walls, which reflect each other. although without being strictly parallel. ...It builds

mental structures which facilitate an understanding of the world in as much as they resemble it. In this sense savage thought can be defined as *analogical* thought (SM:263).

For Levi-Strauss, totemism and other forms of mythological thought provide an etiology that substitutes for historical causality. In other words, the cause and effect of a myth's symbols do the work of today's scientific categories. The man-meets-woman-and-honey example cited above is the equivalent of a sex education class. (Strikingly, even today for the initiation of children, we still use the circumlocution of "the birds and the bees"!) As modern people, we live in a "totemic void," wherein nature means little to daily life. Not so with prescientific cultures. Their symbols must do "double duty," expressing both the ideal and the real. Thus one may understand Levi-Strauss to say:

> Totemic societies explain themselves in terms of a Weltanshauung that incorporates change into itself while remaining ostensibly immutable. They are in sharp contrast to those societies that admit the notion of flux as part of their self—image and therefore explain themselves by history (Hayes:137).

I find repeated here the notion that because it is without history, myth expresses a social context for meaning that goes unrecognized by the mythmaker. Dare one call unrecognized understanding "the unconscious"?[2]

Just as history is redefined in the code of mythology, so too the praxis of prescientific peoples requires a similar deciphering. What Levi—Strauss calls "zero—value" (SA:156—58) is equivalent to pure praxis, that is, the matching of theory and act (Shalvey:95 n.34). Levi-Strauss claims that his notion of "zero—value" is generally identified by prescientific peoples as special power or "mana" (SA:160, a27). The reason it can be identified with praxis lies in the centrality of these notions to the religious system. To make one's life conform to religious myth is to match theory and act. Of course, the logical ties are not presented as "human." They are, rather, usually attributed to the numinous power who has preordained all things, and thus fall under the concept of "mana" For the analogical thinker, praxis becomes a

2. Compare this notion to that ofjung, 6:522—23, cited in Chapter 12. It is another of the convergences in the thought of the two scholars outlined in Chapter 11.

collective reality (SM:263—65), because the mana is recognized by the communality of people to form the "acted—on" premises of social life. In this way, the religious premises of myth become praxis, enabling the practitioners to distinguish between thought alone and thought made reality. This is how Levi-Strauss finds a dialectical purpose to ahistorical mythological thinking.

I find the restraint of Maurice Godlier useful on this point. However sophisticated the "savage mind," he says, myths remain the products of people who are not modern (1974:384—86). He thus distances himself from Levi-Strauss, who would virtually identify mana with modem Marxist praxis. I think it is better to understate than to exaggerate this issue. The Tainos may have found praxis in their myths, but they remained a people who acted without a historical consciousness until the revolt of Enriquilio, who had adopted Christianity (Stevens-Arroyo, 1981. :84-103).

It should be apparent that while I think Levi-Strauss is indispensable to the study of myth, I do not consider him infallible. The principal value his method offers for this study is the notion that myth may be reconstructed from bits and pieces by careful analysis of material reality and by a structural comparison with other myths. This book will borrow his reconstruction of basic South American myths but will not attempt his analysis of all possible permutations (T:16). Nor do I believe it useful to stress any universal theory as the basis for the structuralist analysis of Taino myths. If the universality of myths described by Levi—Strauss is applicable, then this work on Taino mythology will serve to verify such theories; but I leave such connections to be argued by others. My interpretation will be focused upon social and political relations, *and* the symbols will be considered as tools for legitimizing unequal exchange values. In addition, a consideration of how Taino myths are related to the psychological elements of other mythologies will accompany the analysis, receiving fuller treatment in Chapter 11. Finally, by including rituals and artifacts, the mythology will be contextualized as part of a religious system.

CHAPTER TWO

The State of Taíno Studies

The science of archaeology has revolutionized the study of the Taínos. As I suggested in the previous chapter, it is no longer necessary to rely totally on the historical chronicles to obtain information about the Taínos. But the application of archaeology to Taino Studies has proven to be an embarrassment of riches. With the introduction of more sophisticated techniques for the dating of materials and the promise of computers to supply even more forensic details on matters as diverse as the construction of artifacts and the frequency of pollen in fossils, archaeology has begun to outpace archaeologists. The new data are being produced almost too rapidly to be assimilated into a coherent theory. Consequently, materials on Taíno archaeology written as recently as a decade ago may well be outdated already. This problem is also complicated by ideological and generational differences among those working in the field.

In order to assemble what is now known about the Taínos and separate it from speculation or outmoded theories, a brief review of Taíno scholarship is in order. Although there were some archaeological finds made as early as 1869 by North Americans (Rouse,

1978:432), interest in the Taínos among professional archaeologists did not produce any major work in the United States until the early twentieth century. With the acquisition of Cuba and Puerto Rico in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War of 1898, increased attention was paid to the Antilles. Many North American scientists rushed to the islands to study the flora and fauna, geology, and archaeology of the area. Unfortunately, some of these scholars betrayed an ethnocentrism and intellectual arrogance towards the natives of Cuba and Puerto Rico (Lewis:18-19) that would be considered unprofessional today.

With the intention of summarizing most of the data available at the time, the Bureau of American Ethnology commissioned Jesse Fewkes to conduct a major archaeological study on the Taínos. Despite the magnitude of the labor and the considerable resources devoted to it, however, the report suffers from several defects characteristic of the period, notably a lack of chronological determinations (Rouse, 1982:45). Additionally, Fewkes and the North American archaeology upon which he depended neglected to develop a coherent overall interpretation of their findings in the context of Taíno society. Instead, they concentrated on discovering artifacts, usually hauling them to North American museums.

The general pattern of archaeological research by North Americans was thus inadequate to provide an interpretation of Taíno society, focused as it generally was on a disjunctive examination of artifacts. This is not a judgmental indictment of these scholars, since they operated according to the norms of a still infant science. Moreover, the efforts towards Taino Studies among the citizens of the nations of the Greater Antilles also suffered limitations.

Artifacts of Taíno society had been uncovered periodically before 1898. Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica were colonies at the time, however, while Haiti and the Dominican Republic were underdeveloped nations, often wracked by internal civil wars. Hence, until the twentieth century, study of the Taínos generally fell to dilettantes and men of letters. Often lacking formal training as archaeologists, these scholars largely relied on the sixteenthcentury Spanish chronicles in their search for an understanding of Taino society. The best of them, however, became the first to use ethno archaeology in Taino studies. Utilizing their observations of local folk customs and their knowledge of the regional lexicon, they provided connections between

The historical accounts and archaeological remains.[1] These local scholars left a legacy of Taíno Studies for the generation that came of age in the early twentieth century.

A leading example of native scholarship in Taíno Studies in the beginning of the twentieth century is Fernando Ortiz (18811969). He is sometimes considered the "third discoverer" of Cuba, ranking behind Columbus and Humboldt. Trained as a lawyer and a part of the diplomatic corps of the new Cuban Republic, he gained fame through his early writings on the customs and practices of Cuba's large Black population. To polish his observations, he actively sought out ethnographers and anthropologists and read extensively. In 1939 he published his first book on the Indians of Cuba, Los elementos humanos de la cubanidad. His success in bringing the attention of the academic world to the original Cuban natives merited him a position at the University of Havana, where he imbued a generation of scholars with a desire to study and understand the pre-Columbian reality of Cuba Ortiz contributed a passion to understand the whole picture to Taíno Studies. Unlike the North American focus on artifacts that was typical of the time, Ortiz was perhaps the best of the nonprofessional scholars whose very lack of formal training made them more ingenious and resourceful. Their desire for a total understanding of Taino society was very often colored by a patriotism that sought to stir up nationalistic pride. But towards the middle of the century, their enthusiasm was matched by the expertise of a new generation of researchers who combined the patriotic desire to know with formal training in archaeology.

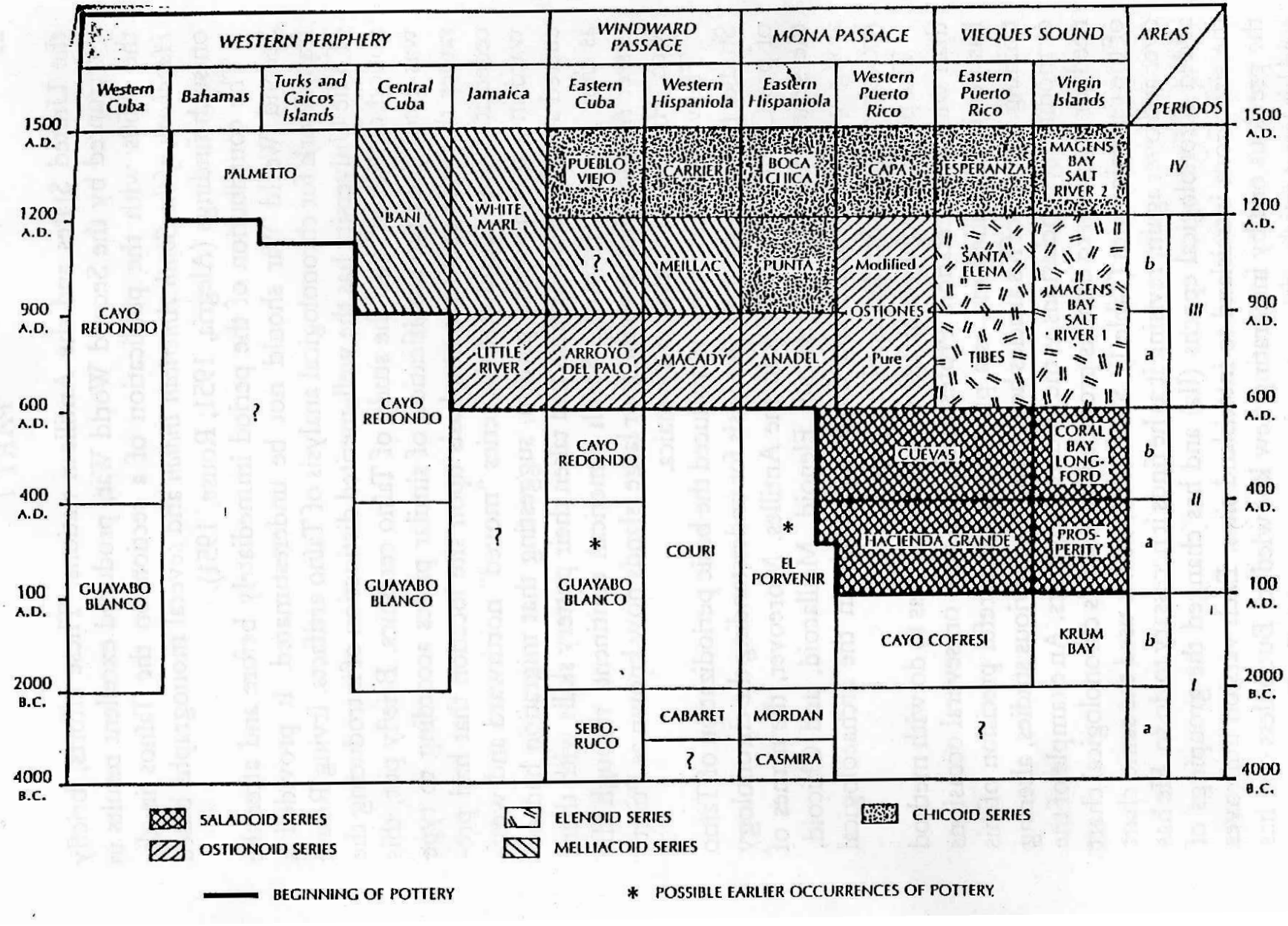
Thus, by 1940, Taíno scholarship was poised for a great leap forward. On the one hand, North Americans were prepared in more strict archaeological methods that provided accurate chronological data on the findings. Likewise, island governments, particularly in Cuba and Puerto Rico, structured the research so that native institutions had a cooperative role. Froelich G. Rainey went to Puerto Rico cosponsored by Yale University and the University of Puerto Rico. Rainey's efforts (1940) not only introduced better methods; it also provided a meeting ground for new generations of scholars from both

1. Among these can be counted Morales Cabrera, Coil y Toste, Stahl, Alberti Bosch,and de 'Hostos.

The United States and the Antillean nations. These efforts, briefly interrupted by the Second World War, produced excellent results in the 1950s with the publication of a section on the Tainos in the Handbook of the South American Indian and several monographs based on such findings (Alegría, 1951; Rouse, 1951).

The contribution of the period immediately before and after the Second World War should not be underestimated. It provided a framework for chronological analysis of Taíno artifacts. Irving Rouse of Yale University has the well-merited distinction of introducing the notion of "series" into the study of Taíno ceramics. Briefly put, this was a comparative classification of similar pieces according to type rather than the exclusive emphasis upon site location that had preceded it. Rouse found that the series "moved" northward and westward in a chronological pattern, suggesting that migration had occurred and that the migrants had taken their pottery skills with them as they traveled from the South American continent, through the Lesser Antilles, and onto the four large islands now known as Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, Cuba, and Jamaica.The work of Rouse has introduced the basic periodization of Taíno Studies that serves as a reliable basis for understanding the chronology of pre-Columbian societies in the Antilles. Moreover, the names of the series: Saladoid, Ostionoid, Elenoid, Meillacoid, and Chicoid, along with Barrancoid and Suazoid, remain in the archaeological lexicon of Taino Studies until the present.

The present problems in Taino Studies have less to do with method than with interpretation. Professor Rouse, who on several occasions has personally aided me, is a product of the careful precision of his training. In each of his articles he reviews his previous studies, altering or modifying conclusions as the evidence suggests. An example of the need for attention to detail is provided by Rouse's chronological chart of the ceramic series (Table 1). Since 1951, he has used the same chart over and over again, revising it as he finds it necessary to do so. He has added chronological epochs (IIa) and has changed the groupings of the sites from Intra Island to inter island sites. Each version improves the previous one by integrating new knowledge. But unless one has read his latest article, citing a previous statement by Dr. Rouse may be misleading (cf. Rouse in Olsen: xvi). Understandably, there is impatience among island scholars regarding the lack of a comprehensive picture of the Taino people. In the tradition of Ortiz's patriotic scholarship, the questions these scholars


WESTERN PERIPHERY
WINDWARD PASSAGE
MONA PASSAGE
VIEQUES SOUND
AREAS
PERIODS
Western Cuba
Bahamas
Turks and Caicos Islands
Central Cuba
Jamaica
Eastern Cuba
Western Hispaniola
Eastern Hispaniola
Western Puerto Rico
Eastern Puerto Rico
Virgin Islands
1500 A.D.
1200 A.D.
900 A.D.
600 A.D.
400 A.D.
100 A.D.
2000 B.C.
4000 B.C.
CAYO REDONDO
GUAYABO BLANCO
PALMETTO
?
BANI
WHITE MARL
LITTLE RIVER
CAYO REDONDO
GUAYABO BLANCO
PUEBLO VIEJO
?
ARROYO DEL PALO
CAYO REDONDO
*
GUAYABO BLANCO
SEBO-RUCO
CARRIER
MEILLAC
MACADY
COURI
CABARET
?
BOCA CHICA
PUNTA
ANADEL
*
EL PORVENIR
MORDAN
CASMIRA
CAPA
Modified
OSTIONES
Pure
CUEVAS
HACIENDA GRANDE
CAYO COFRESI
?
ESPERANZA
SANTA ELENA
TIBES
MAGENS BAY SALT RIVER 2
MAGENS BAY SALT RIVER 1
CORAL BAY LONG-FORD
PROS-PERITY
KRUM BAY
IV
b
a
III
b
a
II
b
a
I
SALADOID SERIES
OSTIONOID SERIES
ELENOID SERIES
MELLIACOID SERIES
CHICOID SERIES
BEGINNING OF POTTERY
* POSSIBLE EARLIER OCCURRENCES OF POTTERY

Ask concern the life of their ancestors, and are not focused on more narrow issues concerning ceramics and artifacts. Hence, a new effort is being made to speed up Taíno Studies by developing speculative theories about migration or social organization and then seeking archaeological evidence for these interpretations. Taínos Studies thus begins to pass from a painstakingly slow inductive method based on archaeological evidence to hypothetical theories evolved from historical testimony and ethno archaeology. In this way, some anticipate that a comprehensive understanding of the Taínos will be developed more quickly.

An example of this approach is provided by the works of the Puerto Rican scholar, Jalil Sued Badillo. His most controversial theory concerns the Caribs, who were described by Columbus as "eaters of human flesh" and "warlike savages" and who supposedly stood in sharp contrast with the more gentle and refined Taínos (Sued Badillo, 1978). Sued Badillo argues that such a description of the inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles flies in the face of archaeological evidence to the contrary (11724). He supposes that the peoples called Caribs were really Taínos, arguing that the variations of social organization were due principally to ecological and demographic factors that differentiate the Lesser from the Greater Antilles (13536). He suggests that linguistic differences between what is known of the Taíno language and the speech of descendants of the supposed Caribs are totally attributable to isolation (10608) and other normal historic phenomena. Much of Sued Badillo's observations are helpful in unmasking the bias of the chronicles, which often described rebellious Taínos as Caribs in order to more easily enslave them (15169). Sued Badillo argues beyond these facts, however. Recalling the Spanish confusion of "Carib" and "cannibal," he states that both are "mythical personages" (72), and that "Carib" is nothing more than "a ritual name for a Taíno shaman" (73).

Not unexpectedly, an assertion like this, which contradicts previous scholarship so dramatically, has not gone unchallenged. His principal critic has been Ricardo E. Alegría, former director of the government-sponsored Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. The two have had some nasty exchanges. Alegría .considers his rival to have exaggerated the importance of unreliable studies (Alegría in Cárdenas Ruiz:89, n.48). On the other hand, Sued Badillo considers Alegría to have manipulated data on the Taínos to fit an ideological portrait of them as ancestral authors of a docility towards invaders that is continued

in Puerto Rico's present-day commonwealth arrangement with the United States (Sued Badillo, 1978:2428; 1982).

Since it is important to know whether, at the time of Spanish intrusion, the Taínos invalidated not only the Greater Antilles but the smaller islands as well, I have been forced to evaluate these two positions. There certainly appear to have been greater similarities between these peoples than the chronicles would allow, even if the Cariban influence seems limited to language (Dubin in Basso:29). But an absolute identity as one and the same culture, distinguished only by ecological factors, is erected upon inconclusive evidence. The reputable sources on the people of the Lesser Antilles that Sued Badillo has consulted offer information taken from observations made some 150 years after the Spanish arrival among the Taínos. A great deal happened in that tumultuous century and a half to permanently erode previous cultural differences between the peoples. As a result, Sued Badillo's conclusions about the similarities can be accept2 as proven only for the post-conquest period, and ought not be understood as conclusive evidence for the cultural identity of Taino and island people in 1492. As will be shown below, it is likely the differences between the peoples were greater before the conquest than they were after it.

Since I am not an expert in the fields that are necessary to resolve this issue, I maintain an open mind on the subject. In any case, it is not necessary for the purposes of this study that the debate be settled. Whether from completely different peoples or from linguistically related peoples, who lived differently, the Greater Antilles were under pressure at the time of the Spanish arrival from migratory bands that came from the smaller islands to the east. What I admire about Sued Badillos's work is his passion for establishing the texture of Taíno society. Even if his conclusions are disproven, his aggressive approach to Taíno Studies will remain as a significant contribution in a field shared by those scholars, generally older, who favor the careful approach of Rouse and those who favor the sweeping conclusions of Sued Badillo and the ethno archaeological approach.

In the Dominican Republic, there are excellent resources dedicated to serious study of the Taínos. Both the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and the Garcia Arévalo Foundation have provided professional opportunities for scholarly research in this field. Museum collections and a number of new publications have significantly advanced our knowledge about the Tainos. The impact of the Dominican groups of

Scholars, not all of whom are trained as archaeologists, has been considerable.[2]In the tradition of Fernando Ortiz, they are anxious to ask questions about the Talnos who are their ancestors. But their financial resources have enabled them to utilize the very best of recent technology to verify their findings by the most rigorous of methods. Although Dominican scholars sometimes differ on ideological and professional grounds as vigorously as Alegría and Sued Badillo, Taíno Studies in the Dominican Republic are focused because there is a widespread conviction that the Taínos constitute a national patrimony.

This cursory review of the field presents a mixed picture. If controversy surrounds the archaeology of the Taínos and the interpretation of data, what can be held as certain, one may ask? Fortunately, the general outlines of knowledge are clear enough, so that despite the possible reformulation of some points, the foundation of Taíno Studies is secure. The following data rely chiefly upon articles by Rouse.

First, it must be understood that the Taínos were not the earliest human settlers in the Greater Antilles. There is some dispute over the cultural identity of these first inhabitants, where they came from and when they got therecertainly by 2100 B.C., and possibly as early as 5000 B.C. (Rouse, 1969:4748)but there can be no doubt that the Tainos displaced this earlier population of the Caribbean islands. It is likely that the Taínos both warred on these more simple peoples, sometimes called Archaic Indians, and also intermarried with them. By the time of the Spanish arrival, the survivors of these original peoples, who had little or no ceramic tradition, were found only in western Cuba and possibly in neglected areas of the other island where they lived in small isolated villages (Rouse, 1964:34).

Second, it seems indisputable that the ancestors of the people now known as Taínos migrated from the South American mainland to the Antilles. It is speculated that they arrived in Trinidad about 200 B.C. (Rouse, 1983:5) from areas of present-day Venezuela and Surinam. The Taínos rapidly migrated by canoe into Puerto Rico, reaching there before A.D. 200. They brought with them pottery and the cultivation of yuca for baking into cakes they called “cazabe.” The Saladoid, the first ceramic series, can be found from 100 to 600 B.C.

2. Besides García Arévalo, scholars working with these groups include Veloz Maggiolo, Vega, Chanlatte Baik, and Boyrie Moya.

This series was so named on account of its repetition of forms that have been identified with a site in the Lower Orinoco Basin. The Saladoid pottery is distinctive because of its whiteover-red geometric designs. The last two hundred years of this initial period of Taíno presence in Puerto Rico were marked by a notable development of cemieism (Rouse, 1982:52), the cult of spirits represented by carved images, which will be described in the next chapter. The pattern of settlement in this period was to first move inland along the rivers and streams rather than to concentrate on the coast. This would seem to indicate that the early settlers, both in the Lesser and in the Greater, Antilles, were initially more comfortable with a freshwater culture than a salt-water one (Rouse, 1983:32).

The next epoch, A.D. 600 to 1200, is marked by a diffusion into western Hispaniola (today's Haiti), Jamaica, and eastern Cuba Two new ceramic series, the Ostionioid and the Melliacoid, replaced the Saladoid of the first migrants. This style of pottery, which features molded faces, abandons not only the geometric designs of the Saladoid types but other distinctive traits as well. One of the great mysteries of Taíno Studies concerns the reasons for this dramatic shift in ceramic style. While it is possible that the new migration was of a culturally different people, interaction with South America by the Taínos should not be discounted as one of the reasons for the modifications (Rouse, 1982:49). But a more likely stimulus would have been contact eastwards with the Lesser Antilles, where a another linguistic group related to the Taíno had begun to settle (Rouse, 1982:53). This population is sometimes associated with a style of pottery known as Suazoid, but the nature of Taíno contacts with the people who supplanted them in the Lesser Antilles remains to be more fully explored (Rouse, 1982:53).

After some intermediate and transitional ceramic series, the final epoch of Taíno culture began about A.D. 1200 and was destined to end with the arrival of the Spanish. The final phase of Taíno culture is notable for a new ceramic series, the Chicoid. This pottery reintroduces the geometric designs of the Saladoid in combination with the molded faces of the previous styles. Moreover, it is accompanied by a revival of cemieism and the multiplication of many ballgame fields, especially in the areas of western Puerto Rico and eastern Hispaniola, the present-day Dominican Republic. Rouse believes that the demographic and cultural center of Taino society by A.D.1500

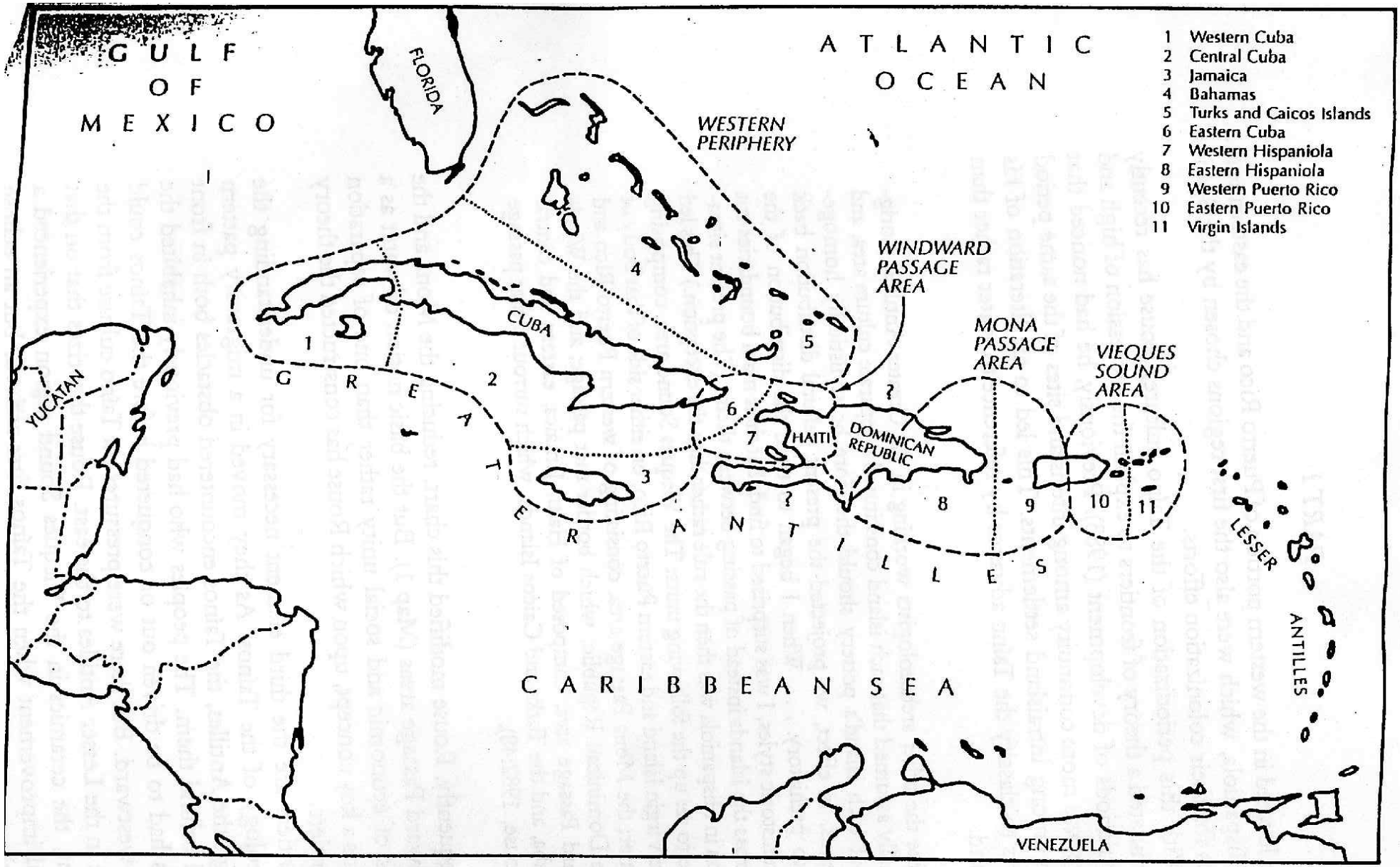
Was located in the western portion of Puerto Rico and the eastern part of Hispaniola, which were also the first regions chosen by the Spaniards for their colonization efforts.

With this periodization of the Taíno culture, Rouse has recently formulated a theory of frontiers to explain the succession of high and low periods of development (1983). Previously, he had noticed that there was more continuity among interisland sires of the same period than among intraisland settlements. This led to an alteration of his charts to classify the Taíno advance by reference to water rather than to land:

Like the other archaeologists working in the Greater Antilles, I originally assumed that each island constituted a separate culture area, and chat each island's pottery should therefore be stylistically homogeneous. In effect, we projected the present cultural distribution back into prehistory. . . . When I began to trace the distribution of the prehistoric styles, I was surprised to find that their main boundaries cut across the islands instead of passing between them. (The present situation in Hispaniola was then the rule rather than the exception.) This led -me to set up the following units: The Vieques Sound area, comprising the Virgin Island and eastern Puerto Rico, on either side of that body of water; the Mona Passage area, consisting of western Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, which border that passage; and the Windward Passage area, composed of Haiti, Jamaica, eastern and central Cuba, and the Turks arid Caicos Islands, which surround that passage (Rouse, 1982:48).

Subsequently, Rouse modified this chart, reducing the Mona and the Windward Passage areas (Map 1). But the basic notion of water as a means of economic and social unity rather than one of separation remains a key concept, upon which Rouse has constructed the theory of frontiers.

Frontiers are the third element necessary for understanding the archaeology of the Tainos. As they moved in a migratory pattern through the Antilles, the Taínos encountered obstacles both in front of and behind them. The peoples who had previously inhabited the islands had to be driven out or conquered before the Tainos could move westward. But there were pressures on Taíno culture from the people in the Lesser Antilles to the east. Rouse theorizes that on that account, the ceramics in the Vieques Sound region experienced a gradual improvement when the Taínos first arrived, but an eclipse when the center of the culture shifted westward to the Mona Passage.



Map 1. Cultural Areas in the Greater Antilles. Adapted from Rouse, 1982.

In migration, the initial settlement is a frontier, demanding a sacrifice of cultural form in order to concentrate upon establishing the society. Gradually the population increases and social divisions enable a more detailed attention to cultural artifacts. But when demographic forces again provoke westward migration, the previous center of culture becomes the rear guard of that culture. In a sense, these regions become frontier againplaces where the Taínos' society was under pressure from new migratory groups.

According to this theory, whose inspiration Rouse attributes to Manuel García Arévalo, Richard Burger, and Aad Boomert (Rouse, 1983:35), the frontiers serve as explanations for the irregular and shifting patterns of ceramic culture. Rouse suggests that it was the greater land mass that delayed the Taíno settlement of Hispaniola and Cuba, even though Puerto Rico had been settled almost immediately (34). The pause before each migratory surge may also have been characterized by cultural mingling with previous populations as well as warfare with them. In any case, Taíno society is better defined by water passages than by land, and was characterized by fluid interconnections between its center and peripheries.

The last major element in Taíno Studies that must be treated is linguistics. Douglas Taylor is considered the leading expert in this field, and he has worked with Taíno scholars, although his expertise is with the Black Caribs of Belize (1951). According to his study, there were three languages spoken in the Caribbean in the preColumbian period. The one that most concerns this study was the language of the Taínos, which Taylor calls “Taino” and which belonged to the large Arahuacan language group.3 Also belonging to this major group were several other Arahuacan-speaking peoples from the Orinoco area, such as the Arawak or Lokono of the present day. Most of these people have remained on the South American continent. Taylor calls the Arahuacan speakers who followed the Taínos' migratory trail into the Lesser Antilles the Igneri (or Island Carib). Finally, there were the Karina-speaking peoples, sometimes called the “True Carib,” who belonged to the Cariban linguistic family and of whom the Galibi peoples of the Guianas are a part (Taylor, 1977:13). Taylor lists the surviving examples of these three pre-Columbian languages:

3. I find this term, first suggested to me by Arrom, less confusing than the Anglicized “Arawakan.”

They are Arawak or Lokono (Trinidad and the Guianese coastal region from the Orinoco as far east as the Oyapock), Carib or Karina or Galibi or Carinaco (Tobago, Grenada, and probably other of the Lesser Antilles, the Guianas from north of the Orinoco eastward to the Amazon), and Island-Carib or Iñeri or Igneri (The Lesser Antilles except Trinidad and Tobago, and from Stann Creek in British Honduras, south and east around the Gulf of Honduras to the Black River) (Taylor, 1977:14).

The roots of the Taíno language can be traced to a supposed "Proto-.. Maipuran" (see Table 2; Rouse, 1985:57; 1986:12326; cf. No-. ble:108). From this basic language came the tongue spoken by the peoples who met the Spaniards. There is scattered testimony as to dialects within this grouping (see Relación: 10, citing Las Casas). The linguistic variations may have been attributable to residual groups of conquered Archaic Indians or to the presence at this time of invading Cariban speakers who had arrived in the Greater Antilles as maraud- ing bands. As I noted in my brief discussion of Sued Badillo's theory, there is virtually no linguistic evidence provided by the chronicles to facilitate definitive judgments about these reports of non-Taínos in the Greater Antilles. But even if there were isolated groups of other peoples inhabiting the same territory as the Taínos, archaeological remains on the Greater Antilles do not suggest that such coexistence resulted in a different culture. Drawing a distinction between population movement, i.e., replacement of the local culture by invaders, and immigration wherein cultures coexist and interact, Rouse has stated that cultural pluralism and diversity of expression among the Taínos merits further study (Rouse, 1985). Hence, it seems likely that the linguistic variations could best be described as "dialects," probably resulting from contacts between the Taíno and other groups. These exchanges, which need not be understood as displacement by invasion, seem to have resulted in a reassertion of certain traditional cultural and religious traits that recall the Orinoco Basin origins of the Tainos (Rouse, 1982:53; Lathrop).

The difficulties in analyzing these languages are attributable not Only to their virtual extinction but also to the historical intermingling of the peoples that generated the process of lexical and grammatical interchanges. The most dramatic evidence is found with the Island Karina, whom Taylor calls the Igneri. The studies of these people in the seventeenth century by the French, most notably the priest,

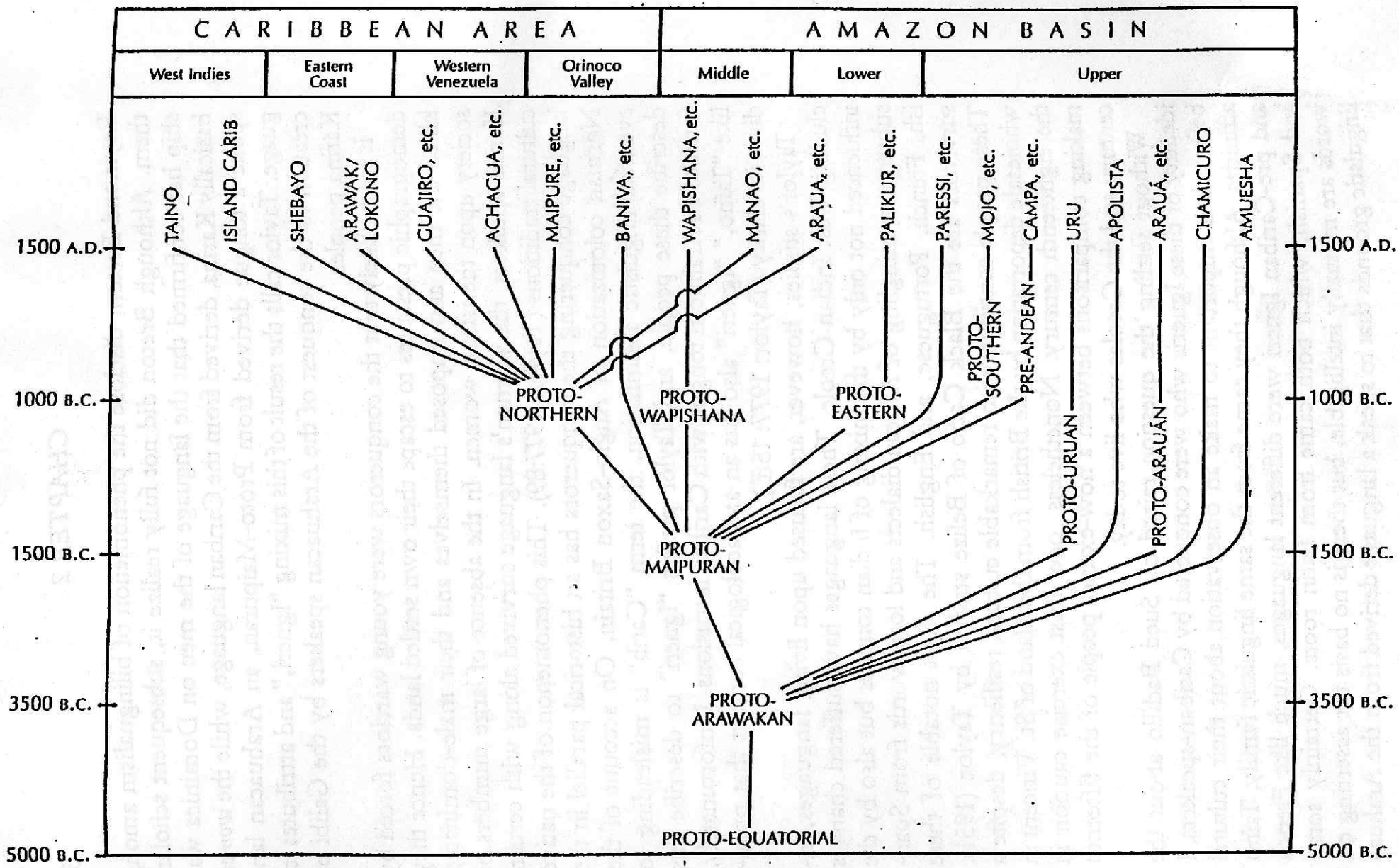


Table 2. The Phylogeny of the Arawakan Language. From Rouse, 1986.

Raymond Breton, disclose the phenomenon of bilingualism among them. Although Breton did not fully realize it, subsequent scholarship has confirmed that the language of the men on Dominica was basically Karina, derived from the Cariban language, while the women spoke a tongue derived from Proto-Maipuran, an Arahuacan language. Taylor calls the result of this mixing "Igneri," and attributes its creation to the conquest of the Arahuacan speakers by the Galibi or Karina peoples.

It seems likely that the conquerors were young warriors forced by demographic pressures to escape their own settled lands. Hence they killed the men and imposed themselves and their maledominated society upon the island women. In the absence of large numbers of Karina-speakers, the women's language survived along with certain cultural traditions (Taylor, 1977:89). This phenomenon of the native language conquering the conquerors has an historical parallel in the Norman colonization of Anglo-Saxon Britain. On account of the eventual linguistic assimilation, the term "Carib" is misleading to describe these people, and Taylor prefers "Igneri" to describe this form of an Arahucan tongue with Cariban intrusions. Unfortunately, like "Taíno," "Igneri" also has an archaeological context that prejudices its clarity (Taylor: 1977: 15ff.).

Taylor's studies, however, are focused upon living languages, including West Indian Creole. These languages have suffered changes influenced not only by the mixing of Indian tongues but also by the subsequent mingling of African dialects and loan words from Spanish, French, Portuguese, and English. The most notable of these survivors are the Black Carib of Belize studied by Taylor (1951). These people continue with remarkable cultural resiliency, despite a wholesale deportation by the British from the island of St. Vincent in the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, one must exercise caution in making comparisons between a nowextinct people of the fifteenth century and the Creoles who live today.

Without settling the question raised by Sued Badillo about the identity of these Igneris who were conquered by Caribanspeakers, I believe it is important to make an observation about their cultural affinities. Although they came from the same linguistic family, Talno and pre-Cariban Igneri were different languages, much like French and Spanish, which both came from Latin roots. Certainly some words are mutually intelligible, but there is no basis for asserting on linguistic grounds that to speak a language derived from the Arahuacan

Family is to be Taíno, any more than one can argue that French is Spanish because they both have a similar linguistic pedigree.
In terms of archaeology, however, Sued Badillo is justified in citing Bullen and Bullen about the lack of substantial Cariban ceramic styles north of the island of St. Vincent (Sued Badillo, 1978:125; Bullen and Bullen, 1972:16667). The absence of archaeological evidence, however, is not the strongest basis for theorizing. As has been suggested above, the rapid changes in methodology may uncover new evidence that is not yet available. Rouse also stresses that the type of conquest that took place on Dominica implied that previous ceramic styles and other cultural and linguistic patterns may have persisted despite the presence of Karina warriors (Rouse, 1964:14).
Rouse has applied his helpful distinction concerning the different kinds of migration to this question (1986). Only one form of migration requires "the original peopling of an area, or else the repeopling that takes place when a foreign population enters an area and overwhelms the local population" (4). Rouse calls this "population movement." He names the other phenomenon "immigration," in which there is an "intrusion of individual settlers into a local population without destroying or replacing it" (5). Expanding upon this less inclusive immigration, Rouse concludes that:

The intrusive settlers usually travel as members-of a family, war party, or some other kind of social group. If such a group belongs to the same race as the local people, lives in a similar culture, and speaks the same language, it will simply lose itself in the local population. If it differs in one or more of these respects, it may be able to maintain its separate identity for awhile, but eventually it or its descendants will be absorbed into the local population. This is apparently what happened to the Carib warriors who conquered the Lesser Antilles. They were able to retain their martial outlook, to develop a new settlement pattern segregating the adult males in separate men's houses, and to preserve their pidgin speech there. They also substituted their own name, Carib, for that of the local population, Igneri. Nevertheless, they do not seem to have succeeded in changing the domestic aspects of the local culture (5).

Applying this distinction to the Greater Antilles, it may be affirmed that the Tainos began repeopling the islands when they arrived in Puerto Rico after the beginning of the Christian era. The Taínos remained the dominant cultural group in the Greater Antilles until the islands were repeopled by the European migration after Columbus.

Contact with the linguistically related but culturally distinct groups in the Lesser Antilles would be best described as immigration. With out replacing the Taíno culture, the encounters affected life at the frontiers of the Vieques Sound area in the period immediately preceding the Spanish arrival, from about A.D. 1200. These contacts probably were in both directions, i.e., Taínos moving eastward to the Lesser Antilles and Igneri groups immigrating to the larger islands. The process eventually affected the ceramic styles of the Taínos beyond the frontiers. The key question is one of chronology. Did the immigration of the Igneri to the Greater Antilles take place before the arrival of the Cariban-speakers? Was the ferment at the frontiers provoked by the raids of migratory Caribanspeakers upon the Arahuacan inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles, who in turn fled westward? Were the hostile contacts only between the marauding Cariban people and the Talno? [4]

Whatever the answer to these questions, it appears indisputable that the contacts spurred a renewal of Taíno cultural and religious activity that took on the nature of a revival of traditional beliefs. Certainly, the cultural affinities between the Taínos and their linguistic cousins who bore the brunt of Cariban or Island Karina invasion merits further study, because despite the differences in language -there are clear cultural linkages. Several examples of common mythological beliefs are described in this book (Chapters 7, 9, and 12), and these considerations may make a modest contribution towards uncovering the nature of the relationship.

In this brief summary of the principal points of agreement, as well as some discussion of the disagreements in Taino Studies, I have stressed the migratory patterns of these people and have established a basic chronology for their cultural development. I trust that I have offered sufficient explanation of the circumstances of Taino conflicts with other peoples at their eastern frontiers at the time of the Spanish conquest. The reader should not overlook the revival of cemieism among the Taínos after A.D. 1200 and the accompanying emergence of the ballgame. These are archaeological phenomena with an important cultural and religious meaning which will be explored in the following chapters.

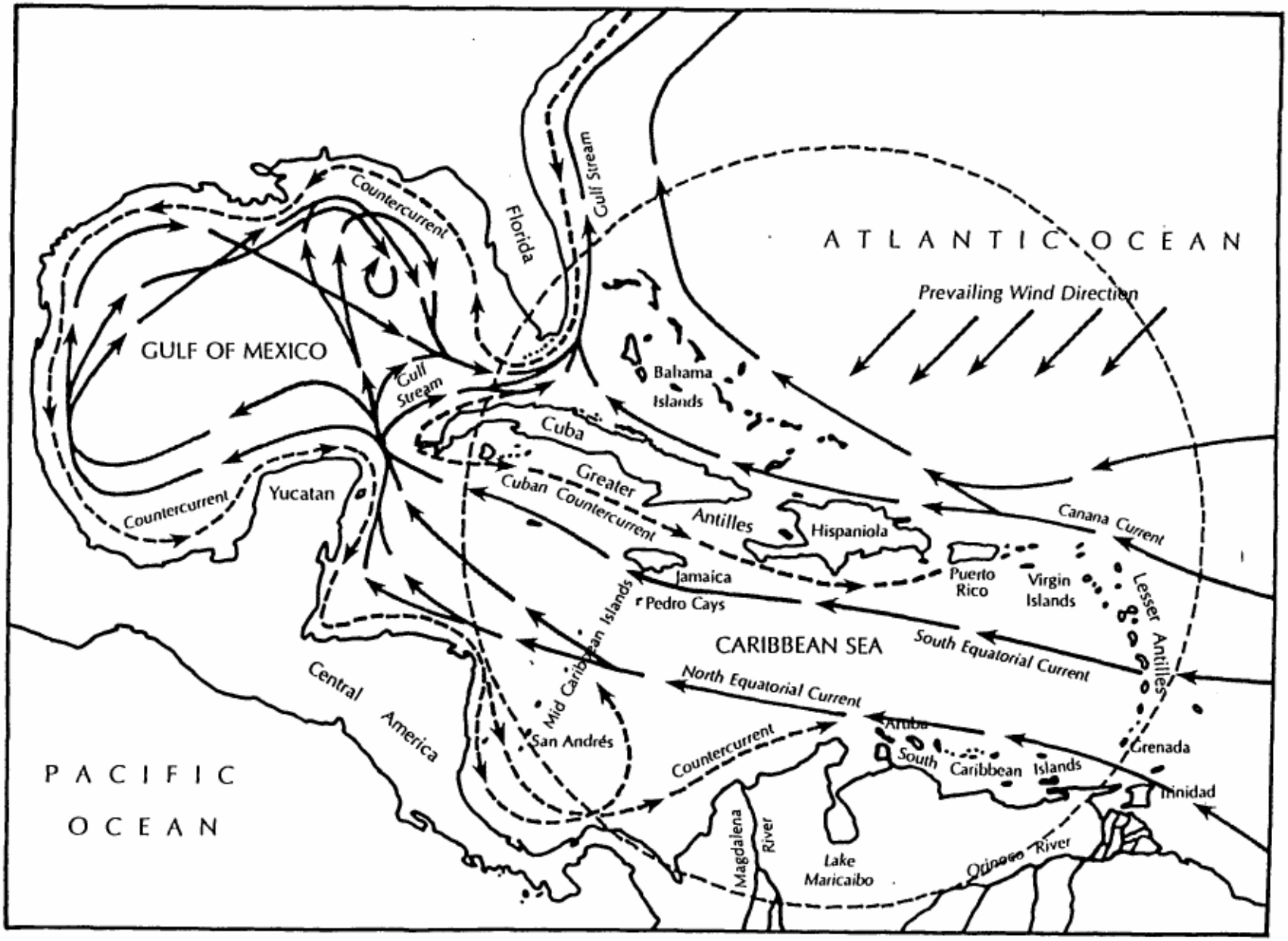
4. See Rouse and Aflaire:46l, 474 for more archaeological data.

CHAPTER THREE

The Natural World of the Taínos

The Caribbean area covers 971,400 square miles (1,562,983 sq. km.), making **it** the size of Europe. The Caribbean Sea constitutes most of the territory, bounded on the south and west by the coasts of the South American continent and Central America up to the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. The other two sides of the oblong-shaped region are determined by the archipelago of the Antilles. It is on these islands that the Taínos lived, having migrated from the southeastern tip of the region at the Orinoco Delta in present-day Venezuela to the central region of Cuba, which lies on the northwestern rim of the island ring (Map 2). There are "spurs" on the Antilles: one is composed of the Caicos, Turks, and Bahama Islands in the northwest, forming a western periphery; in the south and to the west of Trinidad are other small islands, the largest of which are Curazao and Aruba. All the islands are linked by currents and trade winds, so that travel back and forth from all the Antilles is possible even in small ships. Indeed, the frontier concept offered in Chapter 2 (Map 1) is related to these factors, because the would have traveled in canoes.

Size is the most striking feature that distinguishes the islands of the south, where the Taínos migration journey began, and the islands of



Map 2. Caribbean Region and Currents. Adapted from Goméz and Ballesteros, 1978.

the north, where **it** ended. Cuba is the largest of these islands, with an area of 44,218 square miles (71,147 sq. km.), followed by Hispaniola with 29,943 square miles (48,178 sq. km.), Jamaica with 4,441 square miles (7,146 sq. km.), and Puerto Rico with 3,435 square miles (5,527 sq. km.). The total land mass of these four islands, known as the Greater Antilles, is roughly equal to the size of the state of Kansas. On the other hand, the Lesser Antilles are truly tiny: Trinidad, the largest, is scarcely one—third the size of Puerto Rico but nearly twice the size of Guadalupe, the second largest, which has only 688 square miles (1,107 sq. km.) of territory (Picó:1—8).

The Antilles, together with other minor island groups, are also known as the West Indies. To a geologist, they are the peaks of a mountain range formed by volcanic eruptions in formative geological ages. But the Greater Antilles, with which we are principally concerned, have a more diverse geological structure. Each of them has a mountain range running down the center in an east-west direction. The mountainous interiors, however, have slopes, plains, and valleys on either side, which permit a relatively wide variety of flora and fauna. The larger land mass of each of the larger islands afforded the Taínos an abundant supply of fresh water.

The availability of drinkable water is a second striking difference between the Lesser and Greater Antilles. Water is at a premium on the smaller islands, since the combination of heat and lack of arable soil frequently exhausts streams and brooks that flow from the mountains. And although the amount of rainfall varies from island to island, all the Antilles experience a dry spell from December to March. Rain becomes abundant after April and continues to be heavy until the middle of August when the hurricane season begins. At times the hurricanes sweep over the islands, bringing great calamities. For instance, on the smaller islands the destruction of fruit trees could produce famine not only for the human population, but also for the few species of forest wildlife (Sued Badillo, 1978:131-48).

The ecology of the Greater Antilles, on the other hand, offers a brighter picture. The mountain ranges that run through the center of the islands of Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico provide a reliable watershed. The mountains serve as a wall to the moist air blowing off the surface of the sea, and when the process of condensation cools the hot moist air, the resulting rainwater fills mountain streams and ponds. Limestone deposits at the base of the mountains have resulted in what is called a karst zone in all of the Greater

Antilles. This kind of geological condition provides many caves, which fill up with underground water when seepage dissolves the soft limestone. One of the longest underground rivers in the hemisphere is found near Coamo, Puerto Rico, which enjoys the greatest water abundance of the Greater Antilles. In a sense, the karst subsurface is a sponge. Hence, fresh water is provided not only by forest streams and ponds, but also by underground springs (Picó:34-37).

The northern Atlantic coast has more rainfall than the southern coastline because the breezes from the Atlantic carry more moisture. Since Jamaica lacks an Atlantic coast, its annual rainfall is the least of the four islands. Nevertheless, in comparison with most of the Lesser Antilles, each of the four islands of the Greater Antilles represents a more provident ecology. The riverbank soil enjoys a significant agricultural potential, and forest woodlands offer hunters wild fowl and small game. Despite a drier climate, the southern coasts of Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico offered the Taínos better fishing, since the calmer and warmer waters of the Caribbean Sea are more easily navigated by canoe that the harsher Atlantic Ocean on the northern coast.

Since the islands lacked any large game, fish were the principal source of animal protein in the Taino diet. Taíno fishing techniques were well developed, utilizing hooks, nets, and fish stalls which allowed the fish to be trapped when the water was deep, and then hauled in when the tide ebbed (Fernández Méndez, 1960). These methods permitted the Taínos to exploit fishing both in mountain rivers and in the ocean. Crabs, shellfish, turtle eggs, and sea turtles were eaten. According to Exquemelin, writing in 1678, there were four kinds of marine turtles in the Caribbean, of which two were considered good to eat and two others "full of oil and not **fit** to eat" (Exquemelin:73). Since the Taínos seem to have had a taboo on eating fresh-water turtles called *"hicoteas" (Pseydemys palustris)* (Moya Pons, 1972:9), one might speculate that this religious prohibition reflects a gastronomic reality. Parrots, water fowl, and other birds, along with lizards, were eaten as delicacies. The Spaniards wrote of a "mute dog," described by Las Casas both as *"aon"* and *guaminiquinaje,"* which was kept as a pet and often eaten. Another domesticated animal, called a *'jutía,"* a large ratlike animal *(Soledonon paradoxus),* often met with the same culinary fate. The largest mammal found in the pre-Columbian Greater Antilles was the *manatí (Manatus americanus),* or sea cow. These harmless and docile creatures were prized

along the seacoast because they provided flesh for meat, hides for clothing or cords, and bones which could be fashioned into tools or ornaments.

The main source of food for the Taínos came from farming, which was done collectively in villages. The fields, called *"conucos,"* were planted with a variety of crops that provided food on a year-round basis. A wooden hoe, or *coa,* was utilized with dexterity to open the ground. The Taíno word *"maisi"* is the origin of "maize," the common term for American corn. The Europeans first encountered this plant in the Antilles. Maize did not occupy the central dietary role for the Taínos that it did for Meso-American peoples, however.

Many of the cultivated crops of the Taínos were tubers.' The first notice from the journal of Columbus records the frequency of their planting. Columbus recognized some roots as similar to those he had seen in Africa and called them "yams" *(Dioscoreas),* although they are a soft white potato which the Taínos called *"aje"* (Sauer:53). The Taino *batata (Ipomoea batatas)* is a plant of the same family that has come to be known as the sweet potato. The name *"batata"* was confused with that of the Peruvian white and hard *papa* by North Europeans, who created the word "potato" out of the two Indian terms.

The Taínos also cultivated the *man* or peanut *(Arachis hypogeae),* and various kinds of squash and beans. They used the leaves of tobacco *(Nicotiana tabacum)* for both smoking and chewing, but there is no direct evidence that these plants were cultivated in the *conucos.* They painted their bodies with the fruit of the *jagua (Genipa)* and with *bixa (Bixa orellana),* better known for its Mexican name *of"achiote."* The first produces a black dye, and the latter a bright red paint. They gathered cotton from a small tree proper to the West Indies *(Gossyp ium barbadense).*

The Talnos gathered fruits from the forest and often fermented juices to make different kinds of alcholic drinks. *Chicha,* a drink made from maize, is no longer consumed, but another, *mabí,* made from a local berry *(Culubrina reclinata),* is still used by present-day inhabitants of the islands. There are many plants often identified with the islands which were not available to the Tamnos, but were imported by the Spaniards. Among these are bananas, coconuts, and yams. But, on

1. Excellent descriptions of Taíno agriculture can be found in Sauer (48-65) for those who read English and in Gómez and Ballesteros (1978:95-100) for those who read Spanish.

the other hand, there are fruits indigenous to the Antilles that are sometimes attributed to other places. Perhaps the most notorious of these is the fruit the Taínos called *"yayama,"* known today as the "pineapple" *(Ananas comosus),* which was later taken to Hawaii.

The most prominent crop of the Taínos was *yuca,* or *manioc (Manihot esculenta).* This plant, a staple not only in its native America but also in parts of Africa and Asia where it was subsequently introduced by explorers, is a rich source of caloric nourishment. On a par with maize and the potato, *it* determines one of the three agricultural economies among the pre-Columbian inhabitants of the hemisphere. *Yuca* produces more starch per acre than corn or potatoes—more, in fact, than wheat or barley (Olsen:6). Noting that Taíno farming "would have been a competent agricultural system without *yuca,"* Sauer states:

> The white man never frilly appreciated the excellent combination of plants that were grown in *conucos.* The mixed planting system gave the greatest range of terrain usable without regard to steepness or regularity of slope. The plants grown were neither demanding nor exhaustive of soil fertility and were relatively indifferent to soil acidity. They needed no special means of storage, had no critical time of harvest, and were in production at all seasons. . . -The economy worked because production of the land was in balance with food taken from the water, and the bounty of the waters also was great (Sauer:68,69).

This picture of Taino agriculture is a more favorable one than has been offered of the inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles or the Orinoco region, though similar plants and technology are found in those places. The Taíno success in the four larger islands is largely attributable to the natural fruitfulness of the Greater Antilles.

Yucawas recorded by the Spaniards to be the principal crop of the Taínos. Their perception was based on the wide expanse of plantings dedicated to this crop. *Yuca* is a slow-growing plant which takes approximately twelve to eighteen months to produce a harvest. The Taínos prepared the ground for planting by a slash-and-burn technique. No seeds are used for sowing *yuca;* as with other tubers, spuds or parts of the stem are planted. The best time in the Caribbean for such sowing is the rainy season at the end of March. Eyewitness accounts in the chronicles describe the Indians as sowing *yuca* in mounds of earth about nine to fourteen feet in perimeter and some two to three feet apart (Moya Pons:7). *Yuca* must be planted in such

mounds of loose earth, for if it is placed in level ground it lacks oxygen and will not produce a strong root system, thus reducing *its* edible yield. The Taínos in the central cultural area of the Mona Passage fashioned irrigation systems to water remote fields, thus extending *yuca* cultivation throughout the islands' arable land.

There are two kinds of yuca: sweet yuca, called *"boniato"* by the , which is boiled and eaten as a vegetable with relative ease, and bitter yuca, which demands processing. Noting that both varieties have the same botanical name, Olsen speculates that the sweet yuca is a variety of fast-growing yuca which was produced by selective planting over the course of centuries of cultivation (Olsen:51-60). The hydrocyanic acid that flows from bitter yuca when it has been peeled is poisonous. Charlevoix, a European visitor to the Caribbean in the eighteenth century, observed Indian women committing suicide by drinking this venomous juice (cited in Fewkes:53). The Taínos, however, possessed a technology of yuca-processing to avoid the ill effects of the hydrocyanic acid.

The Indians harvested the plant by uncovering and cutting out its roots with stone chopping tools. The rind or husk was then scapped off with flint knives. Yuca roots can grow as long as three feet and may weigh up to twenty pounds, providing an almost pure source of starch. If roasted or boiled, yuca of the sweet variety could be eaten somewhat in the manner of turnips. For baking, strains of bitter yuca were used.

The hydocyanic acid was first squeezed from the roots, leaving a white pulp. The Taínos grated the dried yuca pulp on mills of volcanic rock or wood called *"guariquetenes."* The mass was slowly squeezed in a basketlike tube, called *"cibucán."* Once hard, the bits became a kind of flour, which was shaped on a griddle called a *"buren"* and baked some fifteen minutes on each side into a bread they called *"cazabe."* Olsen points out that bitter yuca produced a *cazabe* which was more resistant to spoilage than that which came from sweet yuca. Two bushels a month was considered an adequate supply of *cazabe* (Olsen:72-73; 87-88).

The harvesting of large amounts of yuca liberated the Talnos from the sporadic foraging of hunters and gatherers, thus permitting them to develop newly specialized forms of economic and social organizadon. It must be stressed that it was not cultivation of yuca or the baking of *cazabe* that distinguished the Taínos: indeed, many other peoples still do this. It is rather the amount of yuca grown and *cazabe*

produced and the attendant procedures of storage and distribution that offer a perspective on social change. How long *it* took for this process to be completed, however, is not clear. The archaeological evidence notes several epochs, arid these are most certainly linked to the gradual emergence of new technologies and forms of social organization that enabled the Taínos to take advantage of the special fruitfulness of the Greater Antilles. The period A.D. 1200 until the Spanish conquest was characterized by a revival of certain religious practices and features of a more ancient pottery style among the Taínos in the Mona Passage cultural region (Chapter 2). The cultural and religious dimensions of these changes will be more fully explored in subsequent chapters, but it may be asked what relationship these changes had to the natural abundance of the islands.

It has been customary to attribute such modifications in cultural production to the invasion of Caribs (Figueroa:41-44). Sued Badillo discards this notion, however, and states that the changes were due to• population density among the Taínos, which forced them into competition for arable lands (1978:133-34). The notion of frontier (Rouse, 1983) should also be considered, not necessarily exclusive of the other theories, to explain these changes. Certainly, by comparison with other societies, it would seem clear that whatever the root cause of alteration in ceramic production and religious artifacts during this period, there were repercussions in the economic and social organization of the Taínos.

One of the effects of specialization of labor is the reduction of flexibility in social organization.2 In a hunting and gathering society, freedom of individuals within small groups is at a maximum and leisure time is considerable (Sahlins). In a more complex organization, however, the workers must produce not only for themselves, but also for others, who are related to them through systems of exchange. These may be considered the key differences between the Taínos and the peoples in the Lesser Antilles: specialization of labor and a movement away from small social units towards systems of exchange.

But although the Taínos may be considered to have achieved a significant level of specialization beyond that found in the Lesser Antilles, they had not developed the intensive agriculture that was be found in Mexico and Peru, nor had they any political system with

2. I have taken this **notion** and the description **on** the harvesting **economy** from Harold D. Winter's introduction to Webb's book.

the stratification of the Mayan, Aztec, or Incan empires. Hence, they may be considered to have been in a transitional or middle stage. Anthropologists have different descriptions for cultures that are beyond simple harvesting and gathering but not yet agricultural. The term I have chosen for this transitional stage of the Taínos is "harvesting economy," a term used to describe the process of adaptation of native North American peoples (Winter in Webb).

First, a harvesting economy is characterized by a highly developed technology for plant processing and the exploitation of a staple crop; the rest of the subsistence system remains more or less at the same level as that in a hunting and gathering society. Corresponding to this description, yuca cultivation by the Taínos was so advanced that the methods of farming, processing, and cooking it have not changed in nearly 500 years. But, on the other hand, the gathering of fruits and the utilization of cotton by the Taínos was dependent on a simple gathering process. The exploitation of one crop lends the economy the appearance of an agricultural one, but because the remaining economic activities lagged behind this advance, the society did not truly have an agricultural basis. The term "horticultural economy" probably carries much of the same meaning as "harvesting economy" but without emphasis on the extensive advance in cultivating a single crop. I believe the Taínos should be seen as a people "harvesting" the windfall of abundant yuca plantings rather than as a people whose social organization was tied exclusively to farming.

Second, in a harvesting economy the narrow spectrum of agricultural activity requires prolonged residence at specific sites and efficient methods of food storage rather than nomadic foraging. There is ample evidence that at the time of Spanish arrival, most Taíno villages were permanent residence sites. In 1496, Guarionex, a chieftain of Hispaniola, offered to sow 80,000 mounds of yuca for the son of Columbus. This would have required considerable expanse of arable land,, and it would have been an unlikely commitment for a nomadic people. Recent excavations on that site suggest it had about 5,000 inhabitants, sufficient population, in my view, to qualify it as a "proto-city." Piles of fish bones as high as six feet have been discovered, which indicates that fish was consumed in great quantities, befitting such a large population (Moya Pons:7). On the basis of this evidence, I conclude that, unlike the peoples of the Lesser Antilles, the Taínos had achieved the prolonged residence typical of a harvesting economy.

Third, in a harvesting economy there is a systematic procurement of, or trade in commodities. This often results in an unequal distribution and concentration of certain resources, including the accretion of wealth. The presence at Taíno inland water settlements of spoons and other implements made from the bones of the salt-water sea cow reveals a network of trading from interior to seacoast. Transport arid commerce in the opposite direction may also be presumed, since sites with 5,000 inhabitants would have required importation of yuca and fruits from outlying areas.

Such trading is the context for the frequent canoe travel by water that formed the basis of Taino settlement (Rouse, 1982). Some of the canoes were large enough to carry sixty to eighty persons. 'Such transport would have been common not only for persons, but for commodities as well. While they seem to have preferred inland river settlements in the first stages of settlement, the fruitfulness of the land arid demographic pressures probably pushed the Taínos to the seacoast, so that by the time the Spaniards arrived all areas of Taíno habitation were father densely populated. Yuca farming requires extensive area for cultivation, however, and such land was the basic resource of the interior. On the other hand, salt-water fishing provides bigger catches than can usually be obtained in fresh-water rivers. On the basis of the natural advantage to each region, a mutual exchange between the interior and the coast likely would have been structured into Taíno expansion. The processing of yuca into cazabe would have been a task for villages of the interior, while fishing—and probably specialized artisanship—would have benefited the oceanside settlements.

Hence, the exchange among the Taínos in this type of transitional economy consisted of trade between the villages of the interior and the coast. With exchange comes the potential for social inequality and the. centralization of political power to maintain social unity (Balandier: 34-41; 79-86). In my opinion, the concentration of resources and accumulation of wealth in Taíno society was founded on this regional exchange, which made the larger coast settlements the "winners" and the older but smaller villages of the mountainous interior the "losers." To substantiate this interpretation, one must examine the relationships among the caciques to discover a pattern of dependence. As I will discuss at the conclusion of this chapter, more research is required before resolving this question of regional inequality. There is ample evidence, however, of social ranking among the Taínos. Ac-

cording to the information offered by the Spanish chronicles, ranking was based partly on the division of labor and partly on the power of the caciques to command resources.

The division of labor according to gender among the Taínos followed the general pattern of similar peoples. Women bore children, collected the harvest, prepared and cooked most of the food, wove baskets and cloth, and made clothes (Sued Badillo, 1975:9-13). Men hunted, fished, and cleared the land for planting yuca. Not all the Taínos assumed these tasks, however. The worker who bore the burden of such labor was called a *"nabori."* They surrendered their produce to a cacique and were given a month's supply of *cazabe* in return (Las Casas as cited in Moya Pons:1O). Apparently, these workers were riot free to chose allegiance and were given in exchange from one ruler to another; indeed, this practice was repeated frequency in the formal encounters with the Spaniards, in which Taíno rulers generally awarded the Europeans with *naboría.* Las Casas saw so much difference in life-style between these workers and their overlords that he once speculated that they were slaves *(Historia* III:223 cited in Gómez and Ballesteros:88, n.XXX), an opinion he later recanted *(Apologética:XLIV).*

The overlord class from which the caciques were chosen was called *"nitaino,"* and enjoyed ranking as the ruling group. The chieftain, or cacique, was separated from the general population by signs of special status. Some of these distinctions are described by the chronicles: the chief's lodge, or *caney,* was large, unlike the rather small dwelling, or *bohío,* of the workers; the chief wore a *"guanin"* and other distinctive jewelry on his chest; he inherited his power. Spanish eyewitnesses report that the caciques were buried in rites which differed from those of the *naboria,* and recent archeology has confirmed these accounts by excavations in which many ornaments, indicative of higher social prestige, were found in some graves (Morbin Laucer:22-31, 95-96, et passim).

Because Spanish sources generally concentrated their accounts on the caciques, the role of *nitaino* as a class is less clear. Since the highly elaborated stonecraft of the demonstrates a significant level of artistic achievement, however (Arrorn, 1975), one may plausibly suggest a specialization of certain artisans as craftsmen of these religious stones. I do not believe it is unreasonable to assert that the *ni* may have appropriated to themselves the role of artisans, especially of religious artifacts. In the process, religion would have

legitimized the social dominance of this privileged group, a phenomenon concisely described by Balandier (101-22, esp. 1080-10, 120), and one I feel is applicable to the *NiTainos.* In sum, the historical and archaeological evidence point towards both the unequal distribution of resources and the accumulation of wealth within Talno society—a fourth characteristic of a harvesting economy.

A fifth trait of a harvesting economy is that increasing time is devoted to religious rites and inter-tribal contacts, which are probably related to the legitimization of an emerging new order. I have stressed that in their last epoch, from A.D. 1200, the Taínos underwent a revival of *cemieism.* There was also an increase in the number of ball courts, which were used in a game related to religious purposes. There is no evidence of yuca-processing or fishing facilities of residential settlements at the ball field of Capá, near present day Utuado in Puerto Rico, or at most other sites in the Greater Antilles. It is probably safe to suppose that the location was used exclusively for ballgames. Capá consists of an immense field lined with hewn stones, surrounded by several smaller fields of irregular size and shape. It has been suggested that this site served as a kind of "Olympic stadium" where the best ball players of the island met in championship contests (Olsen:282-83; 295-99). Furthermore, Alegría has contributed a monograph on the frequent communications among the on both sides of the Mona Passage (Alegría, 1974). Hence, both in terms of religious activities and inter-tribal contacts, the hypothesis of a harvesting economy seems justifiably applied to the Taínos of this period.

The final distinguishing trait of a harvesting economy is the increase of internal and external conflict. The social tensions derive from the transition in social organization. Traditional hunting and gathering styles entail a loose confederation of villages under spontaneous leadership; agricultural societies, on the other hand, have far more rigid forms of social control and a centralized authority (Balandier:87-94).

In the case of the Taínos, it is possible that too much emphasis has been placed on the marauders from the eastern islands as the cause of social dislocation. There does not seem to be any good reason to. doubt that armed conflict was intense in the Taino society in the later period, but some of this may be due to internal changes as well as to the threat of invasion. This seems to be the conclusion of some recent interpretations of these conflicts (Veloz Maggiolo; Cassa;

Moscoso). Terms such as *"cacicazgo* system" and "proto-theocratic" have been suggested to describe the new political formations. Despite their different nuances, these terms all emphasize the transitional nature of Taino social authority. The term "tribal-tributary" suggested by Moscoso is a good one, because it relates political organization to the economic production central to the harvesting economy of the Taínos, who certainly may be considered to have been "in the state of dissolving the social tribal forms and of the incipient emergence of relations of class and the division of the society into classes" (Moscoso:33).

These six characteristics of the harvesting economy as described by Howard Winter suggest that the Taino culture at the time of the Spanish conquest was more developed than that of the people in the Lesser Antilles and parts of the Amazon and Orinoco regions. This is not a great revelation, but if the Taíno society was a harvesting economy, then the social changes stimulated by an intensive yuca cultivation explain the similarities with an agricultural society. Moreover, I have chosen the term "harvesting economy" because I want to compare the transitional state of the Taínos to other peoples.

In the case of certain natives of North America, the meeting with Europeans provided new technologies of hunting as a result of the domestication of the horse. That acquisition enabled societies in a harvesting economy (generally maize) to return th hunting and gathering and thus avoid the social constrictions entailed by an agricultural society. It must be stressed, therefore, that the harvesting economy is not to be understood as a "step in progress" beyond hunting and gathering. Although it certainly demands sophistication in technology and new configurations in social and political organization, the harvesting economy usually maintains significant continuity with the way of life derived from hunting and gathering. If the more complex forms are mastered, the harvesting economy may lead to
•agriculture and state organization. Some societies make such a transition and others do not; ecology often becomes the key determinant. In the future, I hope to explore this theme in terms of the Taino encounter with the Spaniards; for the present, I believe the explanation of the harvesting economy which I have sketched offers greater insight into the disintegration of Taino society than a simplistic blaming the Spaniards for genocide (Stevens-Arroyo, 1981:84-103).

Since the harvesting economy is transitional, it is also fragile. I believe that the foraging peoples of the Lesser Antilles would have

found it possible to escape the conquest by abandoning sites the Europeans coveted and resuming life in another region. The Taínos in the Greater Antilles, on the other hand, could not cut and run from the Spaniards in quite the same way because they maintained a more complex social organization. They did not have the kind of established state system the Spaniards found in Mexico and Peru, however. Armed resistance against the Spaniards by the Taínos was a bloody mismatch, not only because like the Aztecs and Incas they lacked effective weapons, but also because they had no state system. Moreover, the economy of yuca was easily swept aside, because Spanish colonization neither desired nor required what the Talnos produced. The continental empires, on the other hand, had such a vital agricultural system that it had to be incorporated into the Spanish state in the colonization process (MacLachian and Rodriguez). Thus the harvesting economy which placed the Taínos between hunters and agriculturalists also denied them the relative advantages of these other social forms. The Taínos were caught between their achievement of a more sophisticated social organization and their lack of a state system.

The second conclusion to be drawn from asserting that the Taínos had a harvesting economy concerns the type of internal tensions they experienced. If the notion of tribal-tributary structure is correct, then the exchanges among villages would have been basically unjust, favoring the large settlements of the dominant caciques at the expense of smaller units. I have theorized above that the dominant chieftains were based at or near the coast. Independent of this hypothesis, social inequality among the Taínos is hard to deny. Their economy, then, was based on a pattern of uneven exchange among caciques.

I believe coercion existed in intra-Taíno relations and that caciques employed police or soldiers to enforce commerce. A class of warrior either had emerged or was emerging among the Taínos in support of a growing cacical authority. Moreover, a chief rich enough to pay the warriors could have extended his power by waging war with these mercenaries. This may explain an enigma which has puzzled many historians of Puerto Rico, namely the presence of Island Karina warriors fighting alongside Taínos in the revolt of 1511 (Figueroa:64). Those who impose a European concept of feudal antagonism upon the Indian societies find it difficult to explain how two supposed enemies could ever be allies. I would suggest that warrior bands of Island Karina peoples from the Lesser Antilles served as mercenary soldiers for major caciques who sought to subdue recalcitrant fellow

The Religious Cosmos of the Taínos

"For religious men nature is never only natural," says Mircea Eliade, an expert on Comparative Religions (Eliade, 1959:151). Moreover, it is vital to understand that for peoples such as the Taínos, religion functions differently from the institutionalized faiths of modem society. The world today is accustomed to separate realms for religion and science, church and state, theology and philosophy. But for the Taínos, religion assumed all of these functions through an interlocking system of symbols, rites, and beliefs. Some attention has already been paid to the theories of Lévi-Strauss on the relationship of myth to praxis (Chapter 1), but the coherence of religious systems merits more extensive explanation.

Religious coherence is based on reciprocity, not only among its human practitioners but between nature and humankind. The analogical thinker extends the basic paradigm of human experience to explain interaction with the world. Thus the weather, the trees, the ocean, the land observe - or violate - the law the same as humans do. But a religious system makes it possible for humans to safeguard themselves, because in the total reciprocity of the system, even trans - human spirits have their limits. Reichel-Dolmatoff uses the image of

an electrical circuit to illustrate this point: “The circuit of energetic potential remains closed; each debit is recouped, and the current circulates without interruption” (1971:244).

To understand such a religion, therefore, the perspective must be as wide as life itself. Unfortunately, it has been methodologically easier for most of those who have studied the Taínos to place their religion in a separate, often subordinate category, apart from treatment of their agriculture, political, and social organization, division of labor, and the like. In this book, I have attempted to follow the advice of Evans Pritchard and to analyze Taíno religion for its Gestalt, so that every fact of Taíno life is seen as much as possible from the believer’s point of view, and:

> as a relation of parts to one another within a coherent system, each part making sense only in relation to the others, and the system itself making sense only in relation to other institutional systems, *as* part of a wider set of relations” (Evans-Pritchard:112).

One of the benefits of this approach is to perceive what Ignacio Bernal characterizes as “the unity in diversity” of culture. In his study of Olmec civilization, Bernal felt this aspect of religious coherence was essential (Bernal: 6). Without it, there is no continuum to explain change or the periodic rebirth of inherited religious concepts. In the course of my own work, I have found this notion to be indispensable. The very term “Taíno” asserts a commonality between the first settlers of the islands at the dawn of the Christian era and the inhabitants encountered by Columbus. To an archaeologist, this is a questionable premise, since the host of artifacts throughout these centuries are classified according to their differences. With the notion of Taíno religious coherence, however, the repetition in the last ceramic era of the geometric designs found in the first forms a totality. Much like the coda in a musical piece, the modifications can be perceived as so many variations on a theme. The ability of the early religious expression to absorb new styles, change, and be reborn after a thousand years demonstrates the strength of the Taíno belief system. The waves of canoe travelers were all eventually absorbed into an overriding faith that bestowed a common value system. Assuredly, this feat of Taíno religion is not as imposing as that of Christianity, which left a tiny desert colony to absorb first the Roman Empire and then the barbarian hordes that destroyed it. But the phenomenon is the same and demonstrates the strength of the religion.

Religious coherence, however, is a subtle category because it is based upon a logical order that remains subjective. Clifford Geertz, using the idea of religion as a cultural system, introduces the concept of a template which serves as a model for the perception of reality (Geertz:40—41). It is his understanding that like an artisan's template, religious belief affects both the perception of reality and subsequent human behavior; in most societies, religion eventually becomes an indispensable factor in framing cultural behavior. This thinking underlies my own analysis of the subjective dimension of Taíno religion.

The congruence of symbol and reality cannot be rejected by a scholar of religion on the grounds that it does not make sense to him, or that it appears to be farfetched. The only valid judgment is the one based on the thinking of the religious believer. Hence, a religious system necessarily involves a subjective order and the multitude of ways that a person's thinking projects itself into life. I like the term "psychic" to describe the active role taken by human understanding in shaping reality. The analogical thinker is also psychic because his perception is freighted with emotions deeply rooted in life itself.

The Taíno religion explained not only the natural world that could be seen and understood, but also the occurrences that had no explanation. Both orders, the logical and the uncanny, together formed one reality. The Taínos were aware that human beings had the double capacity both to act in accord with nature and to act against it. The world, which in its totality was greater than humankind, would have no less freedom to sin against itself. A coherent system was needed to explain what was permissible and what was taboo.

Virtually all religions encounter this challenge, and differences in dogma and belief are made on the basis of how they resolve it. There may not be answers for everything beforehand, but there is at least a paradigm for corning up with new responses. To examine the coherence of a religious system, some attention must be payed to the parts and how they fit together. Using the categories of Comparative Religions to understand the Taínos, one must study their myths, which explained the origins of ritual and law; their rituals, which invoked the numinous to share power with human needs; their laws or customs, which set the norms for behavior; and their personal religious experiences, which were an individual's incorporation into the social dimensions of the belief system (Smart: 6-17).

López Baralt has provided clear identifications between the structure of Taíno myths and those of ocher Amerind peoples. Her research, as well as the more detailed analysis provided in *this* volume,

suggest that Taíno myth is structurally related to the mythology of most Amerind peoples, particularly those of the Amazonian and Orinoco regions. Taíno mythology apparently predates migration to the Antilles. Theoretical aspects of the relationships among Amerind myths are described more fully by Lévi-Strauss (NM: 561-631), while Alegría has supplied a brief compendium of South American myths directly related to Taíno beliefs (Alegría, 1978). The work of Reichel Dolmatoff with the Tukano Indians of Colombia is of crucial importance because he has focused in great detail upon a religious system utilizing much of the perspective adopted here. The debt to Professor Reichel-Dolmatoff will become apparent in my subsequent analysis of Taíno religion. Indeed, the basic paradigm that he posits as the basis of Tukano analogical thinking is at the core of the Taíno belief system as well. Male-female sexual reciprocity explains fertility and energy within the Amazonian cosmos (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971:243 et passim), and this human experience is also the basis for Taíno religion.

The unique feature of Taíno belief lies in the cult of the *cemíes.* The chronicles amply attest to the centrality of the *cemí* to Taíno religion, and this testimony is corroborated by the frequency with which archaeologists have unearthed specimens of these religious objects.

Olsen states that the *cemíes* first appeared with the migration of the Saladoid peoples to Trinidad, and that these early specimens utilized conch or seashells, both as material and in design (Olsen: 96; Figure 1). He has a neatly reasoned argument that makes the *cem(es* the quintessential religious manifestation of the Taínos (Olsen:89—102). Tripointed stones have been discovered in parts of Meso -America, however, so that the use of such religious artifacts must not be attributed exclusively to the Taínos.

Cemíes were made principally from natural materials. Those carved in stone have best endured the centuries, but there were many *cemíes* of wood and some of ceramic, seashell, and even cotton (Gómez and Ballesteros:127-36). The three-pointed stones have been examined in detail by scholars such as Fewkes (111-32). Despite different interpretations, there seems today to be general agreement that categories of masculine and feminine apply to these triangular specimens (Morales Cabrera: 60-62), thus linking them to a fertility paradigm. The distinctive three-pointed shape of many *cemíes* is sometimes mistaken as the only form for these artifacts. Good authority records that the three-pointed ones were used only in connection with the planting of yuca *(Relación: 43),* although there is reason to expand this description

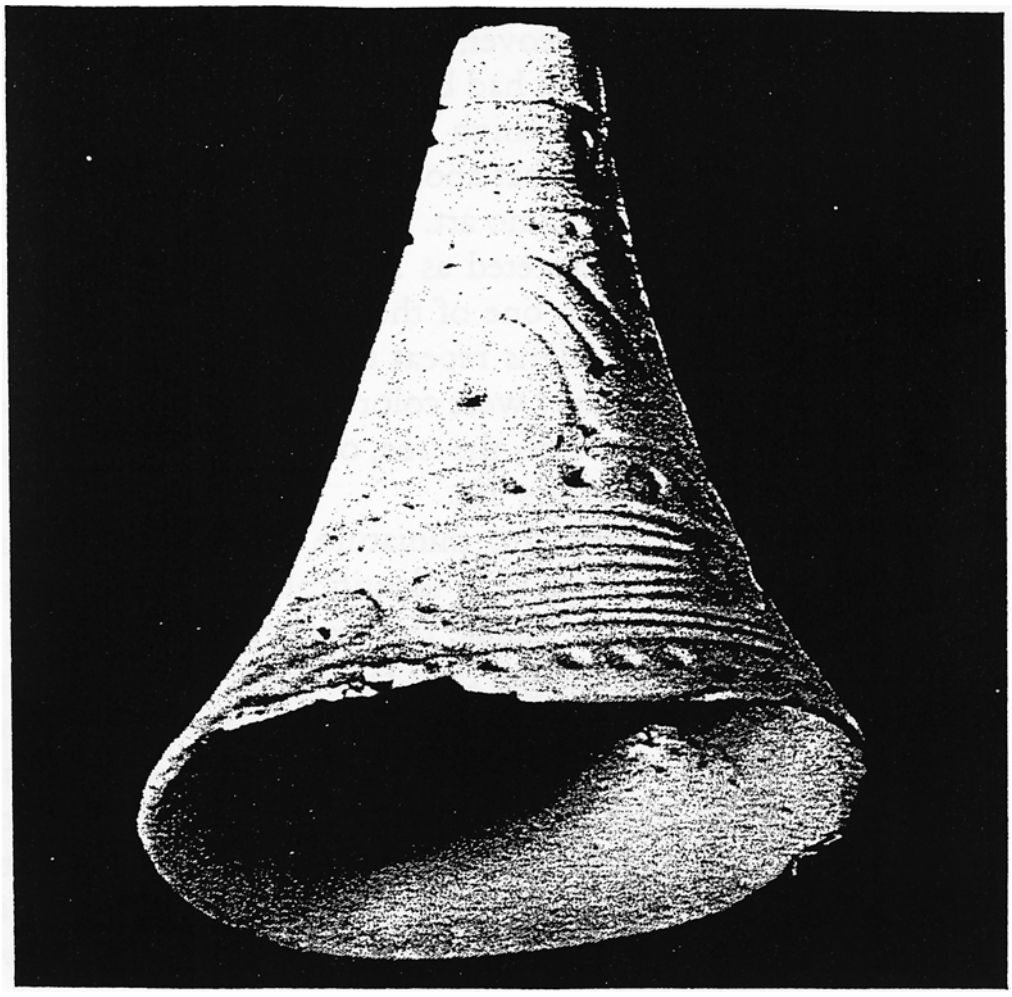


Figure 1. Carved seashell in conical form from the Lesser Antilles. Monserrat, 6.7 cm. Museum of the American Indian. Heye Foundation, New York. After Arrom, 1975. ***Courtesy*** *Siglo XXI, Mexico.*

to include fertility in general, including human childbearing. In addition to insuring fertility, *cemíes* had several other functions. They served as ancestral memorials; they were used for protection from ill omens; and they were integrated into various rituals.

Why, it may be asked, are such images with fertility, funeral, and healing functions considered unique? Are not these common elements in many religions? I would suggest that the belief system, rather than the individual stones that expressed it, is the cornerstone of Taíno religion, and that the artistic traits of the *cemíes* add elements of a religious Gestalt unique to the Taínos. I consider five characteristics to be particularly important.

First, the *cemíes* are miniature art. The largest is about twelve inches long (Olsen: 99), and most are the size of one's fist. They are culturally distinct from the carved Olmec heads or other monumental stone-

craft of Meso-America. Moreover, it is likely that the stone pieces are replicas of wooden *cemíes* that had been previously crafted. Recently, Professor Ricardo Viera of Lehigh University suggested to me that the tiny colorful snail shells that abound in the Caribbean may have served as models for some Taíno art. I find this idea intriguing. Snail shells may have been interpreted as a "natural sculpture," and the conch appears to have been one of the first materials utilized. Undoubtedly, some Taíno designs repeat the natural configurations of snail shells, and probably they were colored in imitation of the species they represented. Furthermore, the *cobo,* or snail shell, figures prominently in Taíno myth (Chapter 10).

The choice of the small and miniature as a divine playground provides a glimpse at the psychic identification of the Taínos with unassuming detail. For the Taínos, the *cemí* was a spirit, not a mere object *(Relación:37).* The images they fashioned were *cemíes* only by attribution, that is, they were holy only as long as they served as a connection to the numinous. But in a seeming contradiction, the great power of the spirit world was entered through contact with miniature figures. The same religious sentiment has been adopted by Christ, who promised entrance into heaven only through a narrow door, where "the last will be first and those who are now first will be last" (Mt. 7:13—14; Lk. 13:22—30).

The second important aspect of *cemeism* is that these artifacts integrate the pottery styles of the Taínos through the ages, but particularly in the last epoch. On many of the *cemíes* one finds both geometric designs and molded faces. In a sense, they are repositories for whatever religious feeling led to a rebirth of certain Saladoid traits in the period preceding the Spanish arrival.

Third, the cranial deformation of the Taínos (Morbán Laucer:61 et passim) can be explained by reference to the *cemíes.* Bernal says that *bilobé,* the practice of modifying the angle of the forehead, was found among the Olmecs and was carried on into subsequent Meso-American cultures (Bernal:72-74): "The head was deformed by binding a small board in oblique position to the forehead of the newborn child until pressure gave the still-plastic cranium the desired form" (Bernal:72). In his opinion, the religious purpose *of bilobé* was to resemble the stylized representations of the spirits. Since the stylized representations for the Taínos were the *cemíes,* the same logic would make them the models for the cranial deformation. Hence, not only did the

Taínos want to speak with and learn from the *cemíes,* they wanted also to look like them.

Fourth, the *cemíes* were perceived to be ubiquitous links between the psychic world of humans and nature. Eyewitness accounts tell how the Taínos would speak to the spirit of the tree, from whose wood was fashioned an image:

> When a native was passing by a tree which was moved more than others by the wind, the Indian in fear calls out, "Who are you?" The tree responds, "Call here a behique or priest and I will tell you who I am." When the priest or shaman had come to the tree and had seated himself before it, he performed certain prescribed ceremonies and rose up to recount the titles and honors of the principal chiefs of the island. He would ask the tree, "What are you doing here? What do you wish of me? Why have you asked to have me called? Tell me if you wish me to cut you down and-if you wish to go with me-how I shall carry you, whether I shall make you a house and a farm and perform ceremonies for a year." The tree answered these questions, and the man cut it down and made of it a statue or idol (Relación:41—42).

This account makes it probable that, not unlike other peoples, the Taínos perceived uncanny formations of stones or wood as special manifestations in nature of the numinous. Eliade would call these "hierophanies" (Eliade, 1974:1—14). The function of the *cemíes* as mediators between the uncanny and the laws of the cosmos makes them the most accessible facets of religious power in the Taíno cosmos.

And fifth, the *cemíes* - *at* least by the time the Spaniards arrived occupied a central place in Taíno rituals of fertility, healing and divination, and the cult of ancestors. The rites were celebrated to communicate with the invisible power of the cosmos, and the *cemíes* were the conduits of these exchanges that maintained the coherence of life.

Interpreting these data led the Spaniards to describe Taíno *cemieism* as idolatry. The pejorative connotations of this word are troublesome; while it cannot be denied that a cult of the spirits represented by graven images was a major characteristic of Taíno religion, it must Simultaneously be affirmed that the same practices are found in many religions, most notably the Catholicism practiced by the conquering Spaniards. The Christians would immediately reject accusations of idolatry based on their cult of the saints, who are represented by

sacred statues. Quite properly, Catholics draw a theological distinction between a saint in heaven and an image meant to serve as a cultic reminder of that person. Yet despite the distinction, abuse of the statue is often considered sacrilegious, because, though only an artifact, the statue is afforded a respect proportionate to what it represents. I believe the same theological distinction should be used with regards to the Taíno religion.

There is reliable historical evidence that the Taínos thought Catholic statues were the equivalents of Taíno *cemíes*. During the first missionary efforts, the Taínos took the Christian statues that had been left by the priest and buried them in the yuca fields. They urinated upon the images for fertility just as they had always done with *cemíes*. In accepting the Christian saints as replacements for their own fertility spirits, the Taínos afforded the Spanish statues an equal place in cultic practice *(Relación:53—55)*.

I believe it is better to use the term "iconolatry" to define this aspect of religion. Raimundo Panikkar, the Hindu-Catholic priest, reasons as follows:

> It makes no ultimate difference whether these forms are gross or subtle, or even whether the iconolater is conscious or not of the inner religious attitude that is his, and, as is generally the case, recognizes that the iconolatrous sign is provisional and must yield to the underlying reality when the time comes. In the final analysis, the icon stands for the homgeneity which subsists between God and his creature; and it is this very homogeneity, which is the condition of religion of the ***religatio*** that "binds together" God and Man so that they are not totally separate and hetrogeneous realities. If God were totally other, there would be no place for love or for knowledge, or for prayer and worship, no place, indeed, for Himself-as-Other (Panikkar: 15-16).

The Taínos found it possible to be intimate with the numinous. The *cemíes* served as sacred mediums allowing the power of the numinous to flow in two directions; from the spirit world out into human experience, and from human need into the cosmos. This Taíno intimacy with the numinous contrasts markedly with Aztec fatalism before the unbridgeable gulf that separated them from their spirits (Brundage: 220—21). On account of this chasm, the Aztecs had a fundamentally pessimistic world view, full of foreboding and dread. Such was not the case with the Taínos and their *cemíes*.

The proliferation of archaeological specimens, however, leads me

to the conclusion that most of the Taíno artifacts are only representations of certain original and more powerful cemíes, which were relatively few in number. Catholic practice offers similar patterns. For instance, the Cuban Madonna, "Our Lady of Cobre," was originally copied from a statue of Our Lady of Charity of Illescas in Spain and is still preserved in a sanctuary of western Cuba Because three local sailors reported that a vision of this Madonna on Nipe Bay at the beginnings of the seventeenth century had saved them from shipwreck, special powers were attributed to the image (Arrom, 1971:196—205). Today, there are millions of copies of this statue, including mass-produced plastic replicas made to be put on car dashboards. No true believer confuses Our Lady, whose spirit is in heaven, with the special statue in its Cuban sanctuary. Nor are the plastic replicas identified with the original statue by the faithful, although the same respect is afforded to all the images because they represent the spirit of Our Lady. Similarly, the Taíno cemíes were simultaneously spirits, uncanny natural images, and stylized copies held by many believers.

This analysis explains how the Taínos utilized the *cemíes* in their religious system. As stated above, fertility was a central function for the *cemíes.* In their rituals, the Taínos celebrated what Las Casas called "first fruits," i.e., the offering of tithes form the harvest in thanksgiving, and the cemíes served as tables or altars for the collected crop, in a ritual representation of the acceptance of the offerings

> We find that when they harvested the fruits of their planting the roots of the casava from which they made their bread, the yams and corn, they gave a certain part of the first fruits to their *cemí* as a thank offering for the good received. These first fruits were placed in the great house of the caciques called *cane y,* thus honoring the *cemí* because they said that he sent the rain, raised the crops, gave them children and other abundant blessings (Las Casas cited in Fernández Méndez, 1972:42, n.125).

The same source indicates that they burned incense to these *cem íes* (42:126). Taíno rituals were celebrated in communal dances, called *"areitos."* Music, dancing, and drinking to induce frenzy appear to have integral parts of these feasts, which apparently often lasted for several days (see Chapter 12).

The *cemíes* were often treated as if they were persons of rank. The Chronicles report that a *cemí* was placed on a seat, or *duho,* alongside a cacique "to signify that he who sits there is not alone, but that he sits

there with his rival" (Oviedo cited in Fernández Méndez, 1972:38, n.5). These *duhos* were ornately carved, often inlaid with gold, and served as seats of honor for persons of distinction (Fewkes: 200—07). The Taínos valued some *cemíes* more than others. Columbus's son wrote: "I have noted that they praise one *[cemí]* more than others and that they esteemed the *cemíes* of certain caciques and people more than others. Furthermore, it is amusing to see how they continually try to steal the *cemíes* from each other" (cited in Fernández Méndez, 1972:40).

Although the Taínos believed that the spirits of the dead lived in a place apart and frequently came out into the forests at night (Fernández Méndez, 1972:57—58), they also held certain caciques and persons of rank after death as *cemíes* (Fewkes:54). The skulls of deceased ancestors were stored in Taíno houses (Relaci6n:34—35; Morbán Laucer:35, citing Columbus). According to Dr. Morbán Laucer, the funeral rites in the last epoch before the arrival of the Spaniards underwent a change. The custom of cremation before interring the bones in ashes became less frequent. Instead, the Taínos tended to use a slow-burning fire to separate the flesh from the bones, which were then buried ceremoniously, usually with the skull covered by an upside—down plate that had been filled with offerings.

Caciques were buried with significantly impressive rites. Not only were larger quantities of gifts placed in the tomb, but the wife of the chief was sometimes buried alive with her consort. This custom, also found among Hindus, whence its name "sutteeism," is amply attested to by eyewitnesses (Morbán Laucer:29—31). In the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, the archaelogical findings of such a grave site are reproduced. One clearly notes the open jaws of the other skull, indicating suffocation.

This archaeological trail of greater and more developed funeral rites, with a gradually more visible role for the ancestors and cacique as some kind of *cemí,* suggests that the cult of these spirits was enlarging its religious role at the time of the Spanish invasion. If indeed the original *cemíes* were few, the apotheosis of ancestors, particularly of the caciques, was underway.

Among other religious practices closely integrated with *cernieism* were the healing rites of the shaman. A great deal of Taíno medicine seems to be paralleled by the customs of people such as the Tukano studied by Reichel-Dolmatoff (1971:1.75—88). The malady was diagnosed, spirits were invoked, arid healing herbs were ingested. The

psychological aspects of this process will be examined below (Chapters 7, 11). Of note is venereal disease, which afflicted the Taínos.

The origin of syphilis has been much debated, apparently because some moral stigma is attached to its originator, either European or Amerind. Certainly, both the Europeans and the Amerinds had venereal diseases before the encounter of the two peoples. But while both populations had acquired some immunity to the ravages of their respective varieties of the disease, both were vulnerable to contagion from the new species of infection. The syphilis of the Taínos had more virulent effects on the Europeans than the previously known "French disease," hence the invaders received the worst part of this exchange. Of course, just the opposite occurred when the Amerinds contracted European diseases like smallpox (Koning:90—93; Bradford: 196—97; Morison, 11:193—218).

The Taínos apparently knew how to alleviate some of the long-term effects of the disease. It is doubtful, however, that they had a cute for syphilis. One of the problematic aspects of the disease is that **it** can be contracted from birth to an infected mother. The infant child carries signs of the infection, but these gradually disappear. Upon entering puberty, the disease becomes active again and must be treated. In light of the mythology of the Taínos, this phenomenon of infant infection, disappearance, and reoccurrence of the disease was an "uncanny" phenomenon, and persons who survived the cycle were treated with great respect (Chapters 6, 10). Religious beliefs associated with syphilis caused the Taínos to limit sexual contact by abstinence, a practice that may be compared with the sexual abstinence of the Tukano (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1971:67—68; 85—86). Such continence was notably absent among the Spaniards.

In divination ceremonies, the *cemíes* enjoyed a central role. Since the spirits to be contacted were represented by the *cemíes,* much attention was directed to the effigy as a medium for communication. Some chicanery is reported by the chronicles, which tell of a tube connecting a hidden accomplice, who answered the shaman by simulating the Voice of the spirit (Fewkes:57). A more important aspect of communication with the *cemíes* was the use of hallucinogenic substances (Chapter 11).

The use of drugs among the peoples of the Vaupés has been masterfully documented by Reichel-Dolmatoff in his book, *The Shaman and the Jaguar,* in which he calls attention to their similarity with the Taínos of Haiti (1975:12). Most striking of the similarities between the two

groups are the plants utilized; the tubes or pipes used to ingest the substances; the stools *(duhos)* upon which practitioners are seated; the relationship of drugs to dance; the use of the maraca; artistic expression of geometic designs perceived during trance; and the use of the drugs in healing and divination.

In the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, which stands proudly in. the Plaza de la Cultura of Santo Domingo, there is an exhibit that recreates, with archaeological pieces, the way the Taínos utilized these hallucinogenic substances. The exhibit incorporates much of the materials offered by Reichel-Dolmatoff. Rather than repeat the information here, I have chosen to incorporate it where necessary to explain Taíno myth. One difference between the Vaupés and the Taínos seems to have been that in the Caribbean, caves were special places for these rites, while in the Vaupés' regions, the *maloca,* or long house, suffices The importance of this detail will be discussed later (Chapter 12).

Among the specimens of tubes or pipes used to ingest the drugs, there are sometimes representations of *cemíes.* Apparently, the *cemí* was thought to aid in the trance so that communication could occur (Figures 2, 3). [1] The playful and jesterlike countenance and the topsy-turvy posture of this figure suggest that the Taínos who used narcotics realized that they were being possessed by the drug. Its use was clearly with religious purpose, and probably considered somewhat dangerous.

I believe that the observations of Carlos Castañeda on the use of drugs by Don Juan, a Yaqui shaman, are probably applicable to the way the Taínos viewed their own use of drugs:

> In don Juan's classificatory scheme a man of knowledge had an ally, whereas the average man did not, and having an ally was what made him different from ordinary men. Don Juan described an ally as being "a power capable of transporting a man beyond the boundaries of himself'; that is, an ally was a power that allowed one to transcend the realm of ordinary reality. Consequently, to have an ally implied having power; and the fact that a man of knowledge had an ally was itself proof that the operational goal of the teaching had been fulfilled (Castañeda:21.2—13).

If the uncanny was a manifestation of the numinous, seemingly ordinary plants that altered consciousness would be hierophanies of

1. I take this to be Corocote. See Chapter 12.

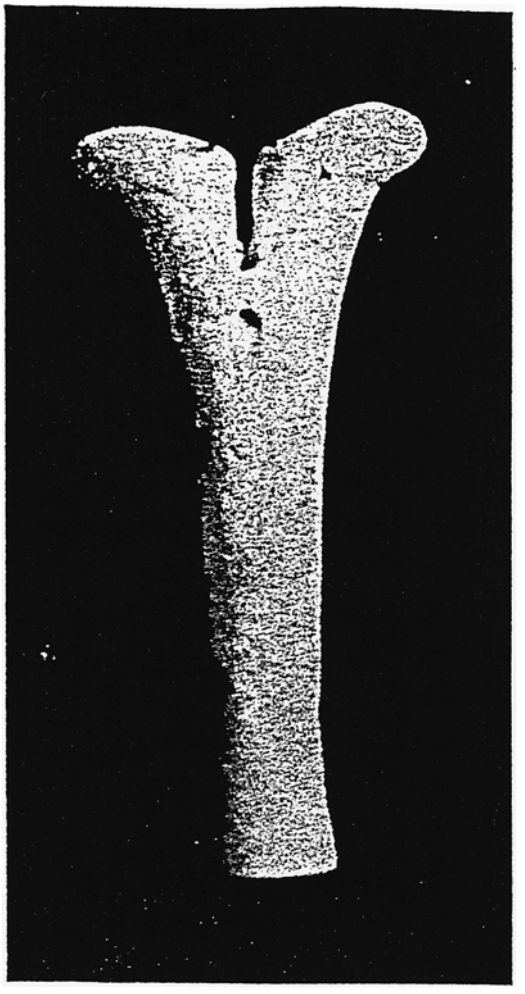


Figure 2. *Nasal narcotic pipe carved £n bone used in the* cohoba rite. ***Santo Domingo. 9.3cm by 4.3*** *cm.* ***Exhibit*** *of pre-Hispanic Art, Garciá Arévalo Foundation, Santo Domingo.* After *Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.*

significance. The work of Reichel-Dolmatoff substantiates this role of drugs within a coherent religious system.

Hallucination in a religious context is "seeing" beyond the normal. Ordinary things receive new shapes and colors; the life in the inanimate becomes manifest; the immovable comes alive and discloses its bidden power. The use of drugs unleashes the psychic power of the religion. In times of crisis the believer communicates with the source of disturbance and finds answers to his questions. When use of this practice is integrated into a life style, one achieves wisdom. Reichel-Dolmatoff offers a description of Vaupés society in which many use the drugs, but only about three percent of the believers are considered to have attained wisdom (1971:250-52, Table 4).

For the Taínos, this kind of vision was equivalent with life itself in their religious iconography, they frequently represented animals with

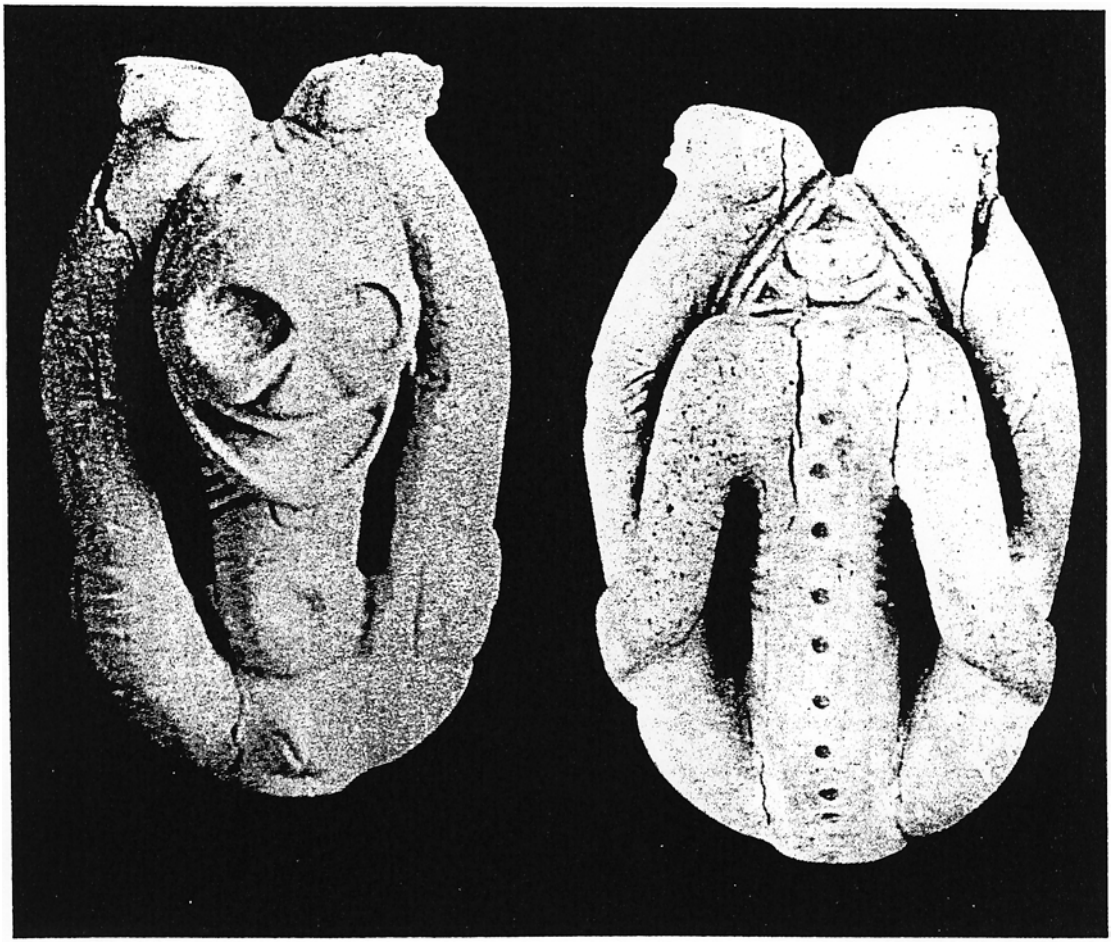


Figure 3. Left: *Frontal view of nasal narcotic pipe of bone. Santo Domingo. 8.7 cm. Exhibit of pre-Hispanic Art, García Arévalo Foundation, Santo Domingo. After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.* Right: *Back view of the same object.*

frontal vision, such as the frog, and those with noctural vision, especially the owl and bat (García Arévalo, 1973). When they executed an evildoer, they poked out his or her eyes (Floyd:21,n.29, citing Morison:423; cf. *Relación:40).* In some representations of the cemíes, gold was inlayed on the eye sockets. Although the Spaniards removed the metal from whatever images they could, in the museum of the García Arévalo Foundation in the Dominican Republic the effect has been recreated by restoration. The glint of the gold lends an eerie appearance to the carving. Since the inlayed gold was placed predominantly in eye sockets, this may be construed as evidence of the importance ascribed to "seeing" in a religious context. Humans used drugs to see the *cemíes,* and perhaps the spirits used gold to see humans.

The final aspect of the Taíno religious system which reflected their

understanding of the cosmos was their use of gold. The myth about an island where gold originated has been mentioned before (Chapter 1) in connection with the impact it had upon the Spaniards, who were anxious to have their fantasies fulfilled in the New World. The chronicles explain how the Spaniards came to possess one of these pieces:

> The Indians of Santo Domingo brought. . . *a* piece of metal that they called guanín of which Admiral Columbus sent some pieces to their Catholic Majesties, and once a study was made, it was found to be of 32 parts: 18 were of gold, 6 of silver and 8 of copper. This was a certain kind of low quality gold that they called guanín, that is somewhat dark red, and that they recognize by its smell and they regard it highly (Herrera cited in Vega:27, n.17).

Hence, although no pieces of golden *guanín* have survived to the present day, we have a reliable testimony as to its constitution.

Bernardo Vega, former head of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in Santo Domingo, has devoted a great deal of study to the origin of this *guanín* gold of the Taínos. Since there is strong evidence that the Taínos did not know how to forge or cast metals by fire (Las Casas, *Historia: 1* as cited in Vega:28, nn.23, 24; Oviedo:1 as cited in Vega:33, n.43), Vega investigates the origin of *guanín.* In this book, he cites experts who state that this alloy is not likely to exist in the natural state (Vega:37). He concludes that the likely source of the *guanín* is trade with peoples from the South American continent. Like Fernández Méndez (1972), who attributed much of Taíno religion to contact with Mexico, Vega's hypothesis would place this important aspect of Taíno religion outside the supposed cultural limits of Taíno society. While such relationships were possible, as I think Fernández Méndez has proven in the case of Mexico (16,n.22; 15, n.12), the more important question concerns a pattern of continual cultural and commercial exchange.

Such a trading pattern for Taíno acquisition of *guanín* gold requires the existence of many conditions, most of which have little or no archaelogical support at the present time. Thus it is not surprising that García Arévalo and other archaeologists treat the *guanín* simply as gold mined by the Taínos in the Greater Antilles (1978:89). From the standpoint of his analysis, the unusual alloy of gold with copper and silver is more likely than is trade with mainland Indians.

Confronted with contradictory opinions on this matter, some evaluation of the issue is appropriate. The artisanship required for smelt-

ing cast gold among Native American peoples was apparently first attained in Andean parts of Colombia (Jones and Bray:14—17). Oviedo, who wrote extensively on the Indies, also visited present-day Colombia, where he observed the process firsthand (Jones and Bray:33—36). As the king's supervisor of smelting operations on the Spanish Main, Oviedo's observations are very reliable. He recorded that as well as the familiar casting, hammering, and embossing, gold working techniques were established that produced satisfactory results, especially if the gold and copper alloy was heated (not necessarily smelted), during the process (Jones and Bray:37).

Warwick Bray of London University also classifies the golden *guanín* given to Columbus by the Taínos as just another form of *tumbaga,* the natural alloy preferred by the Indians of Colombia He states: "The silver, which is found in much American tumbaga and which can constitute up to 25% of the total weight, was present as an impurity in the gold. It was not added intentionally" (Ibid:34). I interpret this to mean that the *guanín* gold was not impossible to find in the natural state as Vega believes. This conclusion makes unnecesary Taíno trade with Colombia for acquisition *of guanín* gold.

Moreover, although the Spanish eyewitnesses were quick to notice the gold possessed by the Taínos, not all of it is reported to have been *of the guanín* type. As will be examined in Chapter 10 (pp. 190—196), the shape and appearance of the gold may have been more important to the Taínos than its physical composition. Taínos wore gold that had been shaped by hammering for adornment as jewelry. Copper, which turned bright green in the tropical climate, was often hammered onto these pieces. The *non-guanín* gold was pure-soft and dull in color, which made it distinguishable from the bright color of the *guanín.* Since the hammering technique of the Taínos seems to have been sufficiently developed to provide satisfactory results, I side with Garcia Arévalo in his opinion that, like the Colombian *tumbaga, the guanín* gold was a natural, if unusual, alloy.

Vega's research remains significant. If not completely convincing as concerns the question of trade with Colombian Indians, he nonetheless emphasizes the Taíno perception of the *guanín* alloy as a special cultural element. By examining the uncanny nature of *guanín* gold, Vega has added an important religious dimension to the archaeological data The uncanniness of *guanín* gold was based on its rarity in the natural order and on the religious vision of the Taínos. The content of religious belief in *guanín* will be explored in detail in subsequent

chapters (see Chapters 10, 11), but it should be clear that *guanín* was important to the Indians for its sacred rather than its material value.

The Spaniards found that the Taínos were happy to exchange nuggets of pure gold for brass bells. The Taínos smelled copper in the brass, and preferred its shiny appearance to the dullness of pure gold. In fact, it is likely that brass was prized because it was similar to the rare *guanín.* Initially, the caciques welcomed such trade with the Europeans. Control of more guanín probably enhanced cacica! power. But with the proliferation of brass through uncontrolled trade directly with the naboría by the Spaniards, the caciques most likely lost more than they gained by such commerce. Not only did trade weaken the authority of the chief to negotiate for all the people, the inundation of brass pieces lessened the religious importance of *guanín* as uncanny. Eventually, there would have been a sort of "symbolism inflation," wherein the special significance of guanín was diluted.

In sum, the coherence of the Taíno religious system was built upon several key concepts, notably the cult of *cemíes,* divination with hallucinogenic substances, and *guanín* as symbol of a growing cacical authority. Because each of the parts acquired meaning in terms of how they were related to other elements, once the Spaniards undermined one aspect of Taíno faith, they set in motion the ultimate destruction of the whole system.

Ironically, in the case of guanín, the wisdom of the Taínos has survived the Spanish insistence on pure gold. Modem jewelry is always fourteen-karat gold, not twenty-four. Such gold is alloyed with at least ten karats of copper and silver, since in this way the jewelry gains tensile strength and does not tarnish. As Vega notes, "The whole world adorns itself today with guanín" (56).

CHAPTER FIVE

The Manuscript of Ramón Pané

Samuel Eliot Morison, the distinguished biographer of Christopher Columbus, records that one of the most crucial decisions in the colonization of America was made by the explorer in February 1495. The second expedition to the Indies had not gone well: little gold had been found, neither the spices nor the hardwoods sent back to Spain had proven to be profitable, and even after nearly a year on the island of Hispaniola, the colonists still could not find enough food for all their numbers. Perhaps most importantly, the Spanish sailors and adventurers were grumbling against their Italian commander (Morison:484-87). In the face of these difficulties, Columbus decided to fill the ships of Antonio de Torres with Indians to be taken back to Spain and sold as slaves. In so doing, he hoped to pacify a royal court increasingly impatient with the poor economic results of the Admiral's enterprise. That decision necessitated a belligerence against the natives that has been memorialized by Bartolomé de Las Casas. The Dominican friar has written:

Among these gentle sheep, bestowed by their Maker and Creator with such [gentle] qualities, came the Spaniards, who from the time they

> knew the Indians, became like wolves and cruel tigers and lions who had been starved for days. And from then until now, they have done nothing else for forty years except to slaughter them, murder them, torture, attack and afflict them to the point of ripping them apart by new and varied forms of cruelty that have never before been seen, written or heard of *(Brevíísima relación:34—35).*

But when Columbus made his fateful decision, the eventual impact of his antagonism towards the Taínos was not one of his worries. From a fleet of seventeen ships and a force of about 1,300 men which had landed triumphantly a year before in January 1494, Columbus had seen his forces shrink. Within a month of his arrival, disease, discontent, and a lack of food had forced him in February 1494 to send more than half of the Spaniards back to Spain, leaving him with but four ships. In search of food at the end of March, he led his troops from his initial settlement on the coast named Isabela to the island's interior. Along the way, he founded two outposts inland along the Yaque River. The first (the contemporary town of Jarico) he named "Fort St. Thomas," after the apostle who had doubted the resurrection of Jesus. Columbus intended this settlement to provide enough gold to silence the "doubting Thomases" who were skeptical about finding quick wealth on the island. The second fort, founded some two weeks later, was named Magdalena, after the repentant sinful woman in the Bible. It was located, according to Las Casas, some "ten or twelve leagues" west of what became the present-day town of Santiago in the Dominican Republic (Las Casas, *Historia:* I, 100).

With his garrisons spread out on Hispaniola and closer to the Indian food supply, Columbus thought that he could get on with his explorations. He set sail April 24, 1494, on a search for oriental kingdoms that brought him instead to Cuba and Jamaica. While Columbus was away from the settlement of Isabela, his brother Bartolomé arrived from Spain, only to find that a mutiny was afoot. Before the Admiral returned to Hispaniola on September 27, 1494, the Catalán leader, Pedro de Magarit, seized the younger Columbus's ships and set sail for Spain with his men, carrying with him tales of the Admiral's inefficiency and the poverty of the island colony.

With good reason, Columbus understood that the stability of his administration depended more than ever upon satisfying the troops left to him. It is generally accepted that the Admiral always hoped to

find oriental kingdoms with which Spain could initiate lasting commercial treaties (Morison: 506, 554, *et passim).* At this early date, the settlement in the Caribbean was viewed as merely a base for further exploration. He needed to buy time until his expected contact with Eastern monarchs would materialize and justify his explorations. It was at this juncture that Columbus resolved to force the Taínos to serve his soldiers' wants.

In his romanticism, the Admiral gave the natives the aura of the "noble savage." Their principal service to him was as exotic examples for his frequent self-laudatory letters to the Crown. Even when the evidence was to the contrary, he refused to believe that the Taínos had killed the forty sailors left behind when the flagship Santa María was shipwrecked on the first voyage of 1492. On the other hand, as Todorov has shown, Columbus never viewed the Taínos as complete human beings (36—50). In his writings, Columbus consistently maintained a great social distance between the Spaniards and the Indians, relegating the Taínos to marginal humanity. According to Todorov "Columbus has discovered America, but not the Americans."(49).

This inability to understand the Taínos contributed to the Admiral's difficulties in governing the settlements. Many of the soldiers and adventurers who accompanied Columbus seriously maltreated the Taínos, putting them to forced labor in the search for gold, stealing their food, and sexually abusing the women. The pious entreaties of Columbus to respect the Indians and to attend daily mass were ignored if not resented. In the face of such stiff resistance to his leadership, a shift in policy to make the Taínos slaves seemed no great matter to the Admiral, particularly when the success of his enterprise hung in the balance. Accordingly, in February 1495, more than a year after he had landed on Hispaniola with the high hopes of a crusader and the pretensions of a great explorer, Columbus became a slave trader.

The Admiral's penchant for pomp and displays of force was no longer an effective means of intimidating the Indians. When their brothers and sisters, wives and children were cruelly abused by the invaders, passivity was no longer possible for the local chieftains. Instead of accepting the Spanish cruelty as Columbus had anticipated, the Taínos began a chain of sporadic rebellions that would end only with the virtual extinction of their race. The fateful decision to enslave the Indians resulted a month later in the killing of ten unsuspecting

Spaniards and attacks first on Magdalena and then on Fort St. Thomas. This first American insurrection against colonialism was put down in a bloody battle at the Vega Real on March 27, 1495.

Columbus decided that he needed more information about the Taínos in order to prevent further trouble. Though they had appeared trusting and docile at first, they had now proven themselves to be clever and brave adversaries. For the task of gathering intelligence about the Taîno tribes, Columbus did not trust his own soldiers, who had provoked the hostility. He turned instead to a priest, Ramón Pané, asking him to report on tribal beliefs and practices. This request, which likely was made in early April 1495, resulted in the remarkable manuscript of Ramón Pané.

History tells us little about Ramón Pané, the Catalan missionary His remarkable pastoral experience began. after he had spent almost a year on the island of Hispaniola, having accompanied the garrison to Magdalena in the spring of 1494. Apparently, Pané intended to be more of a chaplain to the Spanish settlers than an apostle to the Caribbean natives. Nonetheless, probably because Magdalena was the smallest of the early settlements, Pané apparently spent more time with the Taínos than did any of the other five clerics who came to the New World on the second journey.[1]

It is not clear what criteria Columbus used to select Pané for this mission. There is no explanation of the decision in any of his letters. Las Casas, writing at a later date, remarks that Pané did not speak or write well in Spanish, "since he was a Catalán in nationality." Indeed, the text is choppy at times, the vocabulary admits of few adjectives, there are few sophisticated grammatical constructions, and the style is boring. When compared to the fulsome and persuasive Spanish of most of the chroniclers of the period, Pané's manuscript reads like the composition of a student. Las Casas also notes that Pané's piety was greater than his learning:

Only this Friar Ramón, who first came to the island with the Admiral, seems to have had some zeal and good will, and went to work imparting a knowledge of God to these Indians. Since he was an ordinary fellow who didn't know what to do, he could only teach the Indians

1. Besides Pané, there were the Benedictine Bernardo Boyl, the Mercedarian Juan Infante, and three Franciscans: Father Rodrigo Pérez, Brother Juan Deledeule, and Brother Juan Tisim, the latter two from French provinces. Lopetegui and Zubillaga:214.

> the Hail Mary and the Our Father. As much as he could, he led them to understand in a few words, with much confusion and serious gaps, that there was a God in heaven who was the creator of ail things *(Apologética,* Chapter 120, as cited in Arrom,1974:105).

The Spanish Jeronymite Order to which Pané belonged was not a rival to the powerful and ancient religious bodies of fifteenth-century Catholicism, as were the Franciscan and Dominican orders. Their fame rested more on their absence from the ecclesiastical intrigues of the older institutes than upon any essential distinction of their own. But because they were not torn apart internally like the Franciscans over the issue of the Spirituals (Phelan) and did not possess clout in university and courtly circles as did the Dominicans, the Jeronymites acquired a reputation for simple piety. On that account, the confessor of Queen Isabela was a Jeronymite. Twenty-four years after Pané had arrived in Hispaniola, Cardinal Cisneros appointed several Jeronymites to conduct a thorough visit and inspection of the Caribbean colonies in 1517, so that they might advise the Spanish Crown on a policy as to how to treat the Indians in America and settle a conflict between the Franciscans and the Dominicans.[2]

Perhaps Pané's key qualification was his knowledge of the Indian language. While he obviously had not mastered their tongue in a year, according to Las Casas Pané spoke the language better than any European, surpassed only by a native who had been taken to Spain after the first voyage and returned with Columbus as interpreter (see Arrom, 1974:10). Since Pané successfully recorded the thoughts and beliefs of the natives, his command of the language was evidently effective.

Columbus told the friar, however, that the language spoken by the Macorix, who lived around Magdalena, was "not understood every-

2. Named after St. Jerome, the fifth-century scripture scholar, the Jeronymites had been founded in 1370 in the Diocese of Toledo as a reform movement of religious life centered on prayer, the recitation of the divine office, and study of the bible. Never known for original scholarship, the order's branch of nuns nonetheless received into their Mexico City convent the most famous intellectual of the Baroque period, Sor Juana Iñes de la Cruz. Not bound by a mendicant rule, the Jeronymite monasteries accumulated great wealth and influence in the seventeenth century. Ironically, the autonomy of the Jeronymite foundations, which had resulted in their reputation for piety, also proved the order's undoing. It was virtually abolished during the Carlist troubles in Spain in 1835, since the disunity of the monasteries left the order vulnerable to regional politics.

where" *(Relación:49).* This statement made by the Admiral, which has been repeated by historians, raises the question as to whether there was linguistic homogeneity among those called Taínos. Indeed, since language and culture generally form a logical unit for anthropologists, the coexistence of another linguistic group would mean that the Taínos were not the only peoples that lived on the islands. Pané's narrative on this subject offers a vivid description of his interview with Columbus:

> The Lord Admiral told me then that the province of Magdalena or Macorix had a language different from the other and that its speech was not understood everywhere in the country, but that I should go and live with another leading cacique, named Guarionex, the lord of many people, since the language of these folk was understood throughout the land. Thus, at bis command, I went to live with this Guarionex. And it certainly is true that I said to the Lord Governor, Sir Christopher Columbus: "Lord, how is it that Your Lordsbip wishes that I go to live with Guarionex without knowing any language other than that of Macorix? May Your Lordship grant permission so that with me may go some one of the Nuhuirey, who have since become Christians and know both languages." This he granted and said to take with me whomever seemed best to me. And God in His goodness gave to me for company the best of the Indians. . . . It was Guaticabanú, who later was a Christian and was named Juan *(Relación:49—50).*

Was a different language spoken in Macorix—that is, a tongue that used a different linguistic structure? Or were these differences more like a dialect, with variations in pronunciations, vocabulary, and idiom? Arrom cites Las Casas to the effect that the general language of the Taiínos was "more polished, regular and clear" than the tongue spoken by the Macorix, which was "almost like a foreign barbarian language" *(Relación:80—81,* n.147). I interpret this as a difference of dialect, as occurs with relative frequency among peoples (Taylor, 1961:25; Alvarez Nazario:19-29). In the absence of stronger archaeological evidence of a distinct cultural group coexisting with the Taínos, this understanding of their language as a dialect has generally been adopted by Taíno scholars. It is interesting to note that Pané's problem was solved by designating a young boy to serve as translator. Apparently, any one of the Nuhuirey village people could have done the same.

Pané says he and Guaticabanú went to Isabela to wait for Co-

lumbus' return. They then proceeded to an Indian village ruled by Guarionex and lived there for almost two years. The Spaniards, under Juan de Ayala, built a fort "a half league" away and called it "La Concepción de la Vega." It remains today as the oldest continuous habitation in the Americas.

If this were the whole story, Pané's manuscript would be remarkable enough. He fulfilled Columbus' request and thus became the first European to write a detailed observation of an American people. Turn-of-the-century Yale scholar Edward Gaylor Bourne (1906) designated Pané's report as "the beginnings of American anthropology," and Paul Radin (1948:35-40) has called attention to the veracity and accuracy of Pane's observations.

Ironically, Pané's objectivity is related to the Jeronymite's lack of scholarly pretentions. In his fifth chapter, he notes: "And since they have neither writing nor an alphabet, they can not give a good account of how they have known such things about their ancestors, and on this account, they do not agree about what they say, nor even can one write down systematically what it is to which they refer" *(Relación:* 24). In the next chapter he notes that in the light of this confusion: "I think that I am putting first what should be last, and the last first"(26). At one point he complains, as many an anthropologist in the field has on different occasions: "Since I write with haste and I don't have enough paper, I was not able to put in place what I erroneously transferred to another part"(28). I interpret these statements as a sort of "value neutral" perspective that Pané had adopted in recording the myths.

Despite his objectivity in recording the Taíno beliefs, Pané was not opposed to the use of force in order to facilitate the preaching of the Gospel:

> Truly, the island has a great need for people to punish the chiefs when they deserve it and to make such peoples understand the things of the holy Catholic faith and to instruct them in it, because they themselves can not and do not know how to compete with it. I can say this truthfully, since I have been worn Out in understanding all this, and I am certain of what has to be grasped on account of everything we have been saying until now. For those who are good at understanding, a few words are enough. ...there is need for both force and imagination, because we are all not of the same nature. Just as some have a good beginning and a better ending, there will be others who will start well town of

and will laugh afterwards at what they have been taught. With such people, there is need for force and punishment *(Relación:54—55).*

Pané seems not to have grasped the pastoral importance of his observations. In other words, he was not like Las Casas, who adapted the preaching of the faith to new cultures. For instance, Pané was unable to make the connection between Taíno reverence for their own religious artifacts and their attitudes towards the statues of Catholicism. Upon his departure from the village under Guarionex, he left behind some religious statues. The Taínos treated the Catholic images as *cemíes,* burying and urinating on them in the hope of obtaining a good harvest. This action, which parallels the Taíno ritual with their own cemíes, was unfortunately interpreted as a desecration of Christian beliefs, and Pané notes with some satisfaction that reprisals viere taken.

But as Arrom describes, the fate of Pané's report, with all its assets and liabilities, was wrapped in mystery from the beginning. The first major problem is the question of the dating of the text *(Relación: 7*12). Pané says he stayed with Guarionex "for almost two years," and since he was sent there by Columbus in April 1495, this would mean that he finished his work either at the end of 1496 or early in 1497. But as Arrom so carefully points out, Columbus had left for Spain in April 1496, so the report had not been completed when the Admiral departed. Yet Columbus's fellow Italian, Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, describes some of the content of Pané's narration in a letter written to Duke Ludovico in 1497. D'Anghiera never visited America, so all of his information had to be culled from conversation with the explorers. How did Columbus come to report Pané's information to Spain, when, the narration was not completed until later that year in Hispaniola?

The same problem is further complicated by the historical account of the desecration of the Catholic statues in Chapter 26 of the narration. Pané tells of his departure to another village under the tutelage of the cacique Mabiacue, which can be fixed at the end of 1496 or early 1497. He adds that Columbus's brother Bartolomé took the reprisals, since he was in charge of Hispaniola while the Admiral was in. Spain. This narration confirms that the manuscript had not yet been completed when. d'Anghiera cited some of its information.

Arrom offers a plausible explanation for these discrepancies, I

think, when he suggests that Columbus conferred with the Jeronymite friar before his departure in April 1496, after Pané had already passed a full year with the Taínos in La Concepción. The verbal account of these details was then passed on to d'Anghiera while Columbus was in Spain. Upon the Admiral's return to Hispaniola in 1498, he requested a written version from Pané, who added the subsequent incident mentioned above. When Columbus returned to Spain in 1500, he took the final version of Pané's narration with him. Both d'Anghiera and Las Casas studied it in detail and reproduced large segments practically verbatim in their own works.

By noting the difference between d'Anghiera's passing mention of some details in his early letter to Duke Ludovico and his more detailed description in the *Decades,* Arrom has cleared up a major mystery surrounding the chronology of Pané's work. But a still greater contribution has been his reconstruction of Pané's text after the original manuscript had been lost.

After Columbus died, his son Fernando gathered together his father's papers and composed a long biography of his father. Included as a separate chapter in this biography was the original manuscript of Pané. Fernando never published his book, however, and it remained a collection of papers and documents upon his death in 1539. The unpublished biography was lost, and with it the narration of Pané. Fortunately, a Spaniard named Alfonso de Ulloa had translated Fernando's biography into Italian, and this was published in Venice in 1571 *(Relación:12).* Thus, Pané's work survived in the Italian translation of Ulloa and in scattered accounts such as those in Latin by d'Anghiera and in Spanish by Las Casas. The most complete of all of these is found in Ulloa, and the most accurate in the Spanish of Las Casas, who had met Pané in America *(Relación:14* n.20).

Ulloa's Italian version of Pané's narration leaves much to be desired. Arrom discovered that Ulloa had made the translation while he was a prisoner in a Venice jail, imprisoned on account of his intrigues against the authorities. His translation was apparently performed under great pressure of time and in adverse conditions. He makes frequent errors in interpretation and has provided a text filled with incongruities. His penchant for Italianizing all proper names makes for great confusion. Ulloa constantly confuses Pané's name, calling him both "Roman" and Romano." Arrom notes that this is acceptable up to a point, but in this way Juan de Ayala becomes "Giovanni

di Agiada." One of the sad consequences is that scholars who retranslated the Italian text of Ulloa back into Spanish frequently call Juan de Ayala "Juan de AguadoS"

The problem is much greater with the original Taíno names, both of personages and of things. The personal name Bayamanaco is rendered in four different ways: Bassamanaco, Aiamauaco, Baiamanicoel, and Gamanacoel. The Taíno *conucos* (a word still used in the Caribbean to describe small farms) become *"conichi,"* the yuca, *"giuca"* or *"giutola."* The translation by Ulloa was so imperfect that some historians had challenged its authenticity *(Relación:* 12 n. 18).

With a Fulbright grant, Arrom traveled to Spain in 1968 and began a scientific reconstruction of Pané's text. He corrected Ulloa's manuscript with the more reliable Spanish of Las Casas. His study of the Italianizing style of Ulloa made it possible for Arrom to correct many of the errors in the rendering of Spanish names. But the most difficult task was to reconstruct the correct version of the Taíno names through Ulloa's Italian. In the recreation of the original names, Arrom consulted linguistic texts on the Aruhacan languages, notably the-work of Goeje. Arrom's definitive version on Pané's narration provides not only the name that the Catalan friar had recorded, but its probable meaning to the Taínos. These scholarly contributions of José Juan Arrom have clarified much of the mystery surrounding the narration of Pané and have launched a new wave of intensive studies that corroborate the importance of this 1496 study of the Taínos.

As will be seen in the English translation I have supplied in the following chapters, the names of the Taíno mythological personages usually disclose their function as well. For instance, Cahubaba is translated as "Ancient Bleeding Mother," an identification that makes this figure parallel with the Inca Pachamama, the Mother Earth *(Relación:66* n.56). Such a discovery makes it possible to understand more of the Taíno conception of mythology and to compare it with other religions.

Arrom utilized his familiarity with the reconstructed text of Pané to reexamine the Taíno artifacts (Arrom:1975). This work has resulted in a masterful volume which reproduces the actual Taíno artistic renditions of the personages and cemíes narrated in the myths. Mercedes López Baralt of the University of Puerto Rico (1979) has suggested that the myths compiled by Pané have many parallels with the descriptions provided by Claude Lévi—Strauss and other observers of South American Indian religions. Ricardo Alegría of the Centro

Avanzado de Estudios de Puerto Rico y el Caribe has published a useful compendium of comparable South American myths (1978). In my own doctoral dissertation (Stevens Arroyo:1981), I have traced the *similarities* and connections of Taíno beliefs to the cultural patterns and popular religious beliefs among Puerto Ricans today. The museums of the Dominican Republic and the García-Arévalo Foundation have translated the new data into striking and imaginative exhibits that have made the vitality of Taíno religion readily apparent. With these and other efforts, the field of Taíno studies is taking great strides.

Students of Caribbean history will not find in this book some of the assertions that have become virtually identified with common textbook descriptions of Taíno religion. Pané never mentions, for instance, the existence of a "god of evil" by the name of Jucarán (or Jucarán), something found repeatedly in contemporary history books (Figueroa, 1:38; Morales Carrión, 1981:5). To the best of my knowledge, this error comes from a confusion of the Taíno use of the word *"huracán"* and the Mayan Spirit of the Storms, Kulucan. While it is possible that *"huracán"* and "Kulucan" are philologically related (Fernández Méndez, 1972:75), I have found no evidence in Pané of the chroniclers of such a *cemí* among the Taínos. In private conversation, Ricardo Alegría has suggested that the error stems from Cayetano Coil y Toste's book, *Prehistoria de Puerto Rico* (109—11, 230—31). Coil y Toste has enjoyed such prestige among historians that his errors were not seriously challenged. Fortunately, the scholarship of Coil y Toste is complete enough to reveal the reason for his mistake. He assumed that beliefs in a spirit of a similar name among other Amerinds constituted proof that the Taiínos also personified the hurricane as a malevolent diety. By departing from the text of Pané for this assertion, Coil y Toste erred. A similar readiness to ascribe to the Talnos beliefs similar to those of other Amerinds has also led some historians to suppose that the Taínos believed the Spaniards to be immortal (Brau:30-31). The concept of a human being with divinely inherited immortality cannot be found in the text of Pané and would seem to be foreign to Taíno religion.

In this volume, the myths of the Taínos are rendered in an English translation of Arrom's fine work. Those who look for a simple translation of Pané's narration, however—a task that will have to await another day—will be disappointed. I have chosen to focus instead on the religious dimensions of the myths. The tales narrated

by the Catalán cleric have been treated as sacred scriptures, as indeed they would have been, had the Taínos been able to avail themselves of a written language. Pané's own observations have been separated from the body of the myths, just as exegesis would eliminate the glosses of scribes in order to refashion the original biblical account. The intention has been to reproduce the myths as they might have been recounted by the Taínos. I believe their simplicity lends them a quiet eloquence. In the chapters that follow, I have classified the myths according to a methodology derived from the field of Comparative Religions. Accordingly, although they are not found in this sequence in Pané's book, the unfolding of Taíno beliefs becomes easier to follow.

It is unfortunate that in closing this chapter more information on Ramón Pané cannot be offered. Since Las Casas knew him in Hispaniola, the good friar must have been there for some time after 1502, when Las Casas first journeyed to America. Even though he took. orders in 1510, Las Casas was an adventurer until 1514. In that year he renounced the *encomienda,* so it is possible that he had not consulted Pané until he had in mind the composition, of the various polemic works which marked his crusade for justice on behalf of the Indians. This supposition would keep the Jeronymite friar in Hispaniola for more that twenty years. Except for this allusion by Las Casas of his meeting with Pané, there is no historical evidence that he achieved any recognition or honors during his lifetime on account of his study of the Taiínos. A greater achievement, however, seems to have been his conversion of Guaticabanú, the first Native American to be baptized *(Relación:* 54-56). We are told that this historical event took place on the feast of St. Matthew (September 21) 1496. Taking the name of "Juan Mateo," Guaticabanú also brought seven others to Christianity, including his brother, who was baptized "Antón." Both persevered in the faith and were killed by rebellious Indians after Pané had departed from La Concepción. In perhaps the only emotional passage in his narration, Pané allows his genuine Christian love to emerge. After describing the interview with Columbus in which he was granted an Indian interpreter, Guadcabanú, Pané adds:

And God in His goodness gave me for companionship the best of the Indians and the best informed in the holy Catholic faith, and later He took him from me. Praised be God who gave him to me and then took him from me! Truly, I held him as a good son and brother. This was

Guaticabanú, who later became a Christian and was named Juan *(Relación:50)*.

At one point, Pané disappears from the list of settlers. Unfortunately, there is no clear record of when, how, or where he may have spent his last days. Whatever information may be uncovered in future studies, there can be little doubt that by the time Pané passed on to his Maker, Hispaniola had become a slaughterhouse not only for the Taíno people, but also for their religion.

Two Tales of the Taíno Genesis

The Hebrew scriptures of the Judaeo-Christian tradition offer two different versions of genesis. In one account, God creates all things in six days by a word of command; in the other, the first man is shaped from the clay of the earth and life is bestowed by the breath from God's mouth.[1] The Taínos also had two tales of their origins. Pané calls them tales about the origin of the sea, and while he places both in the ninth and tenth chapters of his narrative, he correctly notes that they describe Taíno origins *(Relación:28).* In my translation below, I have tried to render a sacred text, much as the myths might have been recounted among the Taínos. To this end, I have marked with brackets the comments by Pané, separating them from the myth. The meaning of the Taíno proper names as deciphered by Arrom has been placed in upper case.

This format has been adopted in order to underscore the religious

1. Cf. E. A. Speiser, *Genesis,* **The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday,** 1964**), pp.** xx-xliii; **8-13; 18-20. It is generally agreed that these versions are attributed to two oral traditions of the ancient Hebrews, the first technically named the "Priestly" and** the **second the "Yahwist"**

understanding of the myths. These religious topics are treated under subheadings for easy reference. As explained in the first chapter, while I value the anthropological and structural methods for analyzing mythology, my perspective is that of Comparative Religions. The treatment in this and subsequent chapters, then, explores Taíno belief; charts the outlines of a world view, and compares these data to the widest possible sample of world religions. I trust that those unfamiliar with this approach will have patience with the methodology, for I believe that at its roots, mythology is theology.

The Banishment of Yayael (Chapter IX)

There was a man called Yaya, SPIRIT OF SPIRITS,
and no one knew his name.
His son was named Yayael, [which means,] "Son of Yaya"
This Yayael was banished for wanting to kill his father.
Thus he was banished for four months.
Afterwards his father killed him, put his bones in a gourd
and hung it from the roof of his house
where it hung for some time.
It came to pass that one day, desiring to see his son,
Yaya said to his wife, "I want to see our son Yayael"
This made her happy, and taking down the gourd, she turned
it over to see the bones of their son.
From it gushed forth many fish, big and small.
Seeing that these bones had been turned into fishes,
they decided to eat them.

Naming as Theology

Among many religious peoples, knowledge of someone's name gives control over that person (Hartman: 1604-05; Roth: 305-07). If one learns the name of a spirit, mana is acquired (Radin,1957a:224). The same belief in the power of a name circulated among the Taínos. For instance, we have reliable historical accounts that one Taíno ritual was the exchange of names. The chronicles report that after being vanquished by the Spanish Sargent Salazar, the cacique Ayamamón begged to take his name in order to save face (Oviedo 16:120; Herrera I, 8:220; Castellanos 5:128). One may compare this incident with the account in the Book of Genesis of Jacob wrestling with the Lord and

receiving the name "Israel" as a compensation for releasing his celestial opponent (Genesis 32:25—31).

The Taíno name of the Supreme Being is "Yaya," which Arrom has translated as "Spirit of Spirits." This would appear to be a form of the superlative, indicating an exceptional quality for Yaya. But when Pané adds "no one knew his name," he indicates that the proper name is also a description of the spirit's preeminence in Taíno religion. The inability to "know the name" is equivalent to stating omnipotence. Similar reasoning has been employed in world religions. For example, because the name revealed to Moses (Ex. 3:13) was translated as "I Am Who Am," the scholastic theologians of the Judeo-Christian tradition gave the name of the biblical Yahweh a metaphysical interpretation (Küng: 621-22; cf. Hartman: 2613-14). For these theologians, the attribution of an unknown name became metaphysical language. To belong only to oneself, they said, was equivalent to the omnipotence of a spirit not subject to the control of any other reality: in short, the Supreme Being. If the same metaphysical interpretation is lent to the opening verses of the Taíno creation story, they are at once the simplest and the most profound of the mythological statements of Taíno religion.

The opening comments by Pané on the Taíno concept of the Supreme Being echo medieval theology. The friar notes that the Taínos believe god "is in heaven and is immortal and that no one can see it and that it has a mother, but no beginning" *(Relación:21)*. On the basis of Pané's descriptions, at least one nineteenth-century anthropologist concluded that the Taínos were atheists, arguing that an invisible God is no god at all (Stahl). Few today would share this opinion, but the notion of a preeminent spirit does occasion another question about the level of sophistication in the Taíno concept of the numinous.

The "High God"

Interpreting Pané's account from the perspective of Comparative Religions, I conclude that the Taínos believed one spiritual being ranked above all others. Yaya was superior to all other beings and knowable principally in his attribute of superlativeness. Whether or not he was also invisible, his power dominated all spiritual forces. In the language of Comparative Religions, Yaya is a "high god." Reichel-Dolmatoff concludes that the Tukano of the Vaupés have a

similar concept of a "divine personification" who is "omnipotent, omniscent and omnipresent" (1971:41—43). And León Portilla suggests the same role for the Aztec Ometeotl, ruling the spirits in the Mexican pantheon (1962:xxiv—xxv).

I believe this notion of a Taíno high god can be sustained even if one insists—contrary to my own conclusions (cf. Chapter 12)—that Yaya is identical to the other names Pané supplies for the Supreme Being. "Yucahú" (Of Yuca), sometimes also called Yucahuguamá (Lord of the Yuca, *Relación:48* n.131), "Bagua" (Sea), and "Maorocoti" (Without a Male Ancestor) are listed as the names of the "invisible god" *(Relación.21).* But even in the fiercely monotheistic Hebrew religion, Yahweh has titles such as "El Shaddai (Mountain Lord)" and "Elohim (Lord of Lords)" (Hartman: 2187,651; Speíser:24, xlviii—xlix). The plurality of names does not argue for a plurality of gods, since these are titles for the one spirit, indicating the diverse manifestations of cosmic power. Brundage's book on the Aztec concept of the numinous suggests that even a system so obviously polytheistic as that of the ancient Mexicans may have an underlying premise that each seemingly different deity is a mask used by "communities" of spirits (51-53). Moreover, since the Taínos-unlike the Hebrews-had no prohibition against material representations of the Supreme Being, invisibility as a spirit did not mean that Yaya could not be depicted in multiple graven forms. I will develop these ideas in Chapter 12 and show that the *cemíes* are not identical with this mythological spirit. Yaya remains important to Taíno theology even if one does not agree with my interpretation of Taíno *cemieísrn,* however.

Monotheism and Monalatry

Does the notion of a high god imply that the Taínos had some notion of monotheism? I have found that anthropologists are not particularly concerned with this question, often perceiving it to be a theological issue. Therefore, I have turned to the literature of biblical theology on the same question regarding the ancient Hebrew religion (de Vaux 1:393—422; Van der Leeuw 1:160—76) and other belief systems (Radin, 1957: 342—74; Smith).

Monotheism, in the interpretation of these scholars, is the final result of a process of religious development. At some historical point, the cult of one spirit assumes increasing importance over those of lesser spirits, gradually acquiring dominance in ritual observance and

eventually coming to eclipse the worship of other powers. Such predominance of one cult over all others is called "monolatry" or "henotheism" (Albrektson; Bausani). In the case of the ancient He— brews, such a devotion to the dominant spirit was later transformed from cultic preference into dogma. Philosophical and theological expressions intervened to convert the monolatry of Yahweh into a full-blown monotheism with explanations that "there is no other god" (Gottwald:639—41; 680 et passim).

It should be noted that monolatry is not unusual among tribal peoples of the world. Radin dedicates an entire chapter to monolatry and monotheism, citing examples from such peoples (1957a:254—56).. But there is nothing inevitable about the progress from one stage to another. For one thing, philosophy and esoteric rites seem to be necessary ingredients for passing from monolatry to monotheism (Radin, 1957a:259-61). For another, the cult of other spirits may regain public favor. Indeed, one of the great struggles narrated in the Hebrew scriptures is the effort of the prophets to keep the people from reverting to worship at the ancient "bill shrines" and violating the commandment to have "no other gods before Yahweh" (cf Gottwald:694-99). Egypt under the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (1379-1362 B.C.) seems to have made an effort to initiate the process of monolatry, and there is suspicion that the historical Quetzalcoatl (c. A.D. 1000) made a similar effort among the pre-Columbian Toltecs (Sejourné), although both eventually failed. In short, while it would be inappropriate to suggest that the Taínos were monolatrists or monotheists, the notion of a high god would seem to have been a fundamental part of their religion, and one which underscores the sophistication of Taíno religious thinking.

The High God and Patriarchal Rights

Gottwald, in his penetrating analysis of the social and political concomitant elements of monotheism among the Hebrews, draws certain conclusions that are pertinent to these considerations of Taíno religion. Citing Marx, Gottwald states that religious beliefs are utilized:

> …when available goods are monopolized in certain groups so that some in the society were deprived while others were enriched. Marx stressed the "masking" or "mystifying function" of religion in giving

ideological justification co chose power relations by which some dominated the means of production at the expense of others (639—40).

Thus, just as monolatry in Hebrew society impacted-upon power relations, the importance of Yaya as dominant Spirit of Spirits lent power to social authority among the Taínos. Since the myth describes the primacy of patriarchal rights against those of rebellious sons, Yaya serves the function of representing paternal and cacical authority. The Taíno patriarch demanded dominion over others because Yaya, the model of such authority, had already done so.

Moreover, this patriarchal authority should be understood in light of the social changes produced by the evolution of Taíno economy (Chapter 3). I agree with Paul Radin, who asserted:

> Religious beliefs and attitudes were assuredly not created either by methods of food production or by some mechanism of exchange. But they did grow up together with them, and it was the economic system that made certain constituents and certain forms of religion relevant at one period and others relevant at another (Radin, 1957a:40-41).

Applying Radin's notion to Taíno society, I think that the increased political power of a cacique in the harvesting economy required that the role of the mythological Yaya also be widened. This reading of increased cacical authority lies in the view of myth that it is "to explain the existing order and also to justify it" (Balandier: 118). The exclusivity of Yaya against other spirits runs parallel to the rise of major chiefdoms, subordinating small villages to larger ones. Balandier calls this correspondence a "homology of the sacred and political" (108). As I see it, then, Yaya's absolute control over his lands and resources are heavenly reproductions of the means of production on earth.

Anthropomorphism and Its Social Meaning

Whatever importance a high god or invisible Supreme Being may have held for the Taínos, there can be little doubt of their anthropomorphism. In their myths, the Taínos describe a divine spirit full of human emotions and the contradictory moods of human. feeling. Interpreting similar data among the Indians of Guiana, Roth concluded that this anthropomorphism excluded a simultaneous notion of a Supreme Being (Roth:117-19). I believe that his reasoning

expressed a generation ago should be discarded, because it does not give adequate merit to analogical thinking. While the version of the myth as recorded by Pané lacks philosophical embellishment, the outlines of the tale are comparable to Greek, Indian, and Egyptian mythology. As has been suggested in the example of medieval theology's analysis of the name of Yahweh, anthropomorphism does not negate metaphysical speculation, but often precedes it.

The drama in this part of the Taíno creation myth centers upon Yayael's antagonism towards his father and the necessary punishment of four months' banishment. For the Taínos, banishment or ostracism was considered the severest penalty, even greater than death (Oviedo 5:51), and the four months represent a mythical period. Pané corroborates the symbolic meaning of four when he describes the Taíno numerical system of twenty, which was like that of other American peoples. For five they said "a hand"; for ten, "two hands"; for fifteen, "two hands and a foot"; and for twenty, "a man" *(Relación:58.* n.7). The number four represented to the Taínos the fullness of a person— hands and feet, since five multiplied by four spelled the highest number, a cluster of twenty. Hence, the return after four months represented an indefinite, but long stretch of time (Jung:1964, 185— 86). Brundage elaborates a similar Aztec interpretation of the number four (51—52, et passim).

Dramatically, the relationship between this spirit and his son is one of animosity. Yayael desires "to kill his father," thus linking the genesis of the Taínos with classical myths of parricide. Sigmund Freud devoted the entire fourth essay of his book *Totem and Taboo* to the theme of parricide in the ancient human past. He saw in this social prohibition the genesis of the strictures which produce the Oedipus complex. Since the Taíno myth describes a son who failed to fear his father and was subsequently punished, this myth is probably an illustration of the Freudian thesis.

If there are grounds to evaluate the socio-psychological functions of mythological parricide (and also cannibalism and incest, cf. Freud, 1964: 68—70), they must be found in the context of the prescientific society of the Taínos. I believe the death wished upon the father is the envy of a young Indian against his father's rank and territorial fishing and farming rights. The son's refusal to stay away is a threat to established authority and is met with banishment. Yayael's attempt to subvert this punishment by returning to confront his father merits death.

The Fissure Process

I base this interpretation on my reading of the process of fissure among the Yanomamö and other peoples who share similar ecological conditions with the Taínos (Chagnon: 40-44, 70-72; Turner, 1957; Vayda). Chagnon relates that village groups split along kinship lines but are often forced into warfare among themselves in the competition for resources such as land, water, and women (66). Fissure, whether the result of overpopulation or of underutilization of resources, results in a form of migration in search of sufficient territory (Harris: 67-78). As I have described in Chapter 2, the population of all the Antilles came in waves of migration, not only by those people described here as the Taínos but also by other groups. It should be added here that these movements of people were ultimately based upon fissure. Hence the origins of Taíno culture in the Antilles depended on the smooth and efficient achievement of the fissure process.

Chagnon's study has been important for this interpretation of fissure as the social context for Taíno genesis. In his case study, he explains the fierce and destructive results of fissure when it is not also accompanied by migration beyond the original boundaries. Raiding for women, wars over territory and death to one's own kin are related as negative results (Chagnon: 65-66). It is in the interest of cacical authority as repository of patriarchal rights to prevent the return to the territory of kin once fissure has taken place.

The narrative of the Taíno myth describes a situation that is to be avoided. The ethical imperative is to do the opposite of Yayael and thus escape the dilemma presented in the myth. This description of negative effects of proscribed behavior is a mythic device to explain a taboo and establish norms of ethical behavior. Moreover, since the fissure process likely involved kinship patterns, the social context for such migration has an added meaning for Taíno culture.

It would have been helpful to substantiate this interpretation by reference to the kinship system of the Taínos. But despite assiduous research, I have been unable to reach a satisfactory scientific conclusion. No one seems to be certain whether the Taínos were matrilinear or patrilinear. In treating this question, Sued Badillo points out that the classic citation in the Oviedo (1:121) concerning the supposed succession to cacical authority by the sister's son is contradicted by more certain historical data according to which a woman even be-

came chief (1975:6-8). Nor is it clear whether the Taínos were patrilocal or matrilocal (Gómez and Ballesteros: 92, n.XXXVI). The myth does offer some clues, but the information provided ought not be considered decisive.

The Gourd System

The symbols of the gourd and fish in the myth are worthy of analysis. Each serves to explain the powers of Yaya and helps to focus the meanings of the myth. The hollowed gourd was used as a container of food among the Taínos, but it also had a ritual use. The Indians fashioned the maraca., a musical instrument, from a gourd. When seeds are placed within a gourd and a short handle is added, the gourd can be rhythmically shaken to accompany religious dances and chants. This Taíno instrument is still widely used in contemporary popular music among many Caribbean peoples and frequently accmpanies the music of Santería, a syncretic Afro-Caribbean religion. The symbols and rites of this religion and its analogs share enough features with Taíno customs to suggest a historical link between contemporary Afro-Caribbean and Taíno religions (Deren: 63-70). In any case, it is likely that the Taínos considered the maraca to have special powers, much as in Santería rites, in which the hollow gourd is considered to be a womb (Cabrera:360—61).

The interpretation I offer here is unabashedly taken from Lévi Strauss (HA:469—73). As a human tool, the gourd is a storer of food; its cultural meaning, however, is as a musical instrument. As a food container, the gourd is a repository for dead things, i.e., harvested food. But as a musical instrument, it carries seeds that generate a religious dimension that is available to human beings only when they call upon the numinous. Thus, what is a tomb for plant life is also a womb for cultural and symbolic meaning.

The opposition between the functional use of the gourd and its symbolic meaning helps to define the structure of mythic thought (RC: 26-30). The ability to make symbols is perhaps as important to the evolution of human culture as our specie's potential for toolmaking. [2] Lévi-Strauss has constructed what he calls "a gourd system"

2. Lévi-Strauss is hardly the only authority on this point; for relationships between tools and symbols, see the works of such authors as Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard, and Turner 1969.

(HA:470, fig.24). The gourd as maraca or rattle, he says, is the cultural opposite of the gourd that stores water (469—71). When a myth describes the use of a gourd in one function, there is a structural inference that the other kind of use stands in opposition.

Faith as Seeing

When Yaya decides to take the gourd down from its perch and see his son, he terminates its function as storage bowl and allows its mana as maraca to begin. Since the maraca was used in the divination rites *of* the Taínos, I believe the desire to "see" Yayael is a straightforward statement that Yaya was ritually invoking the spirit of his slain son. This desire, which is a serious religious undertaking, is misunderstood by the wife. Believing that Yayael is physically within the gourd, the woman is "happy," and in her eagerness to lay hold of it, she spills out its contents.

The two persons who react differently to the powers of the gourd in this Taíno myth parallel characters in a tale *of* the Warao (M28; RC:109—12) that utilizes the notion of a "spinning gourd." Like others in its series, the Warao myth offers a contrast between two types of behavior when one is confronted with the sacred—communication and nonbelief. In the Warao myth, the nonbeliever reacts by laughing at an ogress who has used a gourd to catch fish and eat them raw. Here, inversely, the woman who is happy uses the gourd to release the fish. Apparently, Yaya also succumbs to the physical understanding *of* his *wife,* so that he too "desires to eat the fish." But the physical or functional meaning is opposed to its religious or cultural significance, so that the use of the gourd *for* food represents a loss of faith.

Yaya is pictured as the primordial father who must force his son into recognizing the inevitable. Moreover, like Jephte in the Bible (Judg. 11:29—39) and the Greek Agamemnon, who were forced to sacrifice a daughter in fulfillment of a vow, Yaya must also execute Yayael when the taboo on return migration is violated. The reluctance to comply with this stricture is tantamount to a loss of faith. Hence the desire to eat Yayael's bones in the gourd represents self-destruction.

Eating and Disbelief

Lévi-Strauss connects the eating of raw food with cannibalism (RC:151-53). He says that to eat food raw is to be like an animal that

cannot bring culture to bear upon this essential human activity. Cooking, on the other hand, separates food from nature. Thus transformed by fire, food belongs to an order different from man. The brute animal eats other animals without control or cultural understanding, becoming a cannibal of its own kind. Humans, however, are in a separate order of creation. They do not eat all food raw but have elaborated social norms that indicate which foods require transformation by cooking (the use of fire) and which do not. In ocher words, human beings alone distinguish between the raw and the cooked. Attraction to raw food, in spite of social norms concerning what ought to be cooked before eating, represents a loss of culture and a descent to a cannibalistic animal level of nature (see RC:169—70; OTM:498—508).

The happiness of Yaya's wife, as I have said, represents disbelief. Her desire to eat the fish becomes a regression from Taíno religious precepts to the level of brute nature. She is parallel with the Warao ogrees who eats fish raw, because both lack cultural sophistication. Moreover, both misuse the gourd as a natural container for fish, oblivious to its religious meaning as a maraca. Upon examination, the fish symbol can be seen as a reinforcement for the understanding of raw food as cannibalism.

The Fish Symbol

The Taíno protein diet depended on fish to supplement the yuca and fruits of their ecology, even though some excavations, such as the one at Boquerón in Puerto Rico, have shown that shellfish taken from shallow waters provided a much larger percentage of animal protein (Goodwin and Walker:29). Fishing was a collective task for the Taíno men (Chapter 3; see Harris:165—66), and I believe that the cultural importance of fishing was similar among the Taínos to hunting among the people of the Vaupés. Reichel-Dolmatoff remarks that the Desana define themselves as hunters (1971:13) even though only twenty-five percent of their food actually comes from the hunt (11). Other seafaring peoples like the Taínos frequently migrate in search of fish, and fissure occurs when new waters are required for an expanding population (Vayda).

A mythological application of the centrality of fish to Taíno life, however, carries with it a premise of analogical expression. What is the connection between Yayael's bones, the fish, and Yaya's desire to eat? In my opinion this myth expresses the Taíno belief in the food

chain. Reichel-Dolmatoff has described how important the replenishment of animals figures -in Tukano mythology (1971:83-84; see Rorth:284-85, 293—95), in which the connection between human energy and the loss of animal life is underscored by a series of rituals that include sexual abstinence and communion with the hunted animal The interconnectedness of living things that underlies replenishment is also asserted in this myth. But the focus is upon fish and how they became Taíno food. During the course of the description, a contrast is maintained between a proper religious attitude towards fish and an. uncultivated natural hunger to eat them.

A Reference to Cannibalism

The culinary reference is indirect, with little more described than a desire to eat. There are three reasons to view this desire as cannibalistic, however. By comparison with related versions such that of the Warao cited above (M28), Yaya's wife, who is happy at the suggestion to eat fish, has the same role as the ogress who eats hers raw Both myths contrast faith as seeing with hunger as disbelief. Hence the opposites are grouped around the sacred and profane understanding of the bones-made-fish. Second, throughout history various peoples have consumed the entrails and other organs of dead family members (Harñs:48). This practice has been reported among. the Yanamamö (Chagnon:50), inviting speculation that Taínos may have done the same (Morbán Laucer:96). One may choose to call this ritual "endocannibalism," distinguishing it from the practice of eating the flesh of enemies and slaves. But since Yayael is a relative, any reference to eating his remains recalls this practice, which is often interpreted as a form of ritual tribute to one's ancestors. The similarity of this custom is not lessened on account of the inversion of roles, i.e., parents in the gourd in the Island Karina account; child in the gourd in the Taíno version. As I suggested in the first chapter, variations of myth frequently invert such elements.

A more certain cultural context for the myth is the well—documented Taíno custom of storing the bones of small children in containers that were often hung from house tops (Morbán Laucer:85). The Island Karma, related linguistically and culturally to the Taínos, used the bones of the dead in prophecy: "They sometimes put the hairs, or some bones, of their deceased parents into a calabash. They say that the spirit of the dead one speaks through these, and forewarns

them of the designs of their enemies" (Roth citing La Borde:168). Sued Badillo is correct in emphasizing that such a burial practice need not indicate cannibalism, although the Spaniards jumped to this conclusion when they found it in the Lesser Antilles among the Taínos enemies (1978:40—52). Las Casas says as much about the 1493 landing on Guadalupe:

> Columbus went ashore and in a house there saw a lot of cotton both woven and ready to be woven, a new kind of loom, and many shrunken heads and human bones that must have been the natives' loved ones. It is unlikely that they were remnants of people they had eaten for, if they ate human flesh as much as is said, a house would not accommodate all the bones and heads—which there would be no reason to keep anyway, unless as relics of their most famous enemies, and all of this is pure guesswork *(Historia:1,84).*

It should not be forgotten, however, that other peoples, including the Taínos, regarded the Island Karina as likely to consume captured enemies (see *Relación:48;* Alegría in Cárdenas Ruiz:58-65, 67-77; Roth 143-44).

Mythic Cannibalism and the Food Chain

I also pointed out in the first chapter that the narration of cannibalism in a myth is not necessarily evidence of its actual practice. I suggest that mythological cannibalism serves here as a symbol for overpopulation, i.e., overtaxing the food chain. Without fissure, a people will consume too many fish for the natural process of replenishment to take place. Over fishing, like over farming, is a form of collective auto-destruction. This perception of a collective responsibility toward the environment runs parallel to the need for obedience to the cacical authority. The surrender of Yaya's wife to physical hunger is a retreat from the social commitment to place the common good over an individual need. Yaya represents the true Taíno believer, who prefers to "see" the son-at least until he succumbs to his wife's temptation, much like Adam in the Hebrew myth (Genesis 3).

Eliade states that all myth takes place in a time before time, when the rules of logic that now separate the two realms were not yet operable (Eliade, 1957:87—113). Yet mythic time is recoverable through the invocation of belief. A mother means as much when she begins

reading a bedtime story with the words, "Once upon a time.
For a religious believer, the sacred time can be recaptured so that the extraordinary power; if conditions warrant it, will again become manifest (Eliade, *1954:85—92).*

The Taíno tale is not unlike that of the Egyptian myth of Osiris. In that tale, the evil spirit Set kills Osiris, his brother, and scatters the parts of his body on the fields. The phallus of the dead Osiris is cast into the Nile River, however, where it is swallowed by a fish. The phallic power of the slain prince is rejoined with the rest of his dismembered body when the Nile overflows its banks. The fertile topsoil deposited by the Nile with its yearly flooding was the fundamental pillar of Egyptian agriculture. The process was believed to be the essential reconstitution of the integrity of creation and was heralded as the resurrection of Osiris (Neumann:63—74; Eliade:1974, 75—76, 240 n.2).

The mythic time that describes the generation of Taíno fish also sets a pattern of repetition in the completion of the food chain. The Taínos are told that fish are primordial offspring of the high god. Never should fish be sought on the basis of hunger alone, but always in the context of social and religious cohesiveness.

Psychic Meanings

The gourd and fish in the myth both have dual meanings to dramatize the primordial distance between a primitive state of nature and the acquired human gifts of religious understanding. But the complex social and ecological realities in the myth also have an emotional or psychological application. Indeed, the gourd and fish acquire multiple meanings because of the emotions of Yaya and his wife. In the first instance, the parents desire to see their dead son, a taboo; in the second, they have a natural desire to eat the fish they discover in the gourd. These impulses are parallel to the wishes of Yayael, who first wanted to supplant his father in a competition for natural resources and second, to return to Yaya's house in violation of the banishment taboo. Whether preceding or following the violation of a taboo, the Taínos seem to recognize that emotion accompanies human behavior. Sin accordingly admits of psychological shadings, and guilt varies in degree. Clearly, the Taíno myth invites examination with the Freudian notion that parricide and cannibalism represent aggression.

But the emotional or psychic dimension of the myth is not restricted to the anthropomorphic personages of father and son. The Taínos also had an affective link to the fish. Anyone who has ever fished knows that a catch should not be taken for granted. Fish often "outsmart" fishermen. These creatures move instinctively in accordance with time, tide, and weather, while human beings can only hope to learn about such things with much patience and experience. In a sense, fish can think. For religious believers like the Taínos, this uncanny ability of such creatures was a manifestation of the numinous. The search for fish, their capture and ingestion, would thus represent a form of communion with the source of all life. Indeed, the Aztecs personified maize in somewhat the same way, perceiving its harvest and consumption as a human repetition of numinous order (Nicholson: 61).

Summary

Now that the symbols of this Taíno myth have been individually examined, my interpretation may be summarized. I believe the myth explains the religious dimensions of tribal fissure, a social phenomenon that is intimately wedded to the migration of the Taínos from the Orinoco basin and throughout the Caribbean islands. The fissure of the group is necessary to prevent a fatal competition for scant resources between members of the same people. Yayael's attempt to kill his father describes a paradigmatic symbol for the refusal to migrate. Banishment is the social control utilized by the father in order to force his son to bring about fissure. Since the return of Yayael is met with his execution, the message of the myth would seem to be that no matter how long one stays away, once banished, any returning exile is met with the most drastic punishment.

A second level of meaning is a political one. The father represents cacical authority; the son, the *naboría.* Since the harvesting economy of the Taínos brought increased importance to certain chiefdoms and an emerging tribal-tributory system, Yaya also represents the prerogatives of a major cacique over lesser chiefs, symbolized in Yayael.

Finally, one must examine the subjective and emotional content of the myth. Yayael's aggressive feelings against his father are based on jealousy over rights of farming and fishing The son's conspiracy against human authority results in banishment; the banishment in turn brings apostasy from religious authority; the return from exile

ends in death. The mounting psychic rebelliousness of Yayael builds into hatred and destruction. His sins are lack of love and devotion.

At first glance, the punishment of the parents-their desire to eat the fish, or their transformed son-may seem a minor inconvenience when compared to the mandated execution of Yayael. While the son paid with his life for his indiscretion, the parents seem to get off rather lightly. But if the desire to eat fish is a symbol for cannibalism, collective self-destruction by overpopulation and decimation of the food chain, the punishment of the parents is strikingly severe.

The desires of Yaya and his wife to see the son again describe the negative effects of fissure upon those who are left behind. Even though the banishment and eventual punishment are necessary, they still produce conflicting feelings in the father and mother. Their desire• to see the banished or slain child militates against the absoluteness of ostracism. Their "sins" parallel those of Yayael. The son is driven by antagonism to seek to replace his father; the parents are drawn by love to be reunited with their son. In both cases, the society cannot bear such naked emotion.

Thus, this myth about migration by fissure is connected to Freud's taboo on parricide and the function of mythic thought to shape human psychology (cf Lévi-Strauss, SA:162-79). Each Taíno son must be willing to leave his father's lands in the process of fissure, because the competition produced when migration does not take place is equivalent to wishing your father dead. Likewise, communication with kin, who have departed may only be a spiritual "sight" through the divination rite. To physically invite back migrants is to court collective self-destruction of one's kind. The myth suggests that the need for migration is an ironclad rule of Taíno social survival and that no human emotions may affect the process. Fissure must be an automatic and impersonal process, which brooks neither hatred from those leaving nor the desire for reunion by those left behind.

There is also a psychic identification with fish, similar to the description by Lévi-Strauss of the Asidwal myth of the Tshimíshian Indians of the Pacific Northwest (in Leach, 1967:1—47). In mythic time, fish took their origin from the son of the omnipotent spirit, but now in the natural order of things, this dependence has been reversed. 'Whereas Yayael became fish, now Taínos eat fish, so that the fish become the flesh of Taínos. I interpret this Taíno tale as an analogical expression of fish in the food chain for the people. And because such mythic realities can be invoked through ritual, I find myself tempted

to summarize the Taíno faith in paraphrase of Christian theology: "Whenever you catch this fish and eat **it,** you do so in memory of Yayael, who gave his bones as fish for the life of the world." The importance of fish to Taíno mythology is made evident by the repetition of this theme in their second account of genesis.

Deminán and the Great Flood (Chapters IX—X,)

[It is said that] one day, when Yaya had gone to his *conucos,*
[which means,I "the lands that were his inheritance,"
four sons came forth from one woman,
who is named Itiba Cahubaba, **THE BLEEDING ANCIENT ONE.**
All came from the one womb and all were twins.
After dying in childbirth, the woman was cut open
and they took out these four children.
The first taken out was *caracaracol,*
[which means,] "The Scabby One."
Caracaracol had "Deminán" for his name;
the others did not have a name.
And while they were eating, they sensed that Yaya
was returning from his lands.
While trying in their haste to hang up the gourd,
they did not put it up securely;
so that it fell to the ground and broke apart.
[It is said that] so much water came from that gourd that it
covered the whole earth and from **it** came many fish.
[It is said that] this is how the sea took its origin.

Relation to the First Genesis Myth

The symbols of the fish and gourd bind this version of creation to the previous one. But there are significant differences. Only Yaya with his house and hanging gourd are the same: the woman is never identified as his wife, as in the first version. Correspondingly, the four children are not said to be Yaya's sons. Perhaps because some of the elements concerning the fish and gourd paralleled the description in the first version of creation, Pané omitted details of what the twins were eating and how they came across the gourd. Roth reports an Arawak myth of Hariwali in an encounter with Yawahu that I think is related to the Taíno version. In the Arawak account, Hariwali has two wives, each meeting with a different fate that merits punishment. The

bones belong to Hariwali's dead brother. Then, after Yawahu places them in a gourd, Hariwali rescues and resucitates this brother before leaving that place in search of game (Roch: 120-23). The theme of fissure seems fairly clear, despite other differences that need not be examined here.

Could the mother of the four children be a second wife of Yaya, or a sister to his wife? Whatever the answer to this textual question, the myth does offer a contrast of fate. Unlike the first episode with the slain Yayael, in this account the children escape punishment for their violation of the taboos. The sin here is one of theft, not of parricide or a return from banishment. That is not to say that the four children are without fault. It is striking to note that the same source that tells us, ostracism was the most severe punishment among the Taínos also tell us that theft was the worst crime (Oviedo 5:51). López Baralt reports that robbery from one's own people is generally perceived as a serious crime among most Amerinds (64-67).

But is the theft perpetrated by the four twin brothers against Yaya the result of scarcity in food and resources in an overpopulated village? I believe this is the reason that they escape punishment. Hence, this second tale of genesis describes the "other side" of fissure. Unlike the first myth, in which the personages are all kin, here the children appear to be unrelated to Yaya. The desire to eat fish, even by stealing from an absent lord, seems coincidental rather than conspired. I conclude that the punishment of the brothers is less severe because their sin is less serious. But such an interpretation depends upon better identification of the mother, of the four brothers, and of the flood that creates the sea.

The Taíno Earth Mother

Arrom has identified several pieces of Taíno art as representations of Itiba Cahubaba., the ancient genetrix. The feminine figure presented by these vases resembles a huge cadaver that seems more like a tree stump than a human body (see Figures 4, 5). The puffed eyes and cheeks present evidence that Itiba Cahubaba is putrefying. Her human limbs are stylistically fused into the massive body, suggesting a loss of human form in the process of decay. On the back of the head is a trapezoidal design that Arrom speculates is the Taíno understanding of the shape of the wor1d.[3] The epithet Itiba, "bloodied" or "bleed

3. Private **conversations with Arrom,** cf. his **book (1975:136).**

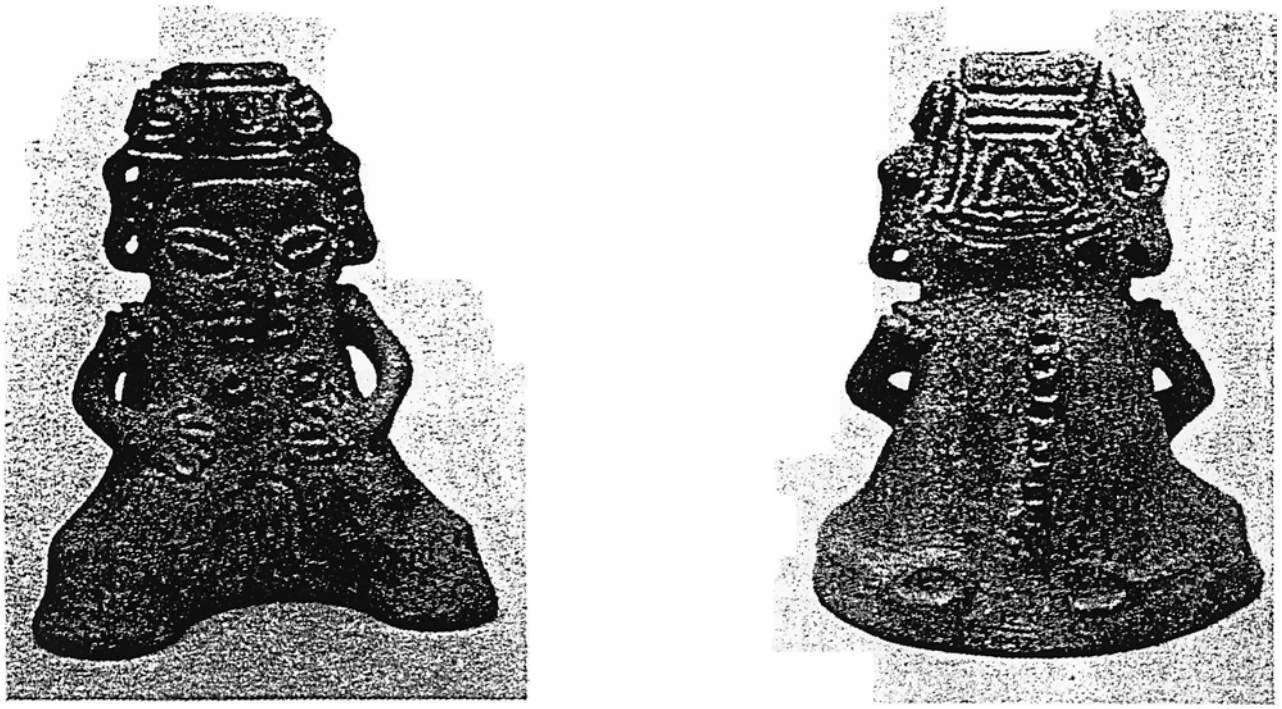


Figure 4. **Left:** *Frontal view of clay effigy vase of Cahubaba with head and breast faces in the Janus Mode. Santo Domingo. 17.8 cm. Museum of the American Indian. Heye Foundation, New York. After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.* **Right:** *Back view of the same object.*

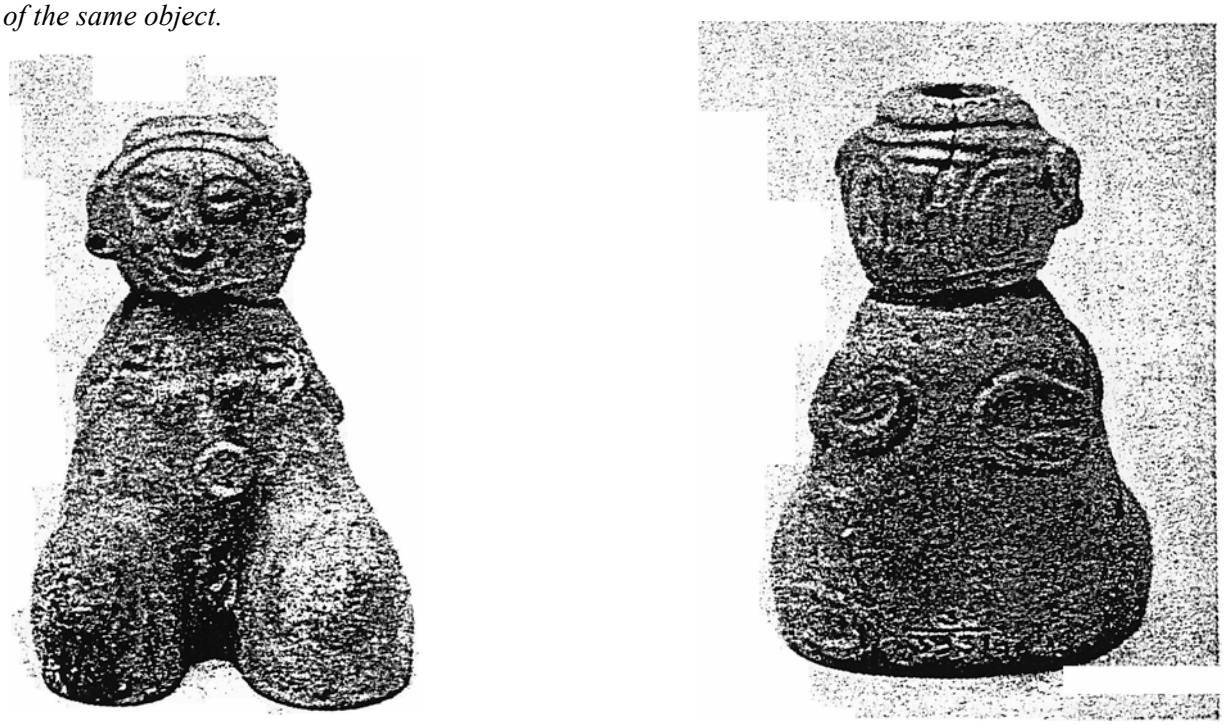


Figure 5. **Left:** *Frontal view of effigy vase of Cahubaba in clay with head and breast faces in the Janus Mode. Santo Domingo. 14.6 cm. Museum of the American Indian. Heye Foundation, New York. After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.* **Right:** *Back view of the same object.*

ing," may be a reference to a Caesarean-type birth, although there is no other hint that the Taínos were capable of such operations (Morales Cabrera:79). It is more likely that the description of blood refers to the single parent, or chthonian phenomenon (Eliade, 1958:245—46).

The function of this Taíno mythological personage as source of diverse life—the number of children is four, a symbol of fullness— makes Itiba Cahubaba comparable to the Inca Pachamama and the Aztec Coatilicue. The double set of twins is a concept of division and dependence. Each brother is only one—quarter of his mother's children, yet individual identity is as "a twin," meaning that each child belongs to a pair instead of to himself or to the mother (Jung, 1964;112-22). But with the decay of Itiba Cahubaba, the children have neither mother nor father to give them kinship identity. This theme returns to prominence in their further exploits (Chapter 7), and I believe it provides an important social meaning to the myth.

The Kinship Theme

In a patrilocal society, migration away from one's father leaves the migrant without a place to call home. This context is provided at the beginning of the episode by Pané's description of *"conucos"* (a word still used to mean a small farm) as "the lands of his inheritance." The four brothers have no inheritance, just as the traveler in a patrilocal system has no title to residence. The brothers can claim only a clan mother, who can give social identity but can bestow no land rights. In this myth, the migrants have never possessed the cultural right to reside in their father's territory; moreover, their mother has passed away. Although there seems no certain evidence that the Taínos were patrilocal or matrilineal, the myth offers a scenario in which these kinship patterns explain the plight of the four brothers.

The Four Twin Brothers

Who, then, are the four twin brothers? The Quiché account of the epic *Popol I/uh* describes four children as the first humans (150ff.).As representatives of the human race, their experiences explain the origins of human frailty (Nicholson 60—65). The universal meaning of the number four should be recalled. Its application to the children describes the fertility of Itiba Cahubaba. Four is a number of abundant reward for her, although it was a punishment for Yayael, who was

banished for four months. Structurally, then, the number four serves to link and contrast the fate of the protagonists in each myth.

The most important of Itiba Cahubaba's children, the only one to have a name, is imperfect. Deminán (whose name has not yet been deciphered) has the epithet, "Caracaracol," or "The Scabby One." The notion of infected skin is a mythological symbol with a sexual meaning (López Baralt: 69-72). In this myth, the condition corresponds to syphilis. As described in the fourth chapter, mothers who have contracted this venereal disease give birth to infected children. The infants show the effects of the disease, but these symptoms disappear until puberty. The phenomena of appearance, disappearance, and reappearance bestowed religious power upon the survivors, the *caracaracoles* (Chapter 9).

Deminán's affliction serves to link his mythological role to that of heroes who lose immortality This notion of a loss of godlike power usually involves some sort of sin (Genesis 3) and has been analyzed by Livi-Strauss in his study of Amazonian peoples (RC:152—63, et passim). Like limping (Roth:150) or some other defect, the imperfection of disease makes the culture hero an intermediary between the purely spirit world and the earth of human habitation. This is the conclusion in the *Popul Vuh,* where the first men have their vision clouded lest they resemble the gods too closely. The symbolic function of Deminán's weakness, which becomes more clear in his subsequent exploits, will be examined in the next chapter.

The Flood From the Broken Gourd

Pané affirms the importance of the flood that is produced by the broken gourd when he states that "This is how the sea took its origin." As in the first account, fish appear with the broken gourd, but their destination is clearly stated here as the sea that covers the whole earth. But this flood is not planned; just "happens." Impersonal forces, resulting from carelessness in hanging up the gourd, rather than conscious human motivation produces *it.* The uncontrollable flood sweeps the brothers away from the lands of Yaya's inheritance and toward new shores. Not only are the brothers carried along, so too is the broken gourd and the fish who were inside.

In order to fully understand the mythological meaning of the flood, I believe **it** important to recall the mythological meanings of the gourd which I have discussed. In the gourd system of Lévi

Strauss, a gourd broken in half, but emptied of water, is meant to float on top of the water. Lévi-Strauss links hollow gourds to hollow trees, mediated by sound. Although the notion is too complex to explain here, he uses this device to establish a parallel among myths about gourds and myths about floods and canoes (HA:451-53; RC:49-55; see Roth:267): "The gourd must be only partially filled, in other words, the water it contains must be shallow, like the water into which the oar is plunged, that is, which contains it. Otherwise, the instruments instead of being beneficient, become maleficent" (HA: 252). The point I am emphasizing here is proper use: spilling water out of a gourd is diametrically analogous to filling a canoe with water, i.e., flooding it—neither should be done.

I suggest that the broken gourd becomes two flooded canoes, bringing the brothers on a journey from Yaya's spirit home to earth. In this journey they follow the fish, much as would be expected of fishermen. This flood links the food-chain theme to the fate of the brothers. In the first myth, fish intelligence was caused by generation from Yayael's bones. Here, the innocent backwardness of the four brothers puts them into a situation where they must imitate fish to survive. As children without kin, little more could be expected from them. Fortunately, their remaining travels help them attain the gifts of culture (Chapter 7).

The Canoe Journey

Lévi-Strauss analyzes myths from other South American peoples about a journey to the earth from the sky by travelers in a canoe and theorizes that the function of the celestial canoe trip is to establish order (OTM:170—95). He suggests that an understanding of the myths rests on an appreciation of the balance and cooperation between paddlers in stern and bow. Without these qualities, he notes, a smooth canoe trip is impossible. The cosmological meaning of these myths is apparent, representing the concept of the canoe trip of moon and sun. According to Lévi-Strauss, these rival celestial bodies discover harmony while in the canoe and, through the course of the myth, establish an explanation for temporal periodicity. Because the canoe involves a journey from one place to another, however, it also serves as a means of joining the near to the far (OTM:190-93). Such theorizing refers to varied themes both of origins and marriage taboos (OTM:145-69; of particular interest are figs. 10—13). All of these,

Lévi-Strauss argues, are parts of an integrated system that relates food and marriage to the order of the heavens.

The travelers to earth in the Taíno myth are not perfect; they bear great resemblance to the quibbling and susceptible ferrymen in the South American tales. But the most striking similarities of this Taíno myth are to North American tales (OTM:456-70). The Mandan and Hidatsa deluge myths are closer to the Taíno account than are South American accounts, because the canoe trip is in a downward vertical movement; that is, from the sky to the earth. In the South American versions, the canoe trip is horizontal, accomplished on earth and among human types who exhibit all kinds of foibles. (As will be seen in Chapters 9 and 10, the Taínos also have myths about a horizontal journey)

Among the Cariban-speaking Tamanac of the Orinoco basin, Lévi-Strauss found a myth which integrates the vertical celestial canoe trip with the horizontal human one (OTM;159—61), and I believe the Taíno myth serves a similar integrative function. The tie between the Tamanac myth and this Taíno version can be found in the defects of the travelers. In the Tamanac account, to prevent return to the sky, the legs of the flood survivors are broken. Here, the defect *is* in the syphilitic condition of Deminán-his scabby body.

Taíno Faith in the Food Chain

In his studies, Lévi-Strauss has gone as far as suggesting that such myths interpret human life *"sub specie piscis"* (1967:31). With this erudite play on the medieval theological expression for faith *("sub specie aeternitatis"),* Lévi-Strauss emphasizes the religious dimensions and sophistication of "the savage mind" (SM: 16—33). There is a symmetry between what happens to fish at one end of the food chain and to humans at the other. The circle of life energy established in the first Taíno genesis myth is closed by this second account. Fish took their origins from the same mythic home of Yaya as humans; now the two are inseparably bound together on the earth and its seas. The second myth tells us that because of the flood, the distance between origins and ordinary human experience has grown. Intuitive communication with fish is no longer natural, and must be learned like the Skills of riding a canoe and *catching* fish. Fortunately, the flood has removed the fish from the territorial claim of Yaya. Although the four twin brothers are on their own, the fish companions may be eaten

because they no longer would be stolen from kin. The fish supplant direct communication with the numinous, because, in fact, they are symbols for the preordained circle of life forces. But as living creatures swimming in the sea, the fish are a step removed from the bones in the gourd. Before the origin (as Yayael's bones) can be ritually evoked, the art of fishing must be mastered.

The Great Flood

The theme of distance from mythic time relates this tale of the broken gourd to the epic dimensions of the great flood. Joseph Campbell notes that:

> Deluge stories occur in every quarter of the earth. They form an integral portion of the archetypal myth of the history of the world, and so belong properly to the … cosmogonic cycle. The deluge hero is a symbol of the germinal vitality of man surviving even the worst tides of catastrophe and sin (37, n.42).

The Gilgamesh epic of Middle Eastern mythology and the parallels in the Hebrew account of Noah (Genesis 6:5-8:22; see Speiser:47-63) describe a world in transition. The flood and the deliverance of the hero in the ark allow for a new beginning for humankind that makes these ancestors closer to humans today than to the first of God's creatures. In the case of Noah, humans now may eat meat, having lost their previous harmony with animals (Gen. 9:3-4). In the Gilgamesh epic, the flood allows humans to acquire knowledge because of the libations poured upon the corpse of Inanna. The cuneiform poetry reads:

> They who preceded Inanna,
> Were beings who know not food, who know not water,
> Who eat not sprinkled flour,
> Who drink not libated wine,
> Who take away the wife from the loins of man,
> Who take away the child from the breast of the nursing mother (Campbell:21516).

This poetically summarizes the many examples offered by Eliade to show that the flood produces estrangement from the things that were

and forces humankind to find their way to a new culture (Eliade,1958:43—46).

Summary

The second Taíno genesis myth describes the circumstances that drove the brothers from their primordial home. The flood has swept them away, and they ride on the waters out of control, without patrilocal right or matrilineal identity. But unlike the slain Yayael, their plight is the result of need, not conspiracy. The four twins do not yet know how to cure disease and are cultural orphans, driven by hunger for fish smarter than they, ignorant of fire, and surviving by theft. The overturned gourd has become like the fruit Eve took in the Garden of Eden or the drunkenness of Quetzalcoatl which led him to incest. Moreover, the theme of migration after fissure is a strong reminder to the Taínos that their ancestors once lived in such a way. The religious message is analogous to the Hebrew tradition of Deuteronomy (26:5): “My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down into Egypt to find refuge there, few in numbers; but there he became a nation, great, mighty, and strong.”

Deminán: New Noah in a Promethean Odyssey

The roles I have attributed to the afflicted Deminán in the title of this chapter are intentionally awesome. Just like Noah in the flood in the Hebrew tale of genesis, Taíno mythology relates the beginning of human life through the faith of one man. But fulfilling this role requires a journey with many adventures, and, like Odysseus, Deminán is unsure of his direction, guided only by destiny. One of the gifts he provides to mankind is taken from the ancients. He is tormented like Prometheus for this audacity, but his spirit nonetheless reigns unconquered. While Pané's narrative of Deminán and his exploits does not rank as literature on a par with what has been written of these other mythological heroes throughout the history of Western civilization, Deminán's functions for the liberation of Taíno society are nonetheless of equal importance.

The Bird-Nester Myth

Among the South American Indians, Lévi-Strauss found myths of characters who possess understanding but lack the ability to speak (RC:114-33). He names this recurrent theme the "Bird-Nester

Myth." The version of the Mataco features a parrot as a sentinel who loses the ability to communicate with humans (and whose tongue is turned black on that account, M32, 114), while the Bororo make the macaw the bird with this role (M34, 115). The Bird—Nester Myth also occupies a major part of the analysis in *The Naked Man.* This myth in its various forms serves to provide an explanation for the transitions between nature and culture. The animal, usually a bird, is caught outside its habitat and loses a previously possessed ability to pass between nature and culture.

Relevant to the versions of the Bird-Nester Myth are those which describe a human who dresses as an animal to deceive others, only to be punished by being forced to always remain an animal (NM:343-45). In my opinion, the sentence that introduces the journey of Deminán is related to the Bird-Nester Myth:

Conel, The Mute Listener (Chapter X)

Later on they left there and came upon a man named Cónel,
son of the listener who was mute.

Identity of the Mute Listener

Because of Arrom's decipering of the proper name as "Son of the Listener," I think this otherwise cryptic sentence may be connected to South American mythology through the Bird-Nester Myth. I have several reasons for suggesting this link. First, the extensive similarities between Taíno mythology and the body of South American tales makes it appropriate to expect that a substantial theme such as the Bird—Nester would appear somewhere in Pané's narrative. Second, the essential and logical place for the Bird—Nester Myth is on a mythic journey in acquisition of cultural gifts. That is precisely what Deminán and the twin brothers are about, and there is no other encounter described into which the Bird-Nester would fit. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the attributes of Conel hint that his functions are similar to those of the Bird-Nester in other South American versions of the myth.

That Conel is both a listener and mute suggests that he has the intelligence to understand language but the inability to reply. This resembles the Mataco version (M32), in which these attributes help

the parrot function as a sentinel. Many species of this myth's totem, the parrot, were common in the pre-Columbian Antilles. The ability of these birds to mimic human speech is well known. In the wild, parrots make sounds which might be interpreted as a form of speech, although not in a human language. Moreover, the bright feathers of the parrot's plumage were used by the Taínos as adornment.

Lévi-Strauss considers clothing of any kind to be a form of social communication that sets humankind apart from nature. In this function it is an analog to cooking, which separates the way humans eat from the way brute animals do (see Chapter 6; RC: 334-39; NM: 342-46). To learn something about the wearing of feathers is to achieve the basic rudiments of human culture. Using another myth to illustrate this link between the culinary and the vestimentary, he says:

By forcing Eagle to undress, Coyote causes him to regress from culture to nature and, metaphorically speaking, from the cooked to the raw,just as Raven's companions, by forcing him to submit to cooking, transform his original white nudity. . into distinctive blackness (NM : 343)

In his treatment of the Bird—Nester Myth, Lévi-Strauss relates this communication by clothing among humans as reciprocal with their loss of communication with animals by language. In other words, becoming human means that one loses the natural ability to interpret bird sounds in the forest. The recompense, however, is that the wearing of bird feathers provides a mute communication among humans in society. Each species recognizes and understands its own kind, but as the distance between humans and animals grows, humans become dependent more on each other than upon nature. This was the closing note of the second Taíno genesis myth, in which the twin brothers were carried along with the fish by the great flood.

These two themes, loss of language and acquisition of feathers as articles of clothing, relate Conel directly to the Bird-Nester Myth. Conel does not seem to be an enemy, and this parallels the perception of the Tukano, who classify the parrot as "friendly." The creature is allowed within the circle of human residence (Reichel-Dolmaltoff, 1975:73), where it also serves as sentinel of the shaman (84). The problem is that Pané says clearly that Conel was "a man": nowhere is there a suggestion of a parrot or any other kind of bird.

Despite any further evidence concerning the identity of Conel, I

believe that the context of the myth is related to South American versions of the Bird-Nester Myth. In the rest of the tale, the exploits of the wandering brothers bring them closer to the culture of human society while at the same time distancing them from their primordial birthplace. Their journey changes them, so they will not be able to communicate any longer with the world they left behind. If there is any meaning at all to the encounter with Conel, it should be the acquisition of new cultural gifts. I conclude, therefore, that Pané has omitted something here—not at all surprising given the constraints of his sojourn among the Taínos in 1496. On that premise, I suggest that the missing information concerns Conel's Bird-Nester function. While incomplete and provisional, this hypothesis of mine should provide substance for further analysis and debate.

The next episode, in contrast with the fragment just analyzed, has many details. For the sake of analysis, I have divided the myth into two parts. The first section below tells of the encounter of the brothers with another personage, white the second sums up the net result of their voyage.

Gifts of Bread and Herbs (Chapter XI)

As soon as they came to the door of Bayamanaco, The OLD MAN, and saw that he carried *cazabe,*
They said "Ahiacabo guarocoel!"[which means,]"We know our grandfather!"
In the same way, Deminán Caracaracol, seeing his brothers ahead of him,
entered in to see if he would be able to get some cazabe.
[This cazabe is the bread eaten in this country.]
Upon entering the house of Bayamanaco[el],
Caracaracol asked for cazabe,
[which is the bread mentioned above.]
He (Bayamanaco) put his hand to his nose
and threw upon (Deminán's) back aguanguayo, SPITTLE.
This guanguayo was filled with cohoba which had just been made
that day.
[Cohoba is some kind of powder that they take at times for purification and for other effects described below. Cohoba is taken in a reed about half as long as one's arm, and they put one end in their nose and the other in the powder. Then they inhale through the nose and this greatly purifies them.]

Thus were they given this *guanguayo,* SPITTLE, instead of the bread they make. He [Baymanaco] left there very indignant because they had asked for it....

Tobacco and Culture

Arrom identifies *guanguayo* with the spittle produced when tobacco is chewed raw *(Relación:68 ,n.69).* The narcotic quality of the raw leaf generally takes effect when mixed with human saliva. This myth is then a Taíno variation of myths about tobacco. "Tobacco"[1] is the Anglicized form of a word introduced by the Spaniards to describe the Taíno custom of inhaling the smoke from the leaves of the plant they called *"cojiba" (Nicotania tabacum).* The narcotic powers of the plant derive from the nicotine in their leaves, which must be extracted to obtain the effect. South American Indians today either smoke or chew the tobacco, usually in a religious context. Among the Yanamamö, possession of tobacco is so highly prized that the word for "poverty" can be literally translated as "without tobacco" (Chagnon:90).

For Lévi-Strauss, tobacco occupies a special place in the classification system of the raw and the cooked, since tobacco, like honey, escapes these definitions for culturally adapted foods. Lévi-Strauss has dedicated *From Honey to Ashes,* one of his four volumes on the structural study of myth, to the varied symbolic meanings of tobacco. While not all of his complicated theorizing is relevant here, a summary of his thought is in order..

To obtain the narcotic power of the tobacco leaf, it must be destroyed, either by burning or by chewing. In other words, tobacco achieves its cultural purposes in ways very different from those of plants that are simply eaten. By inhaling the smoke, the most completely destroyed part of the plant is ingested. In chewing it, the introduction of saliva makes it useless as food and it must be spit out. This spittle eventually ferments the leaf; and, if swallowed, the spittle produces a narcotic effect. But because it is ingested raw or burnt, Lévi-Strauss argues that tobacco is culturally different from food.

1. The evidence is reasonably convincing that "tobacco" is derivedfrom the Arabic *"tabbaq,"* a medicinal herb applied in a similar fashion. See Hernández Aquino: 307; cf.114; Alvarez Nazario:61-62 n.46.

Hence, while other plants are seen as useful in a raw/cooked dichotomy, tobacco is placed in a rotten/burnt classification. Tobacco's narcotic effects are usually associated with shamanistic visions, and sometimes with various forms of healing rites. The plant can excite or deaden the senses, or can be used to induce vomiting.

Lévi-Strauss considers tobacco to be parallel with honey. Honey is another food that can be eaten raw or fermented-the latter as mead, although the bee which produces the honey is often considered to have "cooked" this food as a service co humans. Because tobacco and honey escape the usual cultural categories for food, they are given great symbolic value. As will be seen in Chapter 9, such a role for honey presents certain difficulties in the Greater Antilles, but there can be no hesitation in recognizing the centrality of tobacco for Taíno religion.

Taíno Cohoba and Healing Rites

In the Taíno Deminán myth, the *guanguayo,* or raw tobacco, has been mixed with what the Taínos called *"cohoba."* Scholars are divided as to whether the word *"cohoba"* refers to a plant or to the practice of ingesting the powders produced from the tree. I agree with Gómez and Ballesteros that the ceremony of ingestion is the more likely meaning of the word *(133-36;* see Las Casas, *Apolg:166).* In any case, the work of William E. Safford (1916) has identified the plant referred to as *"Piptadenia peregrina."* [2] This is a native tree with long pods, similar to those of the tamarind *(Tamarindus indica).* The fruit in these pods produces an hallucinatory effect upon those who ingest **it.** Pané renders his finest ethnographic materials in Chapters XIV through XVIII, in which he describes from his own direct observation how the rite of *cohoba* was utilized by the Taíno *behiques.* His descriptions are remarkably similar to those of Roth taken from his observations among the native people of Guiana more than 415 years later (Roch: 327-62) and more recently to those of Reichel— Dolmatoff taken among the people of the Colombian Vaupés (1975).

The basis of the Taíno shamanistic curing rite was an identification

2. Reichel-Dolmatoff (1975:9 n.24) says it has been reclassified as "Ariadenanthera peregrina," and this is the term chat will be employed in the remainder of this text. See his review of Pané (3-9). Oviedo describes the Taíno use of tobacco with cohoba (in Gómez and Ballesteros: l46 LIV).

between the *behique* and his patient. The process can be recreated by an analysis of Pané's Chapter 16. Invocation by mystic chants accompanied a rhythmic beating on a hollow wooden tambor called a *"mayohabao" (Relación:34* n.90). By ritually painting himself black and gray with jaguar juice (see Chapter 8), the shaman presented himself as sharing the sickness. Adorned with the colors of death, he imitated the symptoms of the patient and then ingested the *cohoba* and administered **it** to the patient as well with the use of reeds or "pipes," some of which were fashioned with religious symbols (see Figures 5, 6). The narcotic powder was inhaled through these tubes into the nostrils, somewhat like snuff. This process of ingestation is similar to present customs among many South American peoples, including the. Tukano and the Yanamamö.

The Taíno *behique* then began an interrogation of the spirits who had invaded the sick person. During this process, no natural food was to be in the body; the *behique* fasted, and vomiting was induced to make certain the patient was also purified. Moreover, Taíno healing added the dimension of a disruptive spirit to the ritual use of curative herbs. The body was emptied of profane food so that communication with the sacred spirit world would be unimpeded. **If** the shaman communicated with the possessing spirit, his art was successful. If, on the other hand, the patient died, Pané tells us that the bereaved's family was entitled to question the cadaver as to the cause of death. If the *behique* was found to be at fault, Pané recounts that severe punishments were inflicted on him *(Relación:39—41).*

The Role of the Shaman

Lévi-Strauss offers a valuable analysis of the same shamanistic practices in his essay, "The Sorcerer and His Magic," included in his book, *Structural Anthropology* (161—80). He suggests that the curative efficacy of this emotional identification with the patient may be explained as abreaction:

> In psychoanalysis, abreaction refers to the decisive moment in the treatment when the patient intensively relives the initial situation from which his disturbance stems, before he ultimately overcomes it.. In this sense, the shaman is a professional abreactor…. It is true that in the shamanistic cure the sorcerer speaks and abreacts for the silent patient, while in psychoanalysis it is the patient who talks and abreacts against

> the listening therapist. But the therapist's abreaction, while not concomitant with the patient's, is nonetheless required, since he must be analyzed before he himself can become an analyst. It is more difficult to define the role ascribed to the group by each technique. Magic readapts the group to predefined problems through the patient, while psychoanalysis readapts the patient to the group by means of the solutions reached (SA:175, 177).

The details of the initiation and ordeal rituals for the shaman that Roth has recorded in his study of continental peoples suggest that for the practice of healing, great mental and physical discipline is required before the abreaction capability is acquired. It is not unlikely that among the Taínos, shamanistic skills required similar training. Certain forms of the asceticism and dominion over pain have contemporary parallels among other Amerind peoples (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975; Castañeda, 1972:291-302) and in the practice of yoga in the Orient (Berry: 92-1 15).

It is beyond the scope of this analysis to compare Taíno practices with the field study of Alan Harwood in New York City, although I have done some of this comparison in an earlier work (1981). Harwood reported a successful experiment in a community health center that utilized Puerto Rican *santeros* (shamans of a Santería analog) as mental health therapists (1977). The *santeros'* ritual identification with their patients apparently provided significant therapeutic results. The curing arts of the Taínos seem to have been mixed with those of Africa, and they still retain their usefulness for Puerto Ricans today (see Koss).

The combination of *guanguayo* and *cohoba* in the myth suggests a context of shamanistic curing in the encounter with Deminán. The meaning of the herbs becomes a counterpoint melody in the adventures of Deminán to the theme of *cazabe* which is given to his twin brothers. These ideas, together with the identity of the old man they encounter, will be explored below. However, the entire episode presumes an understanding of the *behique's* art and an emotional identification between healer and patient, who communicate with spirits through the use of drugs.

The Old Man in the Myth

As in the case of Conel, the identity of Bayamanaco is unclear. His name has been deciphered by Arrom as "Old Man." Since two

versions of the name are offered, it is impossible, without the original text of Pané, to know if he is "Bayamanaco" or "Bayamanacoel," which would mean "Son of the Old Man." But although the names differ in the text, Arrom is certain that the mythical personage is one and the same *(Relación: 30* n.63,68).

Perhaps more important to the interpretation of the myth is the identity of the grandfather cited in the greeting of the brothers: They have no father, since their birth to Cahubaba was autochthonous. But their mother may be someone's daughter. Is the grandfather Bayamanaco (López Baralt: 55-60)? Or is he the omnipotent Yaya? If the latter is the case, then the invisible high god is the twins' grandfather, as well as the ancestor of Bayamanaco. This is the interpretation that I prefer, but even without a certain identification of the grandfather, kinship appears as an important gift in this episode.

Invoking one's grandfather may have been a ritual greeting for the Taínos, with the purpose of establishing a common ancestral linkage among strangers. Such a practice may be found among contemporary peoples (Civieux cited in López Beralt:57—59; Elkin:56). Among today's descendants of the Igneri peoples, the *dogó* rite calls upon the grandfather in order to commune with the dead (see Chapter 8). In this myth, the greeting may refer both to natural genealogy and to ritual divination. Such a double meaning for the same term was discussed in Chapter 6 as the explanation for the reaction of Yaya and his wife to the desire to see their slain son. The reference to kin heightens the likelihood that the second version of genesis intends to describe kinship as lacking. The invocation here underscores the point that while they are in the process of acquiring culture, the twin brothers must learn about kinship. (Perhaps they have already learned about clothes from Conel.) But they will also have to attain knowledge of *cazabe* and the secrets of tobacco and *cohoba.*

The Gift of Cazabe

Whatever his kinship identity, the rest of the encounter with Bayamanaco is presented in the familiar terms of Taíno daily customs. Apparently, it was etiquette that those who entered a Taíno house would be offered *cohoba* and *cazabe,* the bread made from yuca and the staff of life for Taíno civilization (Arrom, 1975:115). Taíno effigies of *cemíes* were used as stands upon which these hospitality offerings were placed.

It is surprising that the gift of *cazabe* to the first three brothers is treated without elaboration in the myth. Nor is there mention of fire, an essential part of the technique for baking *cazabe.* Perhaps the Taíno myth anticipates that the travelers knew of fire (see OTM: 189). But as I pointed out in Chapter 3, *cazabe* was the staple of the Taínos. Like other peoples on the South American mainland, they had discovered that this bread resisted spoilage and accordingly used yuca bread as a food for travelers. Bayamanaco here complies with the cultural expectation for the hospitable host. Three of the brothers enter and partake of the bread.

The Gift of Guanguayo

Deminán is specially blessed among his brothers, not on account of the *cazabe,* which they all expect and receive, but because of the mixture of *guanguayo* and *cohoba.* The meaning of the word is "spitle," which helps identify *guanguayo* as the juice of chewed raw tobacco. But it comes from the nose of Bayamanaco, not from his mouth. What is the connection to *cohoba,* which was ingested through the nose? Chagnon vividly describes the green mucus that constantly drips from the noses of the Yanamamö (5), who blow narcotic powders into their nostrils just as the Taínos did. If, as the myth states, Bayamanaco threw the *guanguayo* on Deminán-by putting "his hand to his nose," then is it not likely that the *guanguayo* is mucus from the *cohoba* rather than spittle from raw tobacco? I believe that the myth. intentionally mixes these two substances, both of which have shamanistic powers. Hence a contradiction in details is inserted with a mythological purpose. Just as Torres Laborde relates that among the Barasana the spittle of *guanguayo* can also mean sperm *(42; Relación:68,* n.69), *guanguayo* from the nose is a mysterious and unexplainable manifestation of special powers. In as much as we understand that in order to prove his magic, a magician is supposed to pull a rabbit out of his hat—a most unlikely place—we should be patient with the Taínos who put *guanguayo* and *cohoba* together in Bayamanaco's nose in order to symbolize the shaman's craft.

The Mixture of Opposites

As already stated, *guanguayo* is the fermenting tobacco juice produced when the plant's raw leaves are chewed. The bacteria intro-

duced by human saliva make it into an infecting agent. *Cohoba,* on the other hand, is an emetic for purification rites. The mixture of the two, therefore, is a conjuncture of an infectant and a disinfectant.

Reichel-Dolmatoff describes at length the healing practiced by the shamans of the Vaupés. They also utilize various mixtures of healing herbs and infecting agents, which he classifies as "pathogenic" (1971:101; 1975:89-96). These pathogenic substances are intended to attack and kill the spirit that caused the disease (Reichel-Dolmaltoff, 1971:176).

In my hypothesis, the mixture of herbs is a mythical device. Its purpose is to symbolize the conjoining of opposites. The *guanguayo* infects, i.e., causes a fever, while the *cohoba* disinfects by provoking vomiting. This conjuncture of opposites (in theological language, *"coincidentia oppositorum")* has a meaning of fullness because it represents two extremes and all possible combinations thereof. Karl G. Jung develops this notion extensively (vol. 14). Besides, *guanguayo* must be wet while *co ho ha* must be dry for inhaling; dry *guanguayo* is as useless as wet *cohoba.* Hence, the different functions of these herbs as known to the Taíno shaman are contrasted in order to add symbolic value to the myth. The opposite functions as emetic and infectant are important in the Taíno curing rite.

The Cohoba *as Emetic*

Pané's lengthy description of the use of the *cohoba,* as well as detailed testimony from a variety of other reliable eyewitnesses, states that the *cohoba* was used for its hallucinatory effects (Las Casas cited in *Relación:112).* This is one of the basic reasons for its identification as *Anadenanthera peregrina.* Why then is it ascribed an emetic, i.e., vomiting function here? Materials in Roth, derived from observation of peoples closely related to the Taínos, relate the emetic function to the inducement of visions (298—99, 338). Careful examination of early sources indicates a similar relationship for the Taínos (see Las Casas, *Apolg:167).* A spatula was inserted into the throat in order to induce vomiting and thus purify the body of the believer for communing with the *cemí.* Vomiting also speeded up the hallucinogenic effect of the drug and made it stronger. Some of the spatulas contained rattles to summon the *cemíes* to the ritual (Garcia-Arévalo, 1976).

In other words, while the visions induced by the drugs are the end result and the dramatic phenomena that fascinated the chroniclers, the

purification function is the necessary departure point (see Gómez and Ballesteros:135-36). The *cohoba* powder was probably not the only herb used, and the shaman may have mixed tobacco and other substances in secret blends for the rite (see Roth:334-38). Once in this purified state, the patient was ready to receive a cure from the shaman. The second step was to introduce a pathogenic substance to drive out the invading spirit who had caused the affliction. *Guanguayo* may have been one such pathogenic substance, or it may stand here as a symbol of all of them. But the mixture of the two symbolizes the complete craft of the shaman in healing. First, self-purification and receptiveness; next, attack and infection of the invading spirit; last, good health restored.

Shamanism As Cultural Gift

The effects of the mixture do not immediately cure Deminán; on the contrary, the "gift" puts him at death's door. Moreover, Bay— amanaco has certainly not been a gracious giver; he cleaned his nose and mouth upon Deminán Caracaracol. This is scarcely a dignified form of encounter, and Deminán's disappointment at not receiving *cazabe* suggests that he has also recognized the disparagement in the gesture. Moreover, Bayamanaco departs the scene without any conciliatory gestures or a word of explanation to Deminán.

I believe the attitude of Bayamanaco can be explained in the context of the journey. The brothers are still unschooled in culture; they know enough to ask for food from a kinsman by properly identifying themselves, but they do not yet understand that when they are offered a gift they must reciprocate. Not only have they embarrassed themselves by taking the *cazabe* without offering compensation, but they have been so crass as to not even recognize their error. Oviedo describes the exchange ceremonies of the Taínos with the Spaniards (16:2), and comparison with contemporary peoples corroborates that reciprocity is a necessary dimension of human relations (see Chagnon:7-11, 99-113 et passim). Hence, Bayamanaco's consternation is an example of the myth's negative description of ethical behavior: do not do as these brothers foolishly did.

Deminán, afflicted from birth with a scabby body, merits special treatment. Bayamanaco recognizes the shamanistic capability of the syphilitic child and bestows on him the summation of all healing and divination rites in the *guanguayo* mixed with *cohoba.* But because he

too lacks the rudiments of Taíno culture, he is unable to recognize the worth of what he has been given. His apprenticeship as a shaman has begun. The rest of this tale describes how Deminán came to recognize his gift and the price he had to pay to reach full health.

The Wondrous Guanguayo-Made Female (Chapter XI)

…After all this, Cararacol returned to join his brothers
and he told them what had happened with Bayamanaco[el]
and of the blow that had been delivered to him by the *guanguayo*
upon his back, which hurt terribly.
Then his brothers looked at his back and they saw it was
seriously swollen.
This swelling grew so much that he was at the point of dying.
They then sought to cut it off but were unable.
Taking a stone axe, they opened it
and out came a live female turtle.
Thus they built their house and took care of the turtle.
all of the brothers used her in turn
and from her their sons and daughters were born.

[I have not found out any more about this and what notes I have taken are relatively useless.]

Textual Considerations

Before beginning the analysis of this second part of the myth concerning the journey of the brothers, a matter of textual reconstruction must be addressed. Pané's narrative concludes with the verse about the building of a house and the care of the turtle. The description about sexual reproduction, marked above in capitals in my translation, is taken from the account of this myth found in Pietro Martire's *Decades.* As described in Chapter 5, d'Anghiera incorporated some of Pané's original manuscript into his own account, written in Latin for the edification of the Spanish court.[3]

In as much as d'Anghiera was completely dependent on others for his information about the Taínos, how can his addition of any details in the recounting of this myth have value? I think there are three

3. The Latin text reads: *"ex cuius ulcere natam aiuntfeminam qua mutuos fratres illi omnes usi sunt, atque ab ea ferunt filios filiasque genuisse."* 1:9,5. The edition of Pané's narration by Arrom carries the text in Spanish translation *(Relación:96).* This incident is not found, however, in Eden's English version of 1555.

possible explanations for the verses on the sexual relations between the turtle and the brothers. First, Columbus could have added it to his presentation at court on the basis of what Pané had told him of tife forthcoming report; second, it could have been in Pané's original manuscript but omitted in Ulloa's hurried and inaccurate translation; third, Columbus or Pietro Martire could have added it on their own as a way of elaborating the tale and making it sound more exotic. Regarding the first possibility, Las Casas tells us of another incident, not recorded by other historians and found only in d'Anghiera's account. He verifies d'Anghiera's version, stating: "It is likely that Peter Martyr heard it directly from the Admiral himself, as he heard many of the things he describes, because he resided at court and was one of the king's protégés" *(Historía:I,96)*. The second of these three scenarios is the most likely to me; I think it was in Pané's original manuscript and was omitted by Ulloa. Yet the plausibility of the third explanation corroborates Lévi-Strauss's theory about the structural interpretation of myth. Why did either Columbus or d'Anghiera add this notion of sexual relations? Lévi-Strauss would answer that question, I think, by comparing mythology to music and citing Baudelaire:

> … while each listener reacts to a given work in his own particular way, it is nevertheless noticeable that "music arouses similar ideas in different brains." In other words, music and mythology appeal to mental structures that the different listeners have in Common (RC:26).

The Female Turtle As the Clinging Woman

The sexual theme in which a man marries a frog or worm that clings to him is common in South American myths (OTM: 54-85). Citing Pané, Arrom demonstrates that the figure of Deminán is not a hunchback (1975:141) but the myth's turtle, thus substantiating the accuracy of Pané's narrative *(Relación:69,* n.73; cf. López Baralt:57). In mythic time, the transformations from turtle to woman are possible and even common, and this Taíno figure merits Arrom's description as the "Wondrous Taíno Eve" (1975:139).

As Arrom indicates, the encounter with a female turtle figures in the myths of the Waiwai observed by Niels Fock (Arrom, 1975:142, n.20). But in a larger frame of reference, this encounter with a female

turtle belongs to the primordial canoe journey of Amerind mythology. Lévi-Strauss calls the female personage "The Clinging Woman.” Known among North American Indians as the “Burr Woman,” this personage and her variants are found among South American Indians as well. The Clinging Woman is an undesired companion, repulsive in her appearance and obnoxious in her persistence. But in the inevitable transformation, she becomes a beautiful and desirable woman, often offering the reward of marriage. Her function is to supply gifts to the travelers who are learning about culture.

Arrom’s research has convincingly argued the fact that Deminán was represented with a swelling on his back in the shape of a turtle (Figure 6). Since they saw this woman as a turtle, it is likely that the animal was a uterine symbol of immortality for the Taínos as it is for the Tukano (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1971:155). As a feminine symbol, the turtle is the complementary opposite of Itiba Cahubaba. ‘Whereas the Earth Mother loses human shape, decaying like plant life after giving birth, the clinging turtle created from fermenting tobacco juice evolves into an attractive and productive wife. This contrast conveys the differences between the generative powers of plants and those of animals; between the functions of mothers without husbands and mothers who are wives.

In the “first-time-ever” of mythic origins, the female turtle does things in an inverse order. Turtles copulate when the male mounts the female and impregnates her through the genitals in his tail. In this myth, however, it is the female who assumes the male impregnating position in her contact with Deminán. In Taíno society, it was the male who had more than one wife, usually four; here it is the female who takes more than one husband. The brothers began their journey when the death of their mother left them orphaned as fatherless twins. Culturally unschooled, their education began with the flood that brought them from their celestial home to earth, and a series of encounters with Conel and Bayamanaco gave them the rudiments of culture. Now, through the instrumentality of the Female Turtle, they achieve the knowledge necessary to begin the human race.

The Female Turtle has been generated by the miraculous mixture of two opposite herbs, the infecting *guanguayo* and the disinfecting *cohoba.* Deminán has been poisoned by *his* medicine and cured by his Poison, for this turtle enables the syphilitic caracaracol to have sexual relations and reproduce normally. This tie between the Female Turtle and syphilis is a key to understanding the message of this myth.

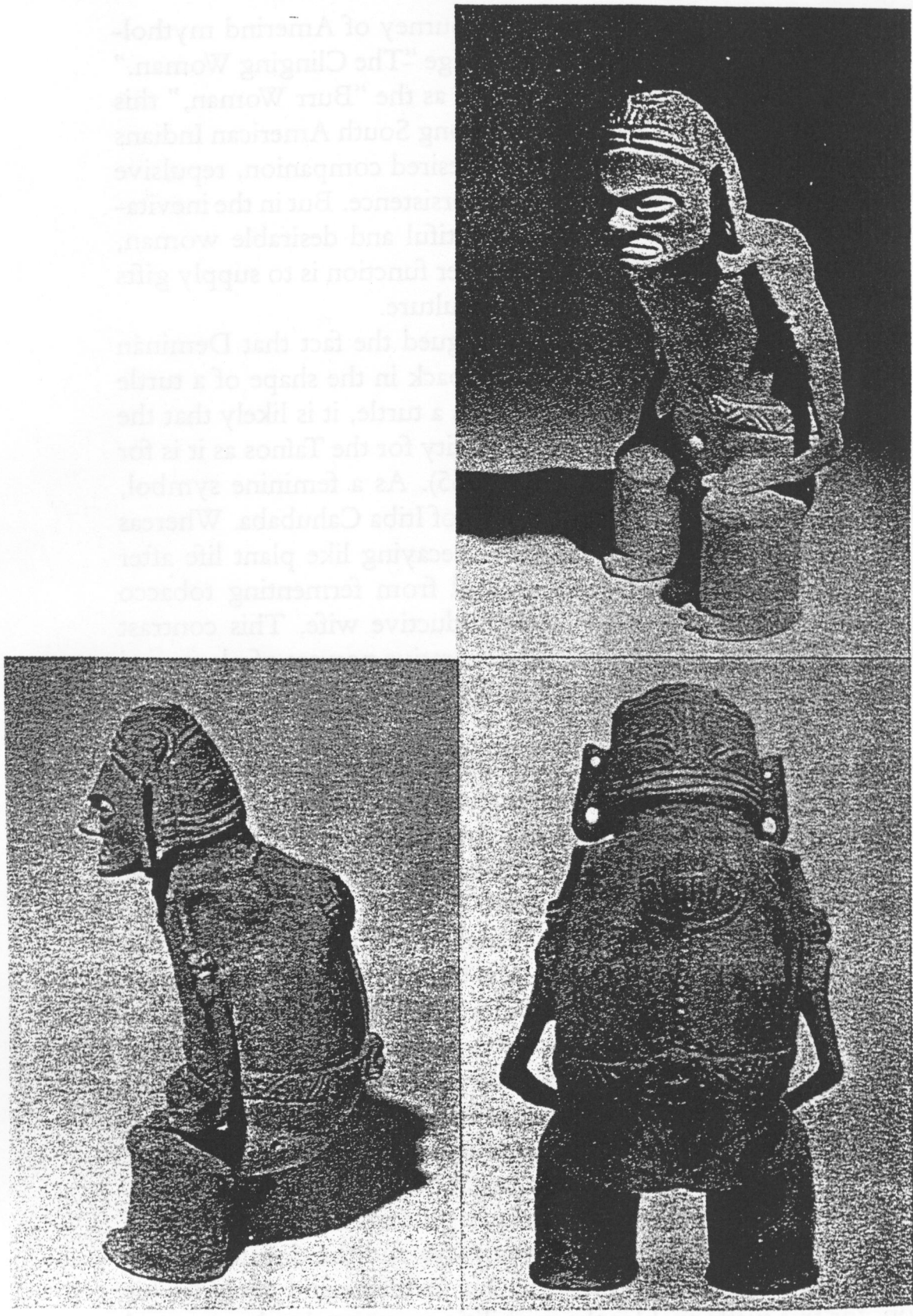


Figure 6. Three views of effigy vase of Deminán in clay. Museum of the American Indian. Heye Foundation, New York. After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.

Syphilitic Symptoms and Fertility

As I mentioned in Chapter 3, the Taínos appear to have had a taboo against eating the flesh of certain fresh—water turtles called *"hicoteas,"* because they said to do so would result in syphilis (Moya Pons:9). I believe this taboo was based. on the above myth. The inability of Deminán's brothers to aid him in his affliction symbolizes the need for a shamanistic gift to overcome the terminal effects of his disease. We know that the Taínos utilized the guayacán tree *(Guaiacum officinale)* to treat those suffering from syphilis (Oviedo:16,17; Las Casas, Ap*olg:13).* If this myth is concerned with the healing of syphilis, why is the tree, compared by the Spaniards to the Holy Rood *(Palo Santo),* not mentioned? The answer, I think, is that both the healing rite and the disease are symbols for all healing and for all disease. It would be a mistake to look at this tale for a realistic report on disease. The myth places the Taínos and ourselves in a symbolic world in which many meanings can be attached to each incident. As will be seen in Chapter 10, a more detailed narration of the treatment of syphilis was supplied in another context. Whatever the state of Taíno medical knowledge, this myth seems to be about syphilis as the worst of afflictions. The sexual and social character of the disease would ruin one's cultural identity. But some persons, such as the scabby *caracaracol,were* able to recover and lead normal lives. The disappearance of syphilitic symptoms must have been a sign of fertility and shamanistic power for the Taínos.

The Turtle-Shell Shape As Taíno Temple

The connection between the turtle shell and the house built for the brothers also has a multidimensional symbolic meaning. The Taínos lived in rectangular homes of wood and thatch that they called *"bohíos."* The caciques, however, lived in oval lodges called *"caneyes."* These oval houses were also used when divination and healing powers were invoked. Pané calls the *caney* a kind of temple, for it was in such a house that his Indian mentors suggested he erect his Christian statues *(Relación:52-53).* Like the spirit house of the Warraus, it was a temple of incantation (Roth:334). Building upon Las Casas' description of harvest rites *(Apolg:166),* I think the oval lodge corresponds to the turtle shell, which is also oval. The Tukano believe that

the *maloca,* or lodge, is a womb (Reichel-Dolmaltoff, 1975:148), and I would apply this religious thinking to the Taínos as well.

The design of the *caney* left an opening in the center, which allowed smoke to escape and sunlight to enter. Apparently, this center was sometimes supported with a long pole, which carried a symbolic meaning in the *cohoba* rite (cf. García Arévalo, 1982:75). As sexual symbols, the center opening of the *caney* represented the feminine while the pole, with entering sunlight or departing fire, represented the masculine sex organ. Eliade calls such symbolism *"axis mundi,"* for it suggests the sexual joining of the primordial creatures with a fruitful earth daughter in mythic time when the world was formed. Reichel-Dolmaltoff supports this analogy when he employs the same term, *axis mundi,* to describe any vertical wood, "a staff, a house beam, a tree, a vine serving as ladder," for Tukano rites (1975:141).

Summary

With this episode, the journey of the four twin brothers comes to a happy conclusion. After being carried out of heaven with the primordial fish generated from Yayael's bones, the twins have finally come to dwell in a happy place. And although they have been distanced from their celestial first home in their travels and can never again return, they have acquired social and cultural knowledge that has made them into human beings in the Taíno civilization. Their canoe trip has been an odyssey, full of meanderings and happenstance, but it has ultimately brought them to the place their destiny has foreordained. Like Noah, they have ridden out the Great Flood and now can begin life on the earth.

Central to the accomplishments of the twins has been the dedicated character of the syphilis-infected Deminán. His dogged presence before Bayamanaco merited the supreme gift of shamanistic knowledge. Despite the pain and disgust caused by the spittle of guanguayo mixed with cohoba, he endured its physical and mental discomfort until certain latent powers were manifest. This is the Promethean dimension of his exploits. Now that human beings have healing powers on account of Deminán, they can sustain life and propagate their kind on the earth. The Female Turtle who clung to Deminán eventually revealed herself as a New Eve. She provided all the brothers with a fertile home. Her shell is at once a perpetually open vagina and the meeting place of heaven and earth. Symbolized in the

caney, her presence assures fertility and freedom from the fatal effects of syphilis. She who once rode as an unwanted passenger upon the back of Deminán has become a new "Ark," bringing life and fertility.

I believe that among the Taínos, a syphilitic infant who was born with a scabby body like Deminán's recalled this myth. The disease served as a visible reminder that from death comes life, from weakness strength, from patience deliverance. Like the stigmata of the medieval saints, the sores of syphilis in the newly born served to remind the Taínos that love wounds us. Yet the same condition became a promise of redemption. By enduring the sickness and pain of others, the shaman summoned the spirits of life and communicated with them. By subjecting himself to the same danger of death as his patient, the Taíno *behique* won salvation for his people.

These are the theological conclusions to be drawn from a religious interpretation of the tale of Deminán and his brothers. Like the epic of the Pupol Vuh or that of Noah, the mythology of Prometheus, and the exploits of heroes like Odysseus, Aeneas, and Hercules, this is a tale of the grandeur of the human spirit in the face of many obstacles. If the simple narrative of Pané pales in comparison with the scope of other world literature of the Great Deluge or the Hero's Quest, **it** should be noted that the Taínos lacked a written language but not a nobility of soul. With or without literary embellishment, Deminán is Noah, he is Odysseus, he is Prometheus-and he is Taíno.

The Taíno Social Contract

Philosophers of European Enlightenment such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau were concerned with the origin of authority in society. It had become clear to these thinkers that the "Divine Right of Kings" was, at best, a suspect doctrine. But if a monarch's power did not come from God, how could the legitimacy of social authority be explained? From their speculations the theory of the social contract emerged. [1]

While there were different nuances in phrasing among the period's thinkers, most of them agreed that at some theoretical time in history, the people had made a contract with a leader in order that society might have a continuity of authority. Kings are the descendants of those first leaders who earned their positions of authority not by divine right, but by a charismatic quality of leadership. This theory allowed philosophers to suggest that if and when a king lost the leadership ability of his ancestor, people in the society had the right to

1. The important texts are Leviathan by Hobbes, Treatises of Government by Locke, and The Social Contract and Discourses by Rousseau. A good summary of the issue can be found in Robert Nisbet, The Social Philosophers, 1973:135—60.

replace the king with a government more likely to achieve the original purpose of the common good. This argument can be seen in the phrasing of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, which first defines the basic rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" and then adds:

> That to secure these rights, governments are established among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it ..a prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

The question of social authority is also a key theme in the mythology of the Taínos. In their effort to explain the legitimacy of the cacique, the Indians returned to a theoretical historical period like the European philosophers. But whereas the rationalists of the continent were forced to speculate upon how and what might have occurred, the mythological vision of the Taínos allowed them to draw pictures of how the social order came to establish authority.

The Hero Myth

In this tale of the Taíno Social Contract, an untroubled, preauthoritarian past is pictured. The Indians are one with nature—they have the same powers as animals, plants, and stones. Yet their oneness with natural forces also inhibits them from mastering the techniques of dominating nature and making it a tool for human needs, so that they are forced to live in a mountain cave.

The discovery of how natural forces become human tools and how human beings are distanced from the state of nature repeats a theme from the Cosmogonic Myth. But in this new tale, the central figure, Guahayona, is not a demigod like Deminán, who was special from birth. The origins of the new leader are never disclosed. He is simply presented as "a man"—and not an exceptional one at that. The description of his exploits tells how he acquires human skills and wisdom. His weaknesses and duplicity are not explained away, and Guahayona also incurs punishments that are inflicted on his descendants.

The humanity of Guahayona is evident throughout. In fact, he is

the *only* personage in the tale who never feels the direct effects of the numinous in nature. His example demonstrates how humans achieve leadership, which contrasts clearly with those who can count on. divine powers to enhance their authority. Thus, the exploits of Guahayona form the core of a Hero Myth. In this and subsequent episodes, he is shown as a novice who acquires increasingly greater skills of leadership. While he is on his journey, he emerges as a human hero who earns the respect and discipleship of the Taínos. In tracing his achievements, the Taíno Hero Myth also describes rites of social initiation (Eliade, 1959:188—201).

The Cave of the Jagua (Chapters 1—II)

THE ISLAND [Hispaniola] has a section called Caonao in which there is a mountain called Cauta
and it has two caves, Cacibajagua. **CAVE OF** THE **JAGUA,** and Amayaúna, WITHOUT IMPORTANCE.

From Cacibajagua came most of the people who inhabit the island.
While still in the caves, this people kept watch at night
and they put in charge someone called Mácocael,
HE 0F THE EYES WHICH DO NOT BLINK,

who [they say] was carried off by the sun
because he returned co the door lace one day
Since the sun had carried him off on account of his poor vigilance, they shut the door.
Thus he was turned into stone near the door.
The reason that Mácocael stayed awake and kept watch
was to see whence he would send away and divide the people and **it** seems his delay was a great mistake.
[They say that] Afterwards others went out to fish and they were made prisoners by the sun,
and they were turned into [trees that they call] *jobos*
[and which we would call cherry plum trees].
It came to pass that one man named Gahayona. OUR PRIDE,
said to another named Cahubaba, **THE ANCEENT ONE,**
that they should go harvest [*a* plant called] *digo*
[with which they wash the body when they go to bathe].
CAHUBABA went out before daybreak
and the sun overtook him on the road
and he was turned into the bird that sings in the morning,
[like the nightingale]

and he is called Cahubabael, **S0N OF THE ANCIENT ONE.**
When he saw that the one sent out to gather *digo* did not return,
Guahayona decided to leave the cave called Cacibajagua.

The Two Caves

The first thing to be said in analyzing this myth is that the caves are mythical. The Taínos did not live in caves, but there is ample evidence that caves were used as sanctuaries where religious artifacts were reserved for ritual purposes *(Relación:31,* 41-43). As the pioneering work of Arrom has shown, the names of the caves disclose their mythological function. The jagua *(Genipa americana)* produces an edible fruit whose juices were used by the Taínos for coloring their bodies (Sauer:56). Along with *bixa (Bixa orellana),* or *achiote,* which has a red color, this black vegetable dye of the jagua served as body paint for the Taínos. The Tukano of the Vaupés use the identical plant for their body paintings (Reichel-Dolmaltoff, 1975:159, see 148). Thus Cacibajagua (Caciba/cave + jagua) is the place of origin for all Taíno peoples who use the black juice for a similar purpose. Amayaúna, the Cave Without Importance, explains the existence of the rest of humanity.

All human beings share a common origin, the myth tells us, but only the history of our believers is important. Thus, the two caves serve as a mythological device that recognizes the existence of other peoples without regarding them as relevant. The ancient Hebrew scriptures utilize this mythological device. The Book of Genesis describes the Hebrews' neighbors as kin by making some the descendants of Lot, Abraham's kinsman (Genesis 19:17—38), and others the sons of Ishmael, stepbrother of Isaac (Genesis 21:8—34). While this literary fashion established mythological kinship relations, it defined other people as inferior to the people of Israel. The Cave of Amayaúna is the equivalent Taíno myth.

Reptilian Symbolism

The name Mácocael—He of the Eyes Which Do Not Blink—is an epithet describing a quality perceived as belonging to nature and applicable to the person thus named. The flora and fauna of the pre Columbian Antilles hold the key to its meaning. I think the name "He of the Eyes Which Do Not Blink" applies to reptiles. Since lizards,

snakes, and certain birds, such as eagles, have transparent eyelids, they seem not to blink. Certain reptiles and serpents also remain motionless for long periods while sunning themselves. Such immobility camouflages their presence, because the skin color and texture of the reptiles enables them to simulate rocks.

The attributes of reptiles form a basis for analogical thinking. According to Lévi-Strauss the congeries of sexual, social, and psychological metaphors converge on the symbol of an animal whose attributes, contain a logic derived from culture (T:92—97). The story of Mácocael offers a mythological context for the images of lizards, snakes, and birds that appear in Taíno artifacts, especially *cemíes.* There are also pictographs of reptiles at the entrance of caves and carvings on stone pillars. These images of the Taínos, I believe, provided coded expression for the qualities of human behavior the animals represented. Hence, there is a parallel between these zoo— morphic representations of the Taínos and the beliefs of other American peoples.

The Tukano studied by Reichel-Dolmatoff believe that through divination they can be transformed into different animals (1975:220— 25 et passim) and that at times the roles of human and animal, as hunter and hunted, are reversed (97). Perhaps the most fully elaborated expression of this notion can be found in the Aztec belief of *nahualli:* "In addition to his soul a man could possess, as part of the power of his personality, a special affinity for an animal or some other aspect of nature. When considered in this fashion a man was a *nahualli,* a transcorporate being" (Brundage:182). This ancient Mesoamerican concept (Brundage:183; Bernal:98—99) enabled the human to magically transform him/herself into the other being. Every member of the society had this basic power, so that the *nahual* sometimes became a totem (Bernal:99, n.34). The frequent meshing of Taíno zoomorphism with human representation, not only in this myth but in their artifacts (Chapter 12), suggests that the Taínos had beliefs similar to that of the Aztec *nahualli.*

Transformation into Stone as a Mythological Device

It is not uncommon for rock formations to be named according to their shape, especially when they resemble something else, as Skull Hill (Golgatha) in the Bible and names such as Natural Bridge, Knife

River, and White Face Mountain. For religious people, such resemblance is not accidental; it is evidence of the numinous. Eliade describes this process in societies all over the world:

> The sacred tree, the sacred stone are not adored as stone or tree; they are worshipped precisely because they are hierophanies, because they show something that is no longer stone or tree but the sacred. . . By manifesting the sacred, any object becomes something else, yet it continues to remain itself, for it continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu. A sacred stone remains a stone; apparently (or, more precisely, from the profane point of view), nothing distinguishes it from all other stones. But for those to whom a stone reveals itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into a supernatural reality (Eliade, 1959:12).

Roth reported that various peoples of the Orinoco believed their ancestors had come from stone (Roth:145—46, 152). The Otomac dug up skulls of the dead, and after placing them in the crevices of rocks, waited for them to be changed into stone (146). The Taíno myth makes Mácocael's transformation into stone a punishment, however—not simply the result of his ancestral origin. The mythological meaning, I think, lies in seeing petrification as punishment.

It is not the heat of the sun that is the cause of the transformation into stone, but rather the failure of Mácocael to coordinate his behavior with preordained social norms. Borrowing the terminology of Eliade, Mácocael has allowed profane desire to supplant the sacred order and is punished on that account. Mácocael has allowed a nonreligious impulse to dominate his behavior and, as Eliade suggests, this is a "fall of man—in other words, that nonreligious man has lost the capacity to live religion consciously, and hence to understand and assume it."[2]

Loss of Mobility as Punishment

As I have mentioned, the natural analogue to Mácocael's plight is the camouflage of some reptiles who sun themselves on rocks and appear to be a part of the stone. But when the danger has passed, these animals once again begin to move about. In the myth, although his

2. Eliade,1959:213; the relationship of these concepts to the beginning of time is traced in his other book (1954), which was originally entitled Cosmos and History.

name emphasizes his similar ability to remain still like these creatures, Mácocael loses the ability to become mobile once again. He is punished by transformation into stone, i.e., absolute immobility. The structuralist analysis of mobility and immobility would appear to be a useful analytical tool here.[3] There are cultural norms which regulate when we are to be still and when we are expected to spring into action. Like knowledge of raw and cooked food, or nudity and clothing, knowledge of mobility and immobility are culturally acquired. When Mácocael forgot this social wisdom he trespassed beyond social norms and had to be punished.

The ancient Hebrews used the similarity of natural rock formations with human forms to explain a mythological punishment of immobility. Some salt pillars on the desert near the Dead Sea, which from a distance resembled human beings, were believed to be the vestige of Lot's wife (Gen. 19:1—28). The woman was punished for looking backward on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The scientific reasons for the formations—that salt is more solid than sand and that as wind erodes the sand, the salt deposits are exposed—is foreign. to mythological thinking (Hartmann:2100), which is focused upon the numinous.

The Social Sin of Mácocael

As in previously described Taíno myths, the idea of punishment to a personage is equivalent to a precept against such behavior. Lévi-Strauss observes: "The elements of mythical thought lie half-way between precepts and concepts. It would be impossible to separate precepts from the concrete situation in which they appeared" (SM:18). The description of nonblinking eyes, then, includes a precept for human behavior. The "eyes which do not blink" would seem related to vigilance, since the myth states that Mácocael was supposed to "be in charge" of the watch at night, the role of sentinels. But when Mácocael was "carried off by the sun," he failed in his primary duty to the people.

But the social and political context of vigilance involves more than

3. A good summary of the mobility/immobility binary set is found in "The Story of Asdiwal," Leach:1967, vide, 7—21; Victor Turner (1967, 1969) is an anthropologist who has **explored this binary concept without the same sort of controversy that usually surrounds Lévi-Strauss' methodology.**

just the physical safety of the people. The text says that Mácocael was obliged to keep watch in order to be able to "send away and divide the people." I interpret this phrase of sending and dividing as referring to the cacical power to mandate tribal fissure, though **it** may also refer to the kinship dimensions of marriage. Mácocael's beguilement with the sun is a symbol for his shirking his political responsibility as the guardian of social order.

Strikingly, the myth frames Taíno cacical authority "to send and to divide" against a charge to protect the people's worship. The cacique's legitimacy rests upon his fidelity to religious duties. Thus "the Talno Social Contract" is based upon the belief system. Those familiar with the Bible will recall that Saul lost his charge as King of Israel when, unable to suppress his curiosity about the outcome of battle, he summoned the spirit of the prophet Samuel through the incantations of the witch of Endor (I Samuel 28). The punishment of Macocael is similar. His petrification is equivalent to being deposed, since once excluded from the human order, he loses the privileges of a cacique.

The Context of Initiation Rite

I suspect that the myth explains Mácocael's malfeasance against the background of an initiation rite. The apprenticeship trials for the shaman among peoples like the Taínos has been discussed in Chapter 7, and other ordeals seem to have been equally rigorous. Roth stated that the Orinoco Indians frequently rely on these trials as a sign of an individual's social importance (277-79). In the ordeals, scarification, artificially inflicted pain, and isolation are major characteristics (Roth:308-13). Among the Tukano, such initiation rites are used to introduce the participant to levels of social power (Reichel-Dolmaltoff,1975:76-83). Moreover, not all the initiates successfully endure their trials. As Reichel-Dolmaltoff observes: "The power selects its bearer, and not the reverse. Some people hear the call, while others do not, no matter how hard they listen in the solitude of their waiting and fasting" (1975:82). Since the Tukano do not possess cacical power (Reichel-Dolmaltoff, 1971:15,125—27), they do not have such an ordeal for caciques; but, as developed in Chapter 4, the growth of central political authority was a notable development among the Taínos.

Inability to pass through the ritual would likely have invoked the

failure of Mácocael and would have delegitimized any ambitions to be cacique. This is one of the frequent relationships between belief and liturgy that was described in the first chapter of this book. We have direct testimony from Pané and Las Casas that vigils were a common part of the cacique's rule.[4]

Relation to Genesis and to the Bird-Nester Myth

The punishment of Mácocael has certain similarities to the fate of the slain Yayael and the Bird-Nester theme in the myth of Deminán Caracaracol. Like Yayael, Mácocael is prevented from returning to the people. Immobility here is not death, however, but the eerie transformation into stone. Perhaps the places where the myths take place should be recalled: Yayael is in his father's primordial house; Mácocael is on the earth, closer to ordinary human experience.

The form of Mácocael's punishment draws attention to the power of reptiles that face the sun without blinking to that of ordinary humans who cannot do so. This loss of movement, recalling the plight of Conel, who could listen but not speak, can be related to the Bird-Nester Myth. The crossover ability between the orders of created things—rocks, trees, and animals—is a key theme in the Bird-Nester's exploits. As culture is obtained, access to nature is denied (Chapter 7). Mácocael's sin results in a petrification outside human society. Thus, the Hero Myth starts where the Cosmogonic Myth left off—with the acquisition of culture. Nature is shown in the process of becoming an adversary, and the subsequent unfolding of the myth extends Macocael's imprisonment within stone to the plant and animal orders.

The Fishermen

The fishermen leave the cave to search for food in the dangerous task of deep-sea fishing on the tropical ocean. But instead of fulfilling their duty to provide food for others, they surrender to the tempta-

4. *Relación:* 34-41, citing Las Casas, *Apologética:* 167. The context of this testimony is a prophetic vision of the eventual defeat of the Taínos by the Spaniards. Note, however, the fasting, drug-induced trance, and isolation of the cacique, all of which duplicate the ordeals of shamanistic apprenticeship.

tion to merely gather fruit for themselves. Since fishing was a most important activity for Taíno man and reprents a collective effort, it symbolizes a substantial cultural advance over a simple gathering of wild fruit. I think that the notion of cultural acquisition underlies this part of the myth just as it does in the description of Mácocael. The fishermen are guilty of regressing back into a primitive life-style, abandoning the discipline and self-sacrifice required of a more developed social order.

The jobo or hog plum *(Spondias lutea),* is native to the Caribbean. The tree produces a sweet yellow fruit. Both its sweetness and its bright color are symbols of seduction. The fishermen demonstrate the height of irresponsibility—self-gratification by gluttony. While they have not violated a ritual, the fishermen have sinned against their social function as providers of food. Even today in contemporary Puerto Rico *"comer jobos"* (eat jobos) is an idiom that represents abandonment of one's duties. It is to "play hooky" from one's social obligations in a childish way. The myth suggests, then, that the Taínos were able to distinguish between a strictly religious taboo such as the vigil of Mácocael and social irresponsibility as in the case of the fishermen. Both are considered wrong, and they are punished in a similar manner.

Mobility/Immobility As a Central Theme

This Taíno myth substantiates Lévi-Strauss' insight that the mobility/immobility theme has geographical, sociological, and cosmological applications. Mácocael moves when he should not and is punished by being made immobile. Ironically, his punishment is to be compelled to perform a task that he refused to fulfill when he was free. For their part, the fishermen are rendered immobile by being transformed into jobo trees. Unlike Mácocael, who was given the condition opposite to his behavior, the fishermen are punished with becoming forever their passing indulgence. In both cases, the punishment of being trapped in a state of immobility may be a symbolic expression of ostracism, the severest penalty of Taíno law.

The ethical lesson provided by the myth to the Taínos sums up its cultural meaning, since the punishments correspond to contrasting behavior. It is just as bad to move when one is supposed to remain still as to remain still when one is supposed to move. Borrowing from

Lévi-Strauss' methodology, this precept may be represented by the following equation:

Mobility: (is to) required Immobility (just as)
Immobility: (is to) required Mobility.

The myth reminds the Taínos that no matter what their religious duties may be, violation is punishable by ostracism. The myth uses the symbol of the rock to signify the mineral order and that of the jobo tree to represent plant life. In both cases, these classes of created things are alienated from human society, and the punishment for religious disobedience will render the violator as distant from the community through ostracism as stones and trees are from human beings. The same theme is repeated with the remaining protagonists.

Cahubaba, The Ancient One

Arrom reasons that the name "Cahubaba" means "ancient, laden with years" *(Relación:66,* n.56). The term fits both a female genetrix, whose name is "Itiba" or "Bleeding" (Ibid.; Chapter 6), and a male figure in thís tale. I suspect "Cahubaba" is an epithet used in Taíno mythology to describe primordial beings. Such a notion is found in the mythologies of other cultures. The Nephilim, or Titans of the preflood biblical age (Gen. 6:4), and the Hurrian heroes with their Greek and Phoenician counterparts (S.peiser:45—46) are races of primordial beings or demigods. The Taíno personage here represents unspoiled nature in its most simple and unaltered state, a phenomenon Eliade calls "chthonian mystery" (1958:245—46). Generated only by Mother Earth, Cahubabael has not acquired the skills of culture which teach humans to turn nature to their own purposes.

The *digo* he searches for is an otherwise unidentified plant which, according to Pané, was used for "washing the body." Even today, in parts of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, people in the countryside use the foam produced by various species of *Furcaea* as a soap. The maguey *(Agave americana)* is one of the most common plants used for this purpose. The search for digo correlates with the interpretation of the jagua dye as a cultural gift that was special to the Taínos. Without the cleansing powers of this natural soap, the body

markings traced with the coloring could not be removed or renewed. Hence, to be unable to wash with *digo* was to remain without variation of cultural adornment.

The Digo *Plant and the* Dogó *Rite*

It is puzzling, however, that in spite of the familiarity with such plants in the Antilles, the name *"digo"* has not survived in any local usage. Given the persistence of Taíno names for species new to the Spaniards, why has this Taíno word disappeared? And why have no other chroniclers recorded the use of the plant under this name? I believe that *"digo"* may be the name of a ritual that utilizes a plant, rather than the name of the plant itself. This kind of confusion between a ceremony and its requisite materials has already been discussed in the case of "cohoba" (Chapter 7). Thus, the text might have read "they should go harvest a plant for the *digo."*

If the *digo* is a rite rather than a plant, what was the significance of the washing ceremony? I believe that the *digo* may be connected to the *dogó* rite of the Black Caribs described by Taylor (1951:115—33). The special importance of the Black Caribs to an understanding of the Taíno language and culture has already been explored (Chapter 3), so a ritual connection between the two peoples is credible.

The structure of the *dogó* rite cannot be fully analyzed here, but in support of my hypothesis, it should be noted that the rite requires a search of several days for food and that the people gather to receive the returning foragers at the break of dawn. This corresponds closely to the task given Cahubabael. Moreover, among the songs and chants that accompany the rite, Taylor reproduces one that invokes a bird "iriuna," begging it to accomplish its work under the cover of darkness and to elude the first rays of dawn. In the Taíno myth, Cahubabael is transformed into a bird very much like the Black Carib iriuna, thus strengthening the similarities between *digo* and *dogó.*

According to Taylor, the purpose of this ten-day rite is to obtain "temporary surcease from further sanction on the part of the spirit or spirits of the dead" (115), and the rite is "given at the instance of dreams or other warnings, the neglect of which may cause ... sickness, madness, or death" (132). In the *dogó* rite, the participants paint themselves with bixa to mark themselves for recognition by the ancestors, who are invoked under the ritual name of "grandfather" or

"grandmother." This greeting, it may be recalled, was used in the Taíno myth about the encounter with Bayamanaco (Chapter 7). Spirit possession plays a major role in the *dogo* rite, and an undesirable spirit possession can be terminated when the body paint is washed away.

The Curious Shaman

The elements of this Black Carib *dogo'* rite and the significance of washing away the body paint to end a spirit possession provide insight into the meaning of the Taíno myth about the *digo.* If the *digo* is a rite of communication with ancestral spirits, Cahubabael would be a symbol of the shaman or *behique* of Taíno religion. Roth reproduced a myth with striking parallels to this episode which concerns Komatari, the first medicine man, who engages a hummingbird to find tobacco. The task must be accomplished under the cover of darkness so that the bird can steal the leaves, allowing Komatari to hide them away until they acquire medicinal powers (Roth:336—38).

In this Taíno myth, Cahubabael fails to return before dawn. It is not entirely clear what taboo he has violated. If daylight represents revelation, one possible explanation might be that as *behique,* Cahubabael has allowed some secret rite to be seen by the uninitiated, thus betraying his profession. His punishment makes it impossible for him to return to the tribe, since he failed to accomplish his task under the cover of darkness. As the bird that sings to the rising sun, he has ironically become the symbol of his mistake, much as the fishermen turned-jobos do. But since he is condemned to eternal rootlessness, his punishment is the opposite of that of Mácocael and the fishermen locked into alien forms.

The Bird-Nester's Mobility and Immobility

In the myth, Cahubabal is expected to bring *digo* back to the Taínos so they can be freed from the cave. As a creature of the earth, he apparently knows where to find the plant, but without the shared parentage of other humans, he does not understand how to take advantage of its religious usage. The punishment of Cahubabael is due to his inability to finish his mission under the cover of darkness. With the approach of dawn, he is transformed into a bird. Unlike Mácocael and the fishermen who were made immobile, Cahubabael

is punished by perpetual mobility. As a bird, he belongs neither to the trees of earth nor to the air; he is perpetually in motion between the two. His indiscretion merits punishment as ostracism from his *behique* brothers. Like the bird, the discredited shaman has an ambiguous existence. He belongs to the tribe without being fully integrated into a clearly defined social order. This punishment is similar to that of the Bird—Nester Myth that Lévi-Strauss has recorded, and the cultural result is the same: alienation from the cultural order of an animal that once possessed both natural and cultural powers (Chapter 7).

The Social Contract

In this episode there is a punishment for misbehavior in each of the three social divisions of labor in Taíno society. Mácocael represents the *cacique* class that misuses the role of leadership; the fishermen betray the responsibilities of the *naborías,* or workers; Cahubabael is the *behique* who betrays the secrets of his profession. The myth paints a picture of a leaderless and impotent people whose social classes do not cooperate. Thus, the theme of the social contract presented here serves as a check on the absolute authority of Yaya in the cosmogonic myth (Chapters 6—7).

The myth describes tribal leadership in some remote time when "we of the jagua" became distinct from "they without importance." We are given a symbolic tale of the formation of the people in terms of a discovery of group leadership. The initial efforts to take the people out of the Cave of the Jagua and into civilization have proven to be unsuccessful. Mácocael has lusted for power and lost his authority, while the fishermen have succumbed to gluttony and disappeared from the tribe. Even the effort to commune with the supernatural by use of the *digo* for divination has gone awry. The ambitions of the three different classes acting separately have proven unable to provide leaders hip.

It is left to Guahayona to organize the migration. His exploits are found in other sections of Pané's narrative. Guahayona later overcomes undue striving for personal power and learns to resist the temptation to seek immediate gratification through gluttony. Finally, he is careful to preserve his shamanistic powers. Thus, by describing the failures of the social orders of Taíno life when they perform separately, the myth emphasizes the need for cooperation among the

segments of society. This social unity is exemplified in the behavior of Guahayona, Our Pride.

The Sympathy of Nature with Taíno Social Order

In the mythology of other peoples, there are themes similar to those of the Taínos. The "sympathy" of created reality with the exploits of an ancient hero can be found in the Egyptian Osiris myth, where all vegetation comes from the slain prince, or the Norse tale of Baldur, whose death is lamented by "nature's tears," the condensation of water on stones. The punishment of Macocael and the fishermen for a moment of frailty can be compared with the Greek tales of Orpheus and Eurydice and of Narcissus, who was transformed into a flower, or with the Hebrew myth of Lot's wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt. What the Taíno tale lacks is the literate religious tradition to elevate a mythological belief into an art form. In my opinion, an aborted Taíno cultural development is one of the tragic effects of the Spanish conquest.

The final segment of the episode also contrasts the role of the animal and human orders of creation, using the same key of mobility/immobility. In this comparison, the realms of the sky and the earth are included. Cahubabael leaves the cave, symbol of earth; but with the rising of the sun in the sky, he is found to be in the wrong place: he has been mobile at night, instead of during the day, and has thus trespassed into the domain of living things. Guahayona, on the other hand, has been immobile at night and waits till the light of day before setting out on his journey. This dichotomy should be compared with the Taíno belief in the separate orders of the living and the dead, symbolized by day and night.

The Afterlife and Taíno Belief

I believe that the Taínos also used the theme of mobility/immobility to elaborate their belief in an afterlife. Pané tells us in another place that the Taínos considered it taboo to travel at night into the forest, considering this the domain of the dead *(Relación:* 32—33). And the frequency of the bat and owl figures on Taíno artifacts suggests that the makers viewed these animals as zoomorphic counterparts of deceased humans (Garcia Arévalo, 1984). The mistake of Cahubabael is

in confusing the sphere of the dead with that of the living. While both exist, there are cultural ways to prevent their confusion. The living no more belong among the dead than animals belong among humans; the gap between the created orders is too great. Invoking again the diagrams of such symbolic logic used by Lévi-Strauss, this meaning of the episode can be summarized as follows:

Mobility among the dead: (is to) human being
(just as)
Animal kingdom: (is to) human being.

The Taínos have represented their social organization in the language of the elemental orders of created things, and the forging of the social contract for tribal authority is as rigid as the distance between living and dead.

The Hero As Society's Paradigm

The subtle and rich interweaving of geographical, sociological, and cosmological themes by the Taínos rivals the levels of meaning Lévi-Strauss discusses in his treatment of the Tsimshian myth of Asdiwal. Guahayona symbolizes the same sort of migratory hero values as his North American counterpart. Indeed, I suspect the summary one scholar has given to Asdiwal may be applied to the Tamo hero:

> Instead, it becomes clear that the life of Asdiwal is a really possible life among Tsimshians. Myth does not "negate reality" then; it parallels it, to demonstrate a somewhat opportunistic rise co social preeminence of one man who founded his career on possibilities inherent in a number of contíngent events, and in this case he seems to have fully exploited the available opportunities; other contingent events, however, were ultimately his undoing. But it is a recognizably Tsimshian career, one which has become canonical because of its very success and one which, furthermore, shows the cultural solutions to the problems (Adams, in Leach, 1967:177).

These qualities of a hero in true-to-life dimensions radically distinguish Guahayona from Deminán, the syphilitic demigod who figured prominently in the Creation Myth along with the two sets of twins. It is also important to recognize the totally different departure points for their exploits. While Deminán seems to have come to earth

in a canoe trip caused by a great flood from the sky, Guahayona has come from a cave on a high mountain. The perspective is completely different, and one that is not without significance.

With its land-sea-land route for Guahayona, the Hero Myth inversely matches the sea-land-seashore itinerary of Deminán in the Creation Myth. Perhaps this reflects the archeological data cited above (Chapter 3), which indicate that the Taínos settled first in the interior parts of the Greater Antilles and only later reached the coast with a technology equal to exploiting the coastal environment. More certainly, the joumey of Guahayona is a metaphor for a technological and cultural development that gave the Taínos the means and social organization to live as Taínos. The myth indicates that the Taíno perspective faced outwards, from the islands' mountainous interiors towards the coast. For them, the mountains were the most secure territory.

The Cave on the Mountain

Belief in the mountain Cauta and its caves probably means that it was here the Taínos placed the *axis mundi,* the center of the world (Eliade, 1958:375—82 *et passim).* The elaboration of the turtle shell and the *caney* as ritual representations of the same mythological place has already been explored in Chapter 7. While the *caney,* however, was a ritual place that symbolized a greater mystery, the mythological mountain of Cauta was the actual Mount Sinai, where the Taíno law was given.

In the religion of ancient India, the Vedas describe the exploits of the Man-God Indra as issuing from his sacrifice with soma juice and its discovery on Mount Mujavat (Rg Veda 11:12). Indra, as namesake of the nation that has come to be called "Indian," symbolizes his people in ways that parallel the role Guahayona plays for the Taínos. The mountain symbolism can be found not only in the remembrance of Mujavat, but also in the Rg Veda (X, 149), which understands the world to spead out from a single point. In the Upanishads, Brahaman is invoked in the belief that the joining place of heaven and the underground world symbolically recapitulates all else that is in between: "That which is beyond the heaven, which is below the earth, which is between heaven and earth, which is called the past, present, and future- this is interwoven in space as its warp and woof" (Brhadaranvaka Upanishad III. 8:4).

This passage from the Upanishad suggests that a spatial understanding of conjuncture also includes a temporal one, so that the place where heaven and earth meet is likewise a place to recall the past and prophesy about the future. The mountain that is *axis mundi* houses-the *omphalos* or "navel" of the world. Like the Greek belief in the Deiphic oracle, the Taíno Mount Cauta and its cave is seen as the contact point between the high heaven and the insides of the earth. From that vantage point, humankind has a vision of reality that is unattainable anywhere else. Those who stand at this threshold have special power, since they can peer in any direction at the world. If they look back into the cave, they see both past memories and future events still in gestation, while on the horizon they see all things in the present (Eliade, 1958:231-32).

As the joining place of all creation, the cave takes on a "feminine" symbolism, associated with birth. Humankind emerges from the bowels of Mother Earth, and always senses there the security of a child still nourished by his umbilical connection to his mother. While the Taínos did not elaborate their religious concepts in the literary forms of either India or Greece, much of their symbolism was virtually the same.

Ontogeny My thologically Recapitulates Phy logeny

Nor should the hero's task exclude the establishment of a social contract that figures so prominently in this myth. The correspondence of Guayahona's success and the stability of Taíno authority is central to this tale. Emergence from the cave for Guahayona and the Taíno people is equivalent to the birth of a fetus which issues from its mother's womb. "Just as every adult was once inside the mother, every society was once inside the Great Mother," says the poet Robert Bly (cited in Hall: 91). The Taíno myth suggests that Guahayona symbolically undergoes what the whole people experience. In a sense, mythology affirms the dictum that "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny." The journey of the Taíno hero Guahayona-like the exploit of the Tsimshian Asdiwal-is ultimately a description of how the individual's development repeats an entire people's development.

The cultural and psychological dimensions of Taíno belief concerning the journey of their hero will be explored in Chapter 11, but it must be stressed that the richness of symbolism provided in the simple narration recorded by Pané is an integral part of the Taíno

religious heritage. Nor should it go unremarked that the elemental identification of Taíno origins with the mountains of their islands' interiors is echoed in much of the contemporary cultures of the Caribbean (Stevens-Arroyo,1981:106-1O et passim). Even with the disappearance of the Taínos, the secure ground of the hero Guahayona on the mountain is still the battle station of the Caribbean's cultural heroes.

CHAPTER NINE

Sexual Wonder and Amazon Femininity

The identification between a woman's body and the agricultural seasons is a mythological equation of great power. Mircea Eliade observes: "Agriculture taught man the fundamental oneness of organic life; and from that revelation sprang the simple analogies between woman and field, between the sexual act and sowing, as well as the most advanced intellectual syntheses" (1974, 52-53). The fertility of the earth and its ability to provide plant life are celebrated as feminine power in mythologies from all parts of the world. The Taínan Itiba Cahubaba, the Bleeding Ancient Mother, has already been introduced (Chapter 6), but Isis in Egypt, Ishtar in Babylonia, Cybele in Phrygia, Demeter in Greece, Pachamama in Incan Peru, Odudua in West Africa, Frija in Scandanavia, and the Yin of Taoist T'ai Chi in China illustrate the wide dispersion of symbolism. The everyday expressions "Mother Earth" and "Mother Nature" are faint reflections in Contemporary culture of this ancient notion that equates the telluric Principle with femininity.

Fertility, Femininity, and Wisdom

Because some people are uncomfortable with these kinds of symbolic generalizations about gender differences, perhaps it is relevant to make a distinction between the "female" and the "feminine." Only some people are biologically female, but all humankind must discover both the masculine and the feminine ways of living. Among the Taoists there is an aphorism to the effect that "He who knows the masculine but keeps to the feminine will be in the whole world's channel" (Hall:4).

But the relationship between the earth and feminine fertility is a complex one. Not only does earth provide life, it bestows fertility in certain predictable patterns. The most obvious convergence of these earth—feminine rhythms can be found in the lunar cycle, which generally corresponds to the menstrual cycle. The female "monthly" has phases within it that mark a passage from fertility to infertility and back to fertility again. Sometimes changes in behavior and moods are attributed to the power this physiological cycle exercises over human personality By personifying the changes of nature, seasonal variations can be explained by analogy with a woman's temperament, and mythology frequently explains these earth patterns of fertility by analogy with feminine behavior.

In Europe, there is a noticeable change iii the seasons through the progression of winter, fall, summer, and spring, and often the telluric principle of life was believed to disappear. The ancient Greeks developed a myth concerning the separation of Demeter from her daughter Persophone, who was whisked away to the underworld. The myth literally sent feminine fertility "to hell" until the springtime. In Egypt, Isis had to await the annual regeneration of the Nile in order to reacquire her fertility.

The Taínos shared these notions of femininity and its correspondence with natural processes. But the Caribbean basin knows only slight temperature changes throughout the year, so that telluric fertility cannot be said to "die" in quite the same way as in Europe. Although the earth of the Caribbean islands is always receptive to planting because of climatic warmth, however, there is a need to observe periodic sowing and harvests if the soil is not to be depleted. Thus, Taíno mythology can be expected to explain both fertility and periodicity.

The following episode from Pane's account links seasonal fertility

and femininity. The mastery of natural rhythms is placed within the domain of the hero, Guahayona. It is an attainable skill, rather than a birthright, since, unlike Deminán to whom all things were given, Guahayona must create his own opportunities. To achieve his wisdom, the hero exploits cleverness, half-truth, deception, and betrayal.

The Flight of the Güeyo Women (Chapters III—IV)

He said to the women, "Leave behind your husbands and let us go to other lands and carry off much *güeyo.*

Leave your children and let us take only the herb with us and later on we shall return for them."

Guahayona , OUR PRIDE , left with all the women and he went searching for other lands.

He came to Matininó, NO FATHERS ,
where he soon left the women behind,
and he went off to another region called Guanín.

He had left the small children near a brook.

Later, when they began to suffer hunger pains, [it is said that] they wept and cried out for their mothers who had gone off.

The fathers were not able to help their children who cried Out in hunger for their mothers, saying, "mama" trying to speak, but really asking for the breast.

Thus they cried out, saying *"toa, toa"* asking to be nursed, and while they behaved as someone asking for things with deep
desire and in a great voice, they were transformed into small, froglike animals, [called] *"tona"* because they had cried out for nursing.

THE CHILDREN WERE TURNED INTO FROGS,
AND FROM THAT TIME ON THE FROG WAS HELD TO BE
THE VOICE OF SPRINGTIME.

In this way all the men were left without women.

Textual Considerations

This episode in Pane has been expanded to include two lines from d'Anghiera's version of the same episode (those in capitals). The rationale for this addition is the same as that suggested in the discussion of the sexual liason with the turtle transformed into a woman (Chapter 7). Roth records that among the continent's Arawaks and some of the Karina people the frog is a symbol of rain (267, 370). The month of May, which corresponds to the European spring, marks the

beginning of a spate of increased rainfall in the Antilles that continues until November. These two lines, therefore, do not alter the sense of the narration in Pane, and they add an important seasonal meaning to the myth.

The Search for Güeyo

Much as the previous episode revolves around the search for *digo,* this part of the tale focuses upon *güeyo.* Arrom *(Relación:74,* n. 100) cites an important observation of Fernando Ortiz:

> Among the Indians of the Guianas, tobacco is usually chewed, and for that purpose, it is mixed with some salty-tasting ashes that are obtained from a species of algae, *(Mourera fluvialis),* the Indians call *"weya,"* that they gather alongside the waterfalls of the river (1963:176).

Arrom considers this the likely identity *of güeyo.* Such an interpretation parallels Taíno use of the *cohoba,* a rite in which *Anadenanthera peregrina* was mixed with tobacco (Chapter 7). Thus the above explanation of *cohoba* and *guanguayo* as equal but opposite uses of tobacco finds an echo here. Just as the inhaled tobacco needs the addition of *Anadenanthera peregrina* to become the powerful *cohoba,* the raw green chewing tobacco needs *Mourera fluvialis* or *güeyo* to become *guanguayo.* On this basis, I conclude that this episode belongs to the body of South American mythology about tobacco described by Levi-Strauss.

Guahayona tempts the women to steal *güeyo,* thus preventing its mixture with green chewing tobacco. Without *güeyo,* the tobacco looses some of its shamanistic qualities, thus neutralizing the *guanguayo* or spittle that was described in the myth about Deminán. The myth establishes a logical link between tobacco without *güeyo* and the separation of the sexes. Men and women belong together in order to achieve fertility, just as *güeyo* and tobacco must be joined to produce the shamanistic *guanguayo* (Roth:334-36; Chapter 10). This logic is symbolically expressed in the fertility that results from the *guanguayo* turned-female-turtle that afflicted Deminán. In this episode, several levels of meaning are kept in rigorously logical parallel, so that the myth simultaneously explains several important phenomena and joins nature and human behavior into an organic totality. I have tried to construct a table closely following a model taken from Reichel-

Dolmatoff(1971:238, Table 3), although I realize that a lack of data about the now-extinct Taínos impedes a definitive interpretation (see Table 5).

Mythological Places: Remote and Close

Two islands provide loci for the mythological events. Matininó, where the women find refuge, represents the separation of the sexes; Guanín is the site of reencounter and subsequent fruitfulness. Arrom shows that "Ma-iti-nino," meaning "Without Fathers," is the probable etymological source for the first island, and that the identification by Samuel Eliot Morrison of this mythical place with Martinique is a mistake *(Relación:61,* n.20). Guanín is presented here as a place, yet it is also the word used to describe the golden alloy prized by the Taínos. The island received this name because it was considered its source, but as explained above, the place is almost certainly mythical (Chapters 1, 4). When they are related to the myth, the places keep these meanings. They underscore the situation of the sexes, so that to mention Matininó is to emphasize that women are alone; to speak of Guanín is to suggest sexual union. To the symbolic islands must be added the Cave of the Jagua, where the sexes are close to each, other, if not yet fruitful, and the remote mountaintop of Cauta, where Guayahona eventually goes to be healed (Chapter 10). These ideas can be listed according to the binary opposites of remote and close, which I think aids analysis according to the method of Levi-Strauss (see Table 4).

Precipitation and Yuca

Certain natural climatic phenomena of the Caribbean Antilles are part of the backdrop of the mythical events. The seasonal changes in rainfall are charted in Table 3 under the columns designating the months of the year and its precipitation. But rainfall also determined the planting of yuca, which was done at least twice a year to keep this Crop in rotation. According to Reichel-Dolmaltoff's table, the periodic increase in rainfall started the process of harvesting yuca from the fields and replanting the mounds with new tubers for the Tukano people. Hence, as he shows, rain designates a time of plenty because the yuca is "close," while drought symbolizes "remote" food. This symbolic correlation also applies to the Taínos, although the climatic changes occur in different months.

CATEGORIES: Natural			Symbolic		Mythological		
Time	Precipitation	Yuca Cycle	Female Cycle	Frog Cycle	Tobacco	Place	Relation
Taíno New Year: late July–mid. Sept.	rain frequent with hurricanes	abundance	sexual encounter	legs apart (unmatched halves)	guanguayo (tobacco & güeyo)	Guanín	close
late Sept.–mid. Dec.	rain less frequent	scarcity	gestation and pregnancy	pregnant (distorted lower half)	raw/dry tobacco	Cauta	remote
late Dec.–mid. March	dry and sunny	scarcity	birth and nursing	tadpoles (unattached top half)	stolen güeyo	Matitinó	remote
late March–mid. July	rain most frequent	abundance	weaning	approach of rutting (matched halves)	restored güeyo	Cacibajagua	close

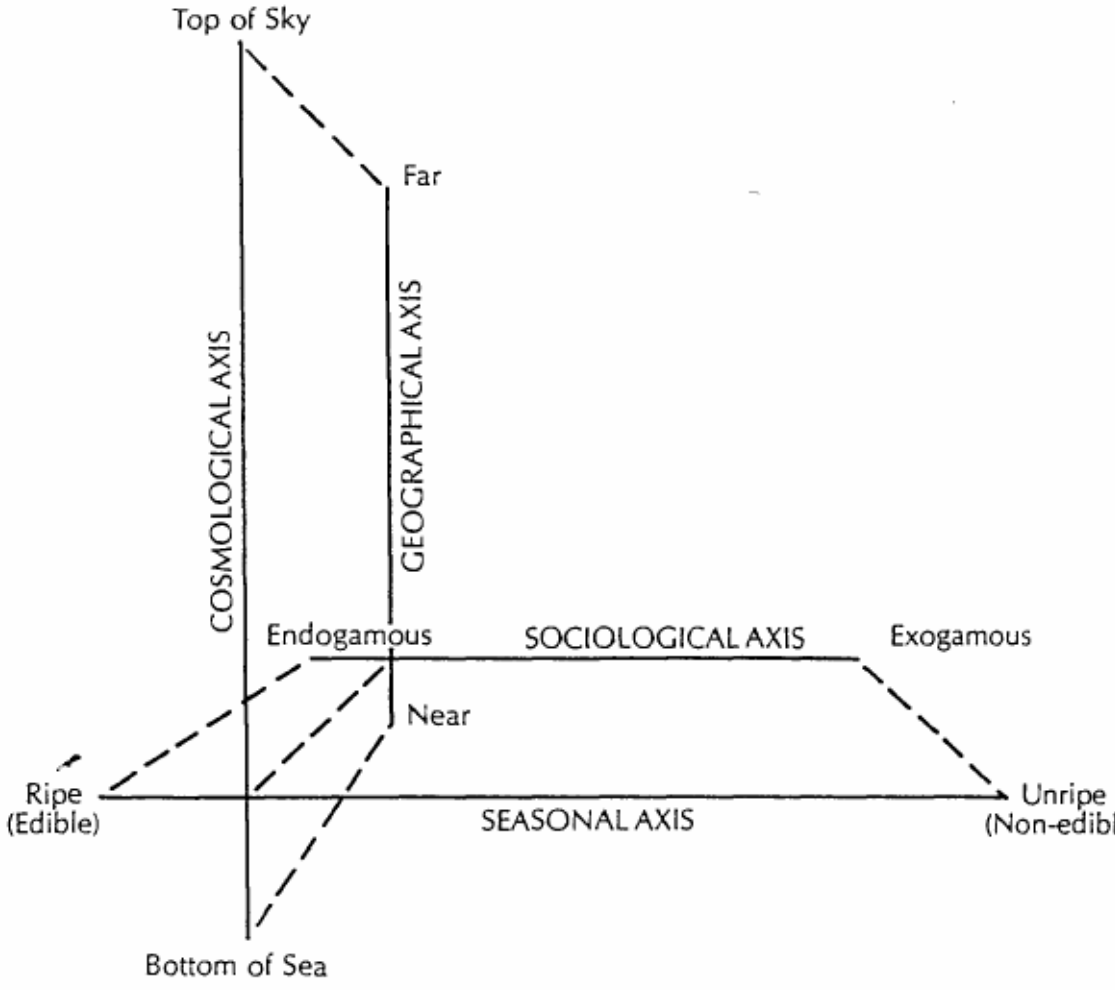


Table 4. Dynamic Relationships between Cosmic and Human Coordinates. (Adapted from Levi-Strauss by Ana Marl Diaz Stevens.)

In his work, Reichel-Dolmatoff has included the correspondence of fishing cycles as well as the pattern of precipitation and yuca planting (1971:238, Table 3). While there are some data on fishing patterns among the Taínos, I have omitted such information from the chart, leaving it for separate analysis in Chapter 10. I think it important to repeat that although Reichel-Dolmatoff places the times of scarcity and plenty, i.e., remoteness and closeness, in months different than those in my table, the symbolic correspondence between rainfall and yuca is the same, and provides an analogical bridge to categories of sexual closeness and remoteness.

The picture painted by the Taíno myth is one of drought, in which the streams have dried up during the winter months. Such droughts cause great hardship, especially for those living on the smaller Antillean islands where water is not abundant (Sued Badillo, 1978:136-40). The disappearance of the earth's fertility for yuca planting during a dry spell is vividly represented in the myth, and is appropriately

explained by reference to the separation from women, now alone in Matininó. The women are remote, rain is scarce, and yuca planting is not possible. The scene is set for the appearance of the frog, which

served the Taínos as a zoomorphic representation of both fertility and periodicity.

The Frog and Fertility

The logic of the natural and mythological categories of rainfall and the mythic islands is held together by the symbol of the frog, whose characteristics had both seasonal and sexual meaning for the TaInos.[1] As has been explained above, the mating season of frogs corresponds to the onset of the Caribbean rainy period from May until November. Among the Indians of Guiana studied by Roth, the frog's changed behavior during rutting is sometimes seen as the cause of increased rainfall (267,370). During mating, the rutting cries increase in audible perception, and because the fishlike tadpoles now become mature, the number of frogs visibly grows: In the Taíno myth, this seasonal behavior of frogs is related not only to rainfall, but also to feminine fertility. When frogs are most noticeable, i.e., at the maturation of tadpoles, during rutting and rain, women are accessible to men. They are "close" at just the opposite times from those when they are remote.

As will be detailed in Chapter 12, the pictographs of the Taíno woman in childbirth represent consummate feminine fertility idealized by the Taínos as the cemí spirit, Attabeira. Curiously, the squatting posture of this fertility figure with her legs far apart is similar to prehistoric European representations of such goddesses (Alcina Franch; Gimbutas, 1982.). I agree with Lévi-Strauss that this posture of the woman giving birth resembles a frog (HA:66—67). I leave it to the reader to judge whether the Taíno pictographs merit this description. But relevant to my opinion is a wider treatment of the frog in South American mythology. Levi-Strauss notes that the frog is considered "ugly" among natural creatures because it is made up of two halves which do not match (HA:32—5). But this "defect" of the frog makes it like a human being, whose legs are longer than the

1. It really does not affect this analogy if the *"tona"* are *coquís (Eleutherodactylus portoricensis),* which are taxinomically not frogs despite similarities of appearance, and whose distinctive cry is much celebrated in Puerto Rican folklore.

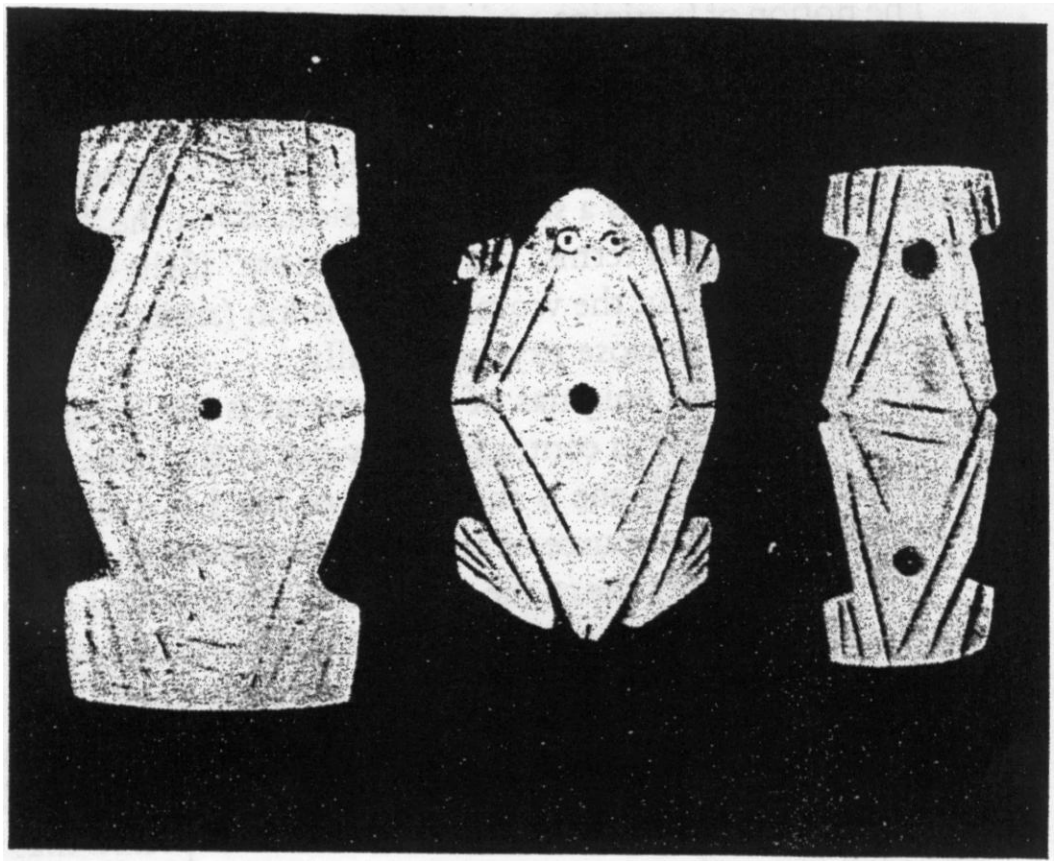


Figure 7. Amulets in the shape of a frog made from seashell, with equal-sized top and bottom halves in the Janus Mode. Santo Domingo. 5.8 cm, 4.1 cm, 5.4cm respectively. Exhibit of pre Hispanic Art, Garcid Arévalo Foundation, Santo Domingo. After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.

arms. To the degree that the frog is like a human being it is an "ugly" creature; but this same quality makes it a symbol of the female squatting with legs far apart to give birth.

This observation on the froglike posture of the fertile feminine in human form is speculative. The common Taíno representation of the frog in zoomorphic form does not show this disproportion between fore and hind limbs, however (Figure 7). Instead, the frog is shown on amulets as being a symmetrical creature of two equal halves. Why this discrepancy between the frog's shape as a symbol of feminine fertility and in the natural state as stylized symmetry? I believe that the two different perceptions reflect the Taínos' use of the frog as an intermediate symbol for linking the categories of natural and biological fertility that also know periodic variations. The perception of seasonal variation in form for the frog, from tadpole to rutting creature to pregnant female, parallels similar changes in shape for the human female .

The Frog and Periodicity

The notion of feminine periodicity explains why a woman does not get pregnant every time she has sexual relations and why she is not always receptive to a man, especially during menstruation. This mystery of a woman's varying closeness and remoteness within her own fertility cycle has a social dimension. Even the "close" woman, in strictly biological terms, may be "remote" *if* she is kin to the man who desires her. But the woman who is kin (sister or mother), while remote sexually, is close psychologically.

One of the basic enigmas of the woman is her complex role as so close and so remote in contradictory ways at the same time. Because she nurses her child, she is the source of food as a mother. But as a mate, she is also the source of sex as a wife, although she ought not to be both at the same time to the same man. Responding to the paradox presented by the incest taboo, myths frequently deal with this theme (Levi-Strauss, ESK.; Leach, 1970:103-24).

In this Taíno myth, the desire of men for wives and the need of children for nursing mothers are paired. Taíno women did not have sexual relations during the period of lactation, a period that was often extended as much as two years (Morales Cabrera:41;cf. Harris:24-25). If the men without women are interpreted as husbands whose wives are nursing children, the infants crying during the weaning period announce the transition of the woman back into the role of sexual partner to her husband. The suffering of the children is mythologically transformed into the croaking of frogs. By the use of onomatopeia, the cry of "toa," the equivalent of "mama," becomes frog's croaking, rather than words. The mating call of the frogs is a sign that rain is near. With rainfall comes the planting season for the yuca and thus the return of the earth's fertility. Cleverly, the organic totality of Taíno mythology weaves the periodicity of women and frogs together with seasonal precipitation and yuca planting.

Since this natural rhythm is echoed in the cyclical succession of dry and rainy seasons in the Caribbean, the myth analogically fuses together the changes in the woman's fertility with the variations of tropical climate. At the peak of the dry spell, however, a sign of salvation appears, as the gloss of d'Anghiera emphasizes. Thus the Taíno frog, the "voice of springtime" which ends the winter's dry season, had more or less the same sexual connotation as in contemporary society, where "Springtime turns a young man's fancy to love."

The Frog and Culture

Levi-Strauss suggests that in places where honey is not available— and the pre-Columbian Caribbean was such a place (Taylor, 1951:3233, n.60)- the frog replaces the bee as the mythical creature related to nature's seduction. The key notion for this transition is the appearance of a "culture" for an animal in nature. The supposed sophistication of the bee in manufacturing honey and in its collective life is perceived as an advance over other animal life, and one that presages human activity. The frog, says Levi-Strauss, also has this kind of symbolic activity that simulates human culture. On the transition from bee to frog, he notes:

> Zoology and ethnography explain, then, how the bee and the tree-frog came to form a pair of opposites, and how I was also to postulate above, as a theoretical principle, that the transformation of one into the other must inevitably appear as an inversion. Both the bee and the tree-frog do, in fact, make their nests in hollow trees. . . The bee belongs to the category of the dry whereas the frog belongs to the category of the wet: it needs water inside its nest to make sure that the eggs are protected, so it sings when it finds water, and in the whole of tropical America (as in the rest of the world too) the croaking of the frog is a sign of rain (HA:168—69).

Just as the bee's honey seduces women, the female frog's ugly appearance seduces children. Levi-Strauss then adds a description of how the toxic fluid used by the tree-frog to trap insects is similar to the poison used on the tips of hunting arrows. But this logic is somewhat tenuous for the Greater Antilles, since the Taínos may not have tipped their arrows with poison (Alegría in Cardenas Ruiz:85- 88).

Levi-Strauss' only explicit reference to the Taínos describes the froglike posture of the fertile female. He notes a similarity of petroglyphs among the Indians of the Canadian Pacific with the same sort of glyphs of the Indians in Puerto Rico that picture the fertile woman in a squatting posture. He reasons that this similarity is based on the absence in both cultures of honey as the intermediary of myths (HA:66-67). Citing G. A. Dorsey (117), Levi-Strauss suggests that the frog "looks like a pregnant woman" (225) and may be another identity of the Clinging Woman (75-77, 224-25). While it has been

turtle, not a frog (Chapter 7), the notion of fertility remains closely linked.

I would argue in favor of the application of these concepts offered by Levi-Strauss to the frog symbol among the Taínos. First, if tobacco and honey are juxtaposed cultural opposites as Levi-Strauss insists (HA), then the parallel *of güeyo* to honey has some meaning. Like honey, *güeyo* is "raw food," prepared by nature (algae) but with religious power when consumed by humans. Second, the frog in this episode is seen as the alter ego of children, pairing nicely with Levi-Strauss' notion of child seducer. Finally, the froglike posture of the feminine fertility symbol in the Taíno petroglyphs projects her dual nature as mother and wife. These changing phases of the frog's gestation cycle are placed in logical sequence to analogically reproduce the female cycles. Table 3 organizes them as intermediate categories for parallel patterns in nature and mythology, so that all together form an organic totality.

The Frog and Tobacco Versus the Bee and Honey

As has been suggested, the mythological functions of this episode are focused upon periodic infertility in the tropics which is made analogous with a woman's sexuality. The myth argues that yuca planting cannot occur unless there is rain, just as a husband cannot use his wife for sexual pleasure until her task of nursing the child is completed. Perhaps the nighttime sounds of the frog further identified the woman's fertility as belonging especially to the darkness. Thus, the myth affirms that while both the earth and the woman may appear to be fertile at all times, in fact they are not. Special knowledge of the moon's phases—of time—is required in order to tell the difference.

These basic truths are framed by the religious use *of güeyo* to make *guanguayo* out of tobacco. Levi-Strauss describes the interrelationships of tobacco and honey in reference to acquisition of the skills for understanding nature:

> The function of tobacco consists in restoring what the function of honey destroyed, that is, in re-establishing between man and the supernatural that communication which the seductive power of honey. had caused to be interrupted (HA:260).

The repeated use in Lévi-Strauss' analyses of honey as seduction is similar to the fate of the fishermen in the first part of the Hero Myth (Chapter 8). As will be remembered, they gave in to the temptation to eat jobo fruit instead of fishing for the community. Here the women take the güeyo-another raw food-and follow Guahayona to the island, where they live alone.

The women, harvesters of *güeyo,* are thus made independent of men. There can be no sexual reproduction until the sexes are united, just as the addition of tobacco *to güeyo* makes *guanguayo.* The symbols of the sexual joining in fertility of the sexes are related analogically to the use of tobacco. Just as the frog uncannily knows when it is about to rain, the mating cries also predict the ritual season for mixing *guanguayo.* Appropriately, this "wet" form of tobacco *(cohoba* requires the "dry" form) is best known to a creature of the waters. This knowledge of human cultural patterns by the frog is similar to the wisdom of the fish of the genesis myth. Just as uncanny knowledge was attributed to the fish because they had sprung from the bones of Yayael, here the frogs' prophetic ability is the result of having first been the primordial lost children of the Taíno mythic past.

The Amazon Woman

In this myth, the women seem willing to be seduced by Guahayona's suggestion. It is the men and the children who suffer from the separation, not the women. Thus the feminine assumes a primacy. The Spaniards recognized this when they called the women on Matininó "Amazons" (Chapter 1). By identifying a theme of Taíno mythology with one from Greek religion, the conquistadores uncovered an important dimension of the Taíno concept of the feminine. The psychological importance of this notion will be adequately discussed in subsequent chapters. But does the idea of the women on Matininó, who are utterly remote from men, have a social and cultural meaning? specifically, is the Taíno Amazon the kinswoman in a system of exogamy?

In the ordinary course of events, one could not view a clanswoman as a potential bride because that would be equivalent to incest. But the same woman could be exchanged with other people, so that a Taíno man could obtain a bride-and a brother-in-law-in return for his Sister. Since the Taínos were exogamous (Fernández Méndez, 1972:5;

Sued Badillo, 1975:15), such an application would be appropriate. In such a structure, remote women are clan sisters and close women are those who are marriageable through exogamy. But in this myth, the remoteness and closeness belong to the same women. Their change in status is related to time and periodicity, not clan rules. I believe it likely that this myth refers to the question of wife procurement outside the established social pattern of exchange rather than to exogamy.

After tribal fissure, bands of Taíno males without a fixed territory have nothing to offer in exchange for women. Chagnon relates that fissure among the Yanomamö is often provoked by fights over women, and that newly formed villages frequently raid older ones to secure brides. Migrant males, therefore, must pirate women from some other village.

Since there is evidence that the Taínos intermarried with some of the women from previous inhabitants and that the marauders from the Lesser Antilles did the same with Taíno women, it may. be assumed that this kind of piracy of females was fairly common among the pre-Columbian inhabitants of the Caribbean. The myth of "fatherless" women on Matininó permits the Taínos to view unprotected women as "rescued" Taíno females who had no patrilocal ties. Hence, no gifts or alliances had to be made with another people in order to gain such women as wives. The Taíno myth gives religious justification for the practice of raiding for women, because it interprets such women as the delinquent Taínas who absconded with Guahayona. Women without fathers are "free" to be stolen, since there is no obligation to barter with the father for gifts in a bride-price or to haggle over a dowry The women on Matininó, I conclude, are remote only temporarily, like all the other references to remoteness in this myth. Chapters seven and eight of Pane's narrative introduce still another notion of remote women: those in prepuberty.

The Tale of Inriri, Chapters VII - VIII

[It is said that] one day the men went to bathe and while they were in the water, it rained a great deal.

They were very anxious to have women, and on many occasions while it rained, they had sought to find traces of their women, but they were not able to find any news [of them].

But that day when they washed, [it is said that] they saw fall

from some trees, coming down through the branches a certain kind of persons, who were neither men nor women, nor had the sexual parts of either male or female.

When the men went to seize them, they escaped as if they were eels.

And since the men could not catch them, they called two or three men under orders from their cacique, so that they would see how many there were, and should seek for each one a man who was a *caracaracol,* [so called because they had rough hands and could thus hold them fast].

They told the cacique that there were four CREATURES, and so they brought four men who were *caracaracol.*

[This is a disease like scabs that makes the body rough.] After they had captured the CREATURES, they took counsel about

how they could make them women, since they did not have the sexual parts of male or female.

They sought a bird whose name is Inriri, and which in ancient times was called Inriri Cahubabayael, THE SON OF THE ANCIENT ONE.

This bird bores holes in trees, [and in our language is called a woodpecker.1

Likewise they took the women without the sexual parts of male or female and they tied their hands and feet.

Then they took this bird and tied it to the bodies.

Thinking that the CREATURE5 were logs, the bird began to do the work to which it was accustomed, boring open and pecking away at the place where the female's private is usually found.

[It is said that] in this way, the Indians had women [as the eldest cell the tale].

Relation to Other Myths

Lopez Baralt has correctly tied this part of Taíno mythology to similar South American tales that describe the initiation rites for young women (Lopez Baralt:37). Levi-Strauss entitles the myth, "The Wooden Bride" (HA:215-49), and catalogs it as a variation on another theme entitled, "The Story of the Girl Mad about Honey" (HA:103-50). Similar tales were found by Levi-Strauss among the Macusi (M266, M277), the Chaco (M216-M217), the Guiana (M259, M266), and the Cubeo (M268). The opening lines of this episode repeat the identification of the rainy season with the approach of a

woman's sexual receptiveness. Here the creatures have never been mothers, however. Their receptiveness to sexual relations is a first-time experience, and, like the South American myths listed above, probably refers to girls before puberty.

Since there is no allusion to Guahayona in the references to the caciques, it seems likely that this is not a direct part of the Hero Myth but a mythic explanation of puberty rites. It has been included here because its theme is related to the tale of remote women. Another familiar reference is to the *"caracaracol"* of the Deminán Creation Myth (Chapter 6). The desire for women is related to water, not only in bathing but especially in the increase of rainfall. Likewise, the myth reintroduces the bird Cahubabael, characterized as a reluctant shaman.

The Puberty Initiation

The link of this myth to ritual is supplied by the phrase "in ancient times." As Eliade points out, this expression in mythology is comparable to the *"in illo tempore"* of Western Christianity (1954:76). By invoking this ritual phrase, the listener becomes a participant in the narration of primordial events and the rite becomes a sacred reenactment of past history.

The central reason for interpreting this myth as a description of the puberty rite is the manner in which the shaman mediates the encounter of men and women. The role assigned to the frog in the account of the Güeyo Women is occupied here by the *caracaracoles* with. their rough hands. Pane probably misinterprets the reason for their power over the creatures when he says that roughness was what made it possible for the *caracaracoles* to hold onto them. As explained above, the survivors of venereal disease are born with scabby skin, and were considered among the Taínos to have special shamanistic proclivities. The victory over syphilis, which left the skin rough with scabs, was viewed as a manifestation of the numinous. Moreover, because the disease was contracted sexually by the mother, the shamanistic power was directly related to sexuality.

I believe that this myth describes a puberty rite in which the shaman takes a central role, and the reappearance of the bird, Cahubabayel, strengthens this interpretation. In the account of the cave, he was the reckless shaman who left the cave only to be caught by the sun and turned into a bird. He is a "foolish *behique"* (Chapter 8). Originally

punished because he revealed secrets of his profession to the uninitiated, he still makes mistakes. Here, he does not realize that he is boring holes in living creatures; instead, he believes them to be logs of wood. His foolishness contrasts markedly with the wisdom of the *caracaracoles* and the cacique.

The Shamanistic Eel and Bird

It is possible that the reference to the eel is a gloss, added by Pane in attempting to communicate the ambiguous nature of the creatures. The eel resembles both serpent and fish, and yet is neither (Lévi- Strauss, T:15-32; RC:246-48; OTM:161-62). By escaping easy classification as either fish or snake, the eel acquires a shamanistic symbolism as an animal that can move between established genera and species. Victor Turner describes this ambiguity in ritual terms as "liminality" Turner:1967, 96ft;1965). Even if the reference to the eel is not a part of the original Taíno tale, Pane has grasped the mythological thinking of the Taínos by his suggestion.

The bird Inriri, or woodpecker, is frequently found under different names in South American myths. Because it can open holes in the trunks of trees in which honey is stored, the bird symbolizes shamanistic power to unlock sexual delight. Hence, says Levi-Strauss, the ability of the woodpecker to uncover honey is generally considered to approximate human behavior (RC:2O3ff; HA:221-38). The same quality of liminality can be attributed to the bird as belonging both to sky and earth (Chapter 8).

In this Taíno version, although honey is not mentioned, the function of the bird is virtually the same as on the continent among South American peoples. Perhaps instead of honey, the delicacy obtained from the woodpecker was *comején (Masutitermis costalis),* or termite eggs, which the Taínos, like the Tukano (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971:99), were said to regard with particular fondness (Moya Pons:9; Fewkes:49). Termite nests appear frequently on tropical trees, and their hollowed enclosures are often taken over as nests by various species of woodpeckers. The "mistake" of treating the termite nests as wood of the tree may be an analogy from nature that has been adapted here for the sake of the myth about the uninitiated women (cf. Basso:99).

Among the Bl ack Carib of Honduras, who at one time populated the Lesser Antilles and are linguistically related to the Taínos (Chapter

2), the name of an important mythological bird is "Iriyuna" (Taylor,1951:118, n.6). I leave it to linguists to determine whether this name can be considered equivalent to "Inriri." Rather than the woodpecker, it is considered to be a species of either goatsucker (fan-Lily *Caprimulgdiae)* or woodduck *(Dendroicygna).* What does seem relevant is the ability of such a mythological bird to have different natural homologues, depending on the region. Thus, mythological identity is attributed to various species by different peoples, who somehow preserve the mythical function of the bird. Strikingly, among the Black Carib, Iriyuna is associated with the *dogó* rite of divination with one's ancestors, just as the Taíno Inriri is also named Cahubabael, like the reluctant *behique* who searched for the *digó* (Chapter 8). Taylor has recorded Iriyuna's song:

Where will the dawn break upon me? Heigh-ho!
Dawn in the path will o'ertake me, ho-heigh, Nearing the ancestor-hall: ah, woe are we!

The Taínos may well have enriched their puberty rites with a strong ancestral recollection of the intiates' kinship identity. Such a hypothesis would explain why Inriri is also Cahubabael.

Ritual Isolation

The notions of being bound to trees in the forest or hidden as snakes in a jungle suggest ritual isolation. In many puberty initiations, such as those of the Tukano (Reichel-Dolmaltoff, 1971:143-44) and the Yanamamö (Chagnon:85), a menstruating woman seeks seclusion in the forest. Among certain hunter tribes, casting eyes on a bleeding woman in the forest was a prelude to death (Hall: 170-71; Turner, 1967:96). Here, however, it is frustration more than terror which characterizes the behavior of the men. It should be noted that the number of *caracaracoles* is "four," the same as in the Creation Myth in which the four brothers found sexual fertility with the Female Turtle (Chapter 6). Hence, the fullness of four, which serves to symbolize an adequate and total supply, is repeated. But in this myth, the problem faced is how to open up the sexual parts of the hermaphrodite creatures so that the male penis may penetrate.

The ritual context for this tale would appear to be the ritual deflowering of Taíno youth. Such deflowering is common in other

cultures, wherein an instrument is inserted into the vagina by the shaman to rupture the hymen and enable penetration by the penis (Van Gennep:72ff). Archaeologists have produced a Taíno ritual de-flowering stone (cf. Olsen:348), so that it is certain that the Taínos observed such a ritual.[2] The puberty ritual initiated young girls into their sexual activity by appealing to a carefully supervised ritual in which the feminine potential was religiously related to social needs. It would be too quick a judgment to classify the scene as a "rape," since it is the men who appear helpless, not the hermaphrodite creatures (cf. Sued Badillo, 1975:11-13; 1978:58-61). But if the men are helpless in the myth, the hermaphrodite creatures are passive. The intermediaries of the tale possess power: the caciques, the caracaracoles and the shamanistic bird, Inriri Cahubabayel.

Taíno Ritual Mediation

This myth focuses upon the shaman and his role in the puberty rite as intermediary between the natural and the symbolic religious world. Only with this intervention is fertility achieved. *A.* table of the elements in this episode (Table 4) depicts the rigorous logic of Taíno myth in emphasizing the essential need for mediation through ritual. It should be noticed as well that the myth's structure shows differences between binary and ternary antinomies. Levi-Strauss considers these to constitute the logical distinctions between classes and relationships within social classes (SA:156-58). The same mediation, which can be found in the preceeding tale of the Güeyo Women, has also been placed in Table 4.

These myths offer insight into the fundamental nature of belief in shamanism among the Taínos. For the Taínos, the *behique* seems to have been an indispensable medium for unlocking the power of telluric nature, with its wonders of fertility. Yet even the shaman required some transformation from the ordinary state to achieve this contact with the numinous. Moreover, both myths state that females are not naturally feminine; i.e., a woman cannot belong to the Taíno people without the intervention of a common religious experience that puts her sexuality in the service of a common social good. For the

2. Even if the deflowering were symbolic rather than physical as occurs with ocher peoples (Turner, 1965:65-67), the reference in this myth to puberty initiation of Taíno maidens seems clear.

Taíno believer, nothing is taken for granted without shamanism-not even one's gender. Without religious faith, a female cannot be feminine.

Summary

These two episodes from Pane's narrative reveal the sexual wonder of the Taínos and their particular way of explaining the periodicity of feminine fertility. With a rigorous logic that interweaves climatic changes with the cycles of women and frogs, the tale of the Güeyo Women establishes the essentially religious dimension of sexuality for the Taínos. Even the piratical raid to procure women is given a religious legitimation. But the first myth about Matininó goes beyond the physical limitations of puberty development that are treated in the tale of the hermaphrodites. The episode about the women with *güeyo* hints at the psychological meaning of womanhood.

The religious power to stand apart from mere physical sexuality (femaleness) and operate on the basis of spiritual strength (femininity) is an essential Taíno cultural attitude and forms the basis for another episode in Guayahona's travels. He finds himself, like the men in the puberty myth, unable to grasp or hold the woman he desires. Her identification with telluric nature is more powerful than his physical strength. True, the male Guayahona, with all of his foolishness, is the tempter. It is his deception that initially caused the Güeyo Women's separation from men. But unlike the biblical tale of the Hebrews in which the tempter is a devil (Genesis 3:1-13), Guahayona is a bumbler. Once he steals away from the cave on Mount Cauta with the *güeyo* and the women, he is unable to reunite the sexes on his own-incapable of undoing what he has started. Only the timely intervention of the independent woman found in the next episode can rescue Guahayona from his own cleverness.

CHAPTER TEN

The Vengeance of Time

When Friar Ramón Pane recorded the mythology of the Taínos, he presented their beliefs as events that had taken place in a past time. Yet it appears that the Catalán priest recognized that the events were parts of an unusual history. Noting that these tales formed the core of a body of traditions passed on from one generation to another, he says:

> Since they do not have writing or an alphabet, they are not able to render a good account of how they have heard all this from their ancestors. This is why they do not agree in what they say, nor is it possible to write down their references in order (Relación:24).

The distinction between the mythic events of religion and the actual deeds of history is what Eliade describes as sacred and profane time. Profane time is the ordinary temporal duration that marks the succession of change. But sacred time is "equivalent to revealing a mystery";

> For the persons of the myth are not human beings; they are gods or culture heroes, and for this reason their gesta constitute mysteries; man

> could not know their acts if they were not revealed to him. . . Once told, that is, revealed, the myth becomes apodictic truth; it establishes a truth that is absolute. It is for this reason that myth is bound up with ontology; it speaks only of realities, of what really happened, of what was fully manifested (Eliade, 1959:95).

These two kinds to time are essentially different. It is not that the sacred conflicts with the profane, but that religion supersedes history in importance. This is how I understand Eliade's comment that the myth is "what really happened." It is left to ritual to allow religious people to "pass without danger from ordinary temporal duration to sacred time" (Eliade, 1959:68).

The previous episode in the Hero Myth about the adventures of Guahayona has suggested this convergence of sacred and profane time through rituals meant to invoke fertility. The further exploits of this improbable Taíno hero establish not only that there is a sacred time, but how it can be managed. Hence, the theme is the acquisition of culture.

The Betrayal of Anacacuya (Chapter V)

When Guahayona departed, he took with him all the women. In the same way, he took the women of his cacique, named
Anacacuya, **LIGHT OF** THE **CENTER,** fooling him
just as he fooled the others.
Moreover, **ANACACUYA** (was) the brother-in-law of Guayahona, [and he] went with him, setting upon the sea.
Guayahona said to his brother-in-law when they were in the canoe:
"Look at that beautiful *cobo* that is in the water."
[A *cobo* is a seashell.]
And when [he] **ANACACUYA** looked down at the water to see the *cobo,* his brother-in-law Guayahona took him by the feet and threw
him into the sea.
And thus he took all the women for himself and left them in Matininó, where [it is said] there is today nothing but women. And he himself went to another island named Guanín,
[and **it** *is]* so named on account of
what he took from there upon leaving.

A Canoe Journey, Time, and Exogamy

This episode describes a canoe trip of Guahayona and his brother in-law But unlike the celestial canoe trip of the four brothers in the

Creation Myth (Chapters 6 and 7), the goal here is not to secure *cazabe* or *cohoba.* Rather, like other tales among South American peoples, the trip explains the social rules for marriage (OTM:135—95): "Every time a canoe journey is featured in the system, its purpose is to remove the hero from the too-close woman ..or to bring him closer to the remote woman ...or to do both at the same time, or the reverse" (OTM:153). In Chapter 9, the concept of "close" woman was shown to have a kinship meaning. Within an exogamous system, incest prohibits marriage to persons from the same clan (sisters) as well as sexual relations with one's parent or sibling. Guahayona is pictured here as guilty of making women remote for his cacique, just as he did for the cave-dwelling men of Cacibajagua. Because he is related by marriage to this Anacacuya, however, Anacacuya's widow (now remote) was once made close by arrangements between the former brothers-in-law.

Levi—Strauss suggests that close/remote pairing is frequently linked to-stellar bodies. He perceives "a correlation between the sociological opposition of close and remote marriages and an astronomical opposition: that between light and darkness" (OTM:153). It can be further suggested that since light and darkness are not only daily occurrences but also assume seasonal variations, time itself is the analogue. In a paragraph which is difficult reading but condenses this idea, Levi-Strauss argues:

> The reconciling of light and darkness occurs not only in the same period of time, as can be observed when the colors of the rainbow or rain-laden clouds mitigate or temper the brightness of daylight, or when the moon and stars light up the noctural sky. Such synchronic mediation is complemented by diachronic mediation, illustrated by the regular alternation of day and night, which is in opposition to a theoretical state in which one would prevail to the exclusion of the other (OTM:154).

These two levels of meaning, marriage and time, are linked by the analogue of canoe travel. Levi—Strauss notes that travel up river is more difficult than the same journey taken with the downward current. Hence, the analogical thinker has a logical question: how can the same distance traversed make such a difference in time and effort? In practical terms, one might answer that the influence of tides makes equal distances unequal in terms of time. But for analogical thinking, this correlation of equal distance and unequal time introduces the

factor of relativism. With such a notion, the binary opposites of time and space give a more complex meaning to the idea of close/remote.

Relativism is applied to a wide range of relationships. For instance, exogamy and seasonal variations in stellar constellations become vehicles for expressing the subtleties of social relations. Analogical thinking allows the believer to interpret not just marriage laws, but the more subtle interplay of sociological relations within a kinship grouping. Like the continual mutations of the nighttime sky or the gradual advance of a canoe traveler towards a destination, human relations are subject to relative shifts in the meaning of close/remote.

In this myth, the Taínos relate the opposites of close and remote to marriage, to time as discerned by the change in constellations, and to a canoe journey. These three structural dimensions of mythology have been represented by Levi-Strauss in a graph (OTM:171, fig. 15) which has been adapted for the Taínos (Table 5). In this Taíno episode on the exploits of Guahayona, the three dimensions are present and correlate in much the same way as Levi—Strauss has suggested. But these connections among the sociological, geographical, and cosmological orders in the tale of Guahayona in the canoe with Anacacuya, require some explanation.

The Brother-In-Law

The reference to Anacacuya as a brother-in-law is a tip—off about the sociological meaning of the episode. Among many peoples, brothers-in-law are as important in the marriage exchange as the bride. Since romantic love between the betrothed is a relatively recent phenomenon even in the Western world, marriage has most commonly been seen as the integration of two families, not the conclusion of a romance. For the Taíno fisherman, a brother-in-law was a guaranteed coworker. Levi—Strauss suggests that marriage expresses a basic exchange value in human culture. One's sister, who cannot serve her brother either as a source of food or of sex, becomes a medium of exchange whereby the cooperation of the brother-in-law is acquired.

In this Taíno myth, however, Guahayona is presented as unfaithful in his obligation to his brother-in-law, Anacacuya. Feigning cooperation, he accompanies Anacacuya in the canoe but then betrays the cacique so that he can "take the women for himself." As has already been discussed in a preceding chapter, the island of Matininó is the

Table 5. Taíno Ritual Mediation.

Mythological Designation	Nature's Problem	Ritual Shaman's Solution	Cultural Result
Myth	hermaphrodite prepuberty daughter	Inriri Cahubabayel ritual deflowering	fertile woman marriageable exchange
	lack of (cooked) food too much nature, i.e., raw food	opened-up termite nests	food made (cooked) by nature
	eels (mobile)	*caracaracol* (demobilizing hands)	logs (immobile)
Linkage Motif	too much rain (wet) too much sun (dry)	mix of elements (rainbow)	balanced ecology
Myth, of Güeyo Women	women too remote for marriage	ritual claim of rediscovered women	women close enough for marriage
	too much raw tobacco lack of *güeyo*	*guanguayo* and *cohoba*	sacred order installed: divination of dreams
	Matininó	Guanín	natural world incorporated into religious cosmos

mythological location of the remote women. Because Guahayona instigates placing the women on the mythical island, he is the reason that they are not "close" but "remote." Anacacuya's mistake is to believe that as a brother-in-law Guahayona is close to him, when in fact the tricky Taíno hero behaves as if he is, like the women he stole, a remote relative.

The reference to the seashell, or *cobo,* is an analogue of the sociological ambivalence of the two brothers-in-law. Anacacuya believes that the *cobo* is closer to him than it really is, and when he reaches out for the shell, Guahayona pushes him out of the canoe into the sea. Thus, he makes the same mistake with the *cobo* as he had made in his perception of the closeness of Guahayona and the women with him.

Shellfish and Seasons

The word *"cobo"* can be taken to mean any kind of seashell or snail's conch. This seashell was used by the Taínos as a horn within religious rites. The name for the seashell made into a horn was *"fotuto,"* a term still found in the Antillean lexicon (Alvarez Nazario: 60, 67). Could the myth of Anacacuya be related in some way to the numinous power acquired by a seashell when used as a horn? Or does the complexity of the snail shell's miniature design exercise some other ritual meaning (see Chapter 3)?

Without discarding these possibilities, I think it more likely that the *cobo* is a reference to shellfish as food. Like oysters and clams, many species of mussels found in the Caribbean cannot be eaten from April to July, because their breeding produces certain fluids noxious to human consumption. Hence, the notion of close/remote regarding these shellfish has the same deceptive relativity as the brother-in—law relationship of Anacacuya and Guahayona. The myth substitutes a culinary reference for the "anatomical" axis in Levi-Strauss.

The deceptiveness of Guahayona is linked to temporality: close/ remote for food and for women, for sociological relations and cooperation have their "right times" and "wrong times." The difference is not apparent; it is, rather, the product of wisdom in religious ways. I believe that the theme of profane and sacred time colors the Taíno notion of accessibility of both women and food. Like other religious peoples, the Taínos recognized that it was ritual which made marriage relationships or finding food into fruitful enterprises. The attempt to marry and contract a brother-in-law in profane time without invoking the sacred was foolishness. It was equivalent to the mistake that proved the undoing of Anacacuya. One can no more marry successfully without religious ritual—remain in profane time—that one can eat shellfish out of season without incurring pain. One must recognize, as the Taínos apparently did, that without the mediation of the sacred, time will take its vengeance on the unbeliever.

The Starry, Starry Night

The cosmological dimension of this episode has been made apparent, I think, by Arrom's translation of the name Anacacuya as "Star of the Center" *(Relación:62,* n.30). Given the structural similarity of this episode to other myths discussed by Levi-Strauss (OTM:170-95

RC:240—55) and the role of the night sky in telling time, I think it is virtually certain that Anacacuya represents an allusion to a star or constellation (Eliade, 1974:111—23). Since I was the first to scientifically identify Anacacuya, "The Star of the Center," with the constellation Orion, I will repeat the explanation offered in my dissertation (1981:162_64).1

The constellation Orion, also known by various names among South American peoples, is made up of several bright stars, principal among them Rigel, Betelgeuse, and Bellatrix (Levi-Strauss, RC:22ff). The outline of the principal stars in Orion is in the shape of a trapezoid, with the three stars of the belt in the center. These three stars are called *"Las Tres Marías"* or *"Los Tres Magos"* in Puerto Rico and other parts of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. They lie in an almost exact line with the equator, so that they scarcely vary in position and are distinctive in the tropical sky.

The Bacairi Indians identify Orion as a frame for drying yuca. Other names for the stars of Orion among South American Indians. are "Tortoise Shell," "Wading—Bird," "Heron," "Migratory Stork," "Great Cart," and "White Stick." The Macusi view Orion's belt as three pieces of a dismembered corpse. The Guiana Indians see Orion's belt as a severed limb (Levi—Strauss, RC:220—23). Because this constellation, and especially these three stars at its center, are so important to other South American peoples, I consider it likely that the "Star of the Center" in this myth is identifiable as Orion's belt, the three stars over the equator at the center of the tropical sky.

Orion and Fishing

Orion can be seen rising at dawn in Hispaniola and the Greater Antilles from about the last week of July each year.[2] It is "chased" by the sun each morning, climbing higher and higher in the sky before disappearing until September 15, when it can be found at its zenith as the sun rises Afterwards Orion becomes more visible through the night, so that on December 15 the constellation reaches its zenith at

1.Subsequent to the preparation of this manuscript, Professor Arrom showed me an article by Robiou-Lamarche (1984) which independently arrived at much the same conclusion concerning Anacacuya's identity.

2.1 am grateful to Mr. Larry Brown of the Hayden Planetarium of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City for this information.

the center of the sky at midnight, maximizing its nighttime appearance. By sunset on March 15, the length of the nighttime manifestation has been cut in half, and the constellation stands at the center of the sky at sunset. Henceforward it chases the sun, appearing lower and lower on the horizon until late May, when it disappears altogether for the summer months. These data and more which follow have been schematized in Table 6, along with the information below.

The path in the sky of the constellation Orion has such close parallels to seasonal weather that its rising and falling has acquired meaning for sailors and fishermen all over the world. Since Greco Roman times, Orion has been seen in the Mediterranean as a sign of approaching storms. In South America, the significance of Orion as a weather indicator varies according to climate: inland, Orion's appearance means rain, hence more difficult fishing; among the coastal flatland Indians of Guiana, Orion's rising heralds a glut of fish (Levi-Strauss, RC:234—35). The Island Karina studied by Breton called Orion "the Star of the Winds," associating it with the Dippers and with hurricanes (cited in Fernández Méndez, 1972:35—36, n.9). But in every such case, this constellation has a central importance to determining the time for fishing.

If Anacacuya is correctly identified as Orion, then the myth discloses the concept of time that regulated the rhythms of the Taíno economy. Orion's rising corresponds with the beginning of the hurricane season in late July and early August. This is the most frightening seasonal weather in the Caribbean, since hurricanes are capable of causing widespread devastation, and the worst period of the storm season is the middle of September, when Orion is at its zenith. The danger gradually subsides by the beginning of November. In December the dry season begins, and January through March are the months of lightest rainfall. From April until July, the tropical Caribbean enjoys the nearest balance between sun and rain of the entire year. In fact, it is not uncommon for each day to begin with a clear sky, then cloud up and produce a midafternoon downpour before rapidly clearing once again before sunset (Picó:143—76).

What each of these phases of Orion's manifestations meant to the Taínos is not entirely certain. They were reported to have usually planted *yuca* in March, at the end of the dry season and the beginning of balanced rainfall (Chapter 9). Such a task would have drained manpower from fishing. Moreover, the months from September to November—corresponding to the hurricane season—would be times to

Table 6. The Orion Constellation and Taíno Fishing.

Seasonal Manifestation	Zenith	Direction	Taíno Economy	Mythological Antinomy	
Appears in late July	Sept. 15th	chased by the sun	dangerous fishing	windy	
Fall-Winter	Dec. 15th	shines all night long	good fishing	calm	
Winter-Spring	March 15th		chases the sun	fair fishing	dry
Disappears in late May	—	not seen at all	scarcity	wet	

avoid setting upon the sea in canoes. I have interpreted these data schematically, together with other information, on Table 6. The months when shellfish are not consumable, it will be noted, correspond roughly to the end of the dry season. Moreover, the Taínos are reported to have determined the New Year by the appearance of the Pleiades (Gómez and Ballesteros:160), a constellation that has been shown by Levi-Strauss to parallel Orion in its mythological function
(RC :219—27).

The table presents Orion's appearance in late July as inaugurating the dangerous season of hurricanes. The Island Karinas' designation of this constellation as the cause of tempests is linked to Taíno belief, I think, since the peoples shared virtually the same ecological space. The consumption of shellfish coincided with the appearance of the constellation, and I conclude that Orion's permanence during the night signified an abundance of food to the Taínos. As the stars sank lower on the horizon each night before finally disappearing in late May, the fishing would have remained good, if not maximal; but rainfall increased at this time, and the Taíno economy turned its focus upon planting of yuca. Moreover, the consumption of shellfish would have become dangerous, on account of the approaching reproductive cycle.

The constellation disappeared from the sky when the Taíno economy was in a period of food scarcity: i.e., no longer in a phase of intensive agriculture, either for sowing or harvest, or at a time when fishing was optimum or the substitution of shellfish in the diet was possible. The disappearance of Orion during a time of scarce food

supply for the Taínos thus roughly corresponded in mythological terms to the European winter.

Anacacuya, The Taíno Starman

Certainly, the constellation of Orion helped the Taínos tell time. Accordingly, they knew when to observe the rituals which served to distinguish sacred from profane time, and coordinated behavior with a perceived cosmological order. Like Yayael turned into fish, the children turned into frogs, or various other such transformed personages, Anacacuya mythically explains the intelligent order of the universe. These nonhuman forms of creation intuitively possess an uncanny transhuman wisdom, and the myth describes the origins of these powers by attributing a primordial human form to such objects.

Persons turned into stars abound in the mythology of many different cultures. Reference has already been made to South American myths recorded by Levi-Strauss in which this transformation takes place. In Chinese mythology, Chih-nii, said to be the daughter of Tung Wang Kung, the Jade Emperor, was married to the Heavenly Cowherd, a star in the constellation Aquila, and was given the Milky Way as her bridal robe (Shapiro and Hendricks:43—44). Greco-Roman mythology tells the tale of Castor and Pollux, twin stepbrothers. When Castor, the mortal brother, died, he was given immortality in the stars alongside Pollux, his immortal twin. The tale of Orion, the giant beloved of Artermis, has a similar ending. Apollo deceived his sister huntress into killing Orion, the son of Neptune. Pointing to the head of Orion, swimming in the sea, Apollo challenged his huntress sister to hit the black object. Artemis shot and killed her favorite, and bewailing the death of Orion, placed him in the sky, with his club and belt, where "Sirius, his dog follows him and the Pleiads fly before him" (Bulfinch:1 66—67). The Greek Orion was the son of Neptune, Lord of the Seas, but his final resting place was among the stars. For the Greeks, his origin in the sea and eventual tomb in the sky provided a mythological explanation of the influence celestial bodies have on the tides. Orion is born of the sea and, despite his perch on high, continues to have power over the waters because it is part of his heritage. While the reasoning is mythological, it does explain the link between stars and tides. Moreover, the ancient Greeks, along with other peoples, including the Hebrews, conceived of the skies as waterways separated from the

oceans by an airy vault in which moved the sun, moon, and stars, while the underworld was the corresponding airy space underneath the earth. On the basis of the cosmology suggested by South American peoples (Reichel-Dolmaltoff 1971:44; Chagnon:27, fig.2:4b), it would appear that the Taínos held something like this notion of a layered cosmos.

The Heavenly Seas

How can the "Star of the Center" be a constellation in the *sky,* if the cacique was drowned in the *sea* while reaching for the *cobo* that lay on the seabed floor? The notion that the sky is part of the ocean system solves this problem concerning the identification of Anacacuya with Orion. The inevitable flow of the oceans surrounding the vault would allow something or someone at the bottom of the sea to eventually appear in the sky above. On the basis of this speculation, one may conceptualize the Taíno cosmos as a flat earth surrounded by water and many islands, with a vault above and below the inhabitable world. Access between the flat earth and the underworld was through sacred caves. Surrounding all of creation would be the ever-circulating seas (Figure 8).

In my opinion, the Taínos possessed mythological terms to describe the relationships between Orion's path and seasonal economic activity. Anacacuya's perpetual response to the trickery of Guahayona was the mythological analogy for these concepts, providing anthropomorphic emotions to explain the fickle variations of fishing, shellfish availability, and the trustworthiness of brothers-in—law.

I suggest the following interpretation of Anacacuya's powers, adopting an anthropomorphic perspective much as the Taínos would have utilized. Under the earth, Anacacuya keeps the cobos—as-food to himself and hoards the fish, keeping them away from the Taínos. But as he is carried by the torrents away from his ocean dominions and appears in the sky, Anacacuya is forced to rely on the winds of the sky—the hurricanes—to wreak havoc against the Taínos. Once trapped high in the sky, he loses control over both the fish and the ***cobos,*** so that the descendants of Guahayona are protected from his wrath. But as he again enters the sea at the end of his celestial journey, Anacacuya renews his vengeful attack on the food supply of the Taínos. Thus, the betrayed cacique punishes the descendants of Guayahona

Figure 8. Taíno cosmos. Drawing by Dr. Ana Maria Diaz Stevens.

Summary

This episode of Guahayona's adventures utilizes the analogical thinking that has been analyzed in previous chapters. Here the Taínos have used cosmology, sociology, geography, and culinary discretion to demonstrate the relativism in the notion of close/remote. In so doing, they have revealed something of their concept of the ambivalence of human relations within exogamy and their notions of the rituals required before undertaking activities as diverse as food— gathering and marriage. The mythological Anacacuya becomes the transhuman constellation that gives a numinous and intelligent cause to the frequently observed variations in the phenomena of stars, tides, and in-laws. The occasionally negative impact of these patterns upon Taíno society are pictured as punishment for the deceptions of the

trickster hero, Guahayona. In the next and last episode offered by Pane's narrative, we glimpse the happy resolution of his adventures.

The Healing by Guabonito (Chapter VI)

[It is said that] while Guahayona was in the land to which he had gone, he saw that he had left a woman in the sea.
HE WENT **DOWN TO** FETCH THIS BEAUTIFUL **WOMAN HE SAW AT** THE **B0TT0M OF** THE SEA.
(He then returned to Cauta [the mountain} from which he had taken the women.)
He was greatly pleased with her and immediately sought the purifications to wash himself, for he was full of sores,
[from what we call "the French Disease."]
She put him in a *guanara,* [which means} a place apart.
Thus while he was there, he was cured of his sores.
Afterwards she asked him for permission to continue her journey
and he granted it to her.
This woman is named Guabonito.
Guahayona changed his name, calling himself from thence forward,
"Albeborael Guahayona."
The woman Guabonito gave Albeborael Guahayona
many *guanines* and many *cibas,*
so that he might wear them attached to his arms. [In these lands, the *ci has* are rocks, which are very much
like marble and they wear them attached to the arms and neck. The *guanines* they wear on the ears, making openings when they are young with tiny needles made of metal like florin.]
[It is said that] the origin of these *guanines* was Guabonito, Albeborael Guahayona and the father of Albeborael.
Guahayona stayed in that land with his father, Hiauna, **HE WHO WAS MADE BRILLIANT.**
His son by his father was named Hiaunael Guanín, [which means]
"Son of Hiauna."
Ever since, he was called Guanín, and is so named today.

Textual Considerations

The continuity of this part of the translation suffers from many deficiencies First of all, it must be remarked that in all other parts of Pane's narrative, the information supplied in the chapter titles is found in the body of the text. In this episode, however, the reference to

Cauta is found only in the chapter title. Its omission in the narrative may be attributed either to Ulloa's faulty translation or to a timesaving ellipsis by Pane. In either case, the scene presented in this episode requires the inclusion of the details taken from the title description.[3]

A second ellipsis in the narration can be discerned by comparing the version derived from Ulloa's translation with the same account taken from d'Anghiera *(Relación:94)*. The arguments for including the descriptions offered only by d'Anghiera as parts of the myth have been discussed in Chapter 7. As in the case of the Female Turtle who gave children to Deminán, the notion of a woman at the bottom of the sea "fits" this myth to others like it in South American accounts. In particular, there is great similarity between this Taíno myth and the tale Brinton recounted for the Arawaks of Guyana, in which a woman from the bottom of the sea gave the hero sacred stones that were placed in a gourd to make a maraca (Bririton:444). Levi—Strauss cites this tale (M335) and provides a similar Island Karina myth (M336) wherein the hero who jumps into the waters after the woman is given both a rattle and tobacco (1973:439). He classifies these myths with others under the title "The Harmony of the Spheres" (HA:423—75).

The Maraca and Tobacco

As described above, the rattle is an instrument of mediation related to tobacco, and there is little reason to suppose that this general identification does not also apply to the rattle of the Taínos (Chapter 6). The divination rite of *cohoba* and the numinous properties assigned to tobacco have been described in Chapter 7. The probability of their linkage in Taíno mythology can be understood by comparing the tale of the Güeyo Women in Matininó with a myth of the Warao recorded by Roth and cited by Levi-Strauss (M327) (1973:423—24).

The Warao tale describes a man who has lost his wife and children. Hence, the Warao hero has been abandoned much as in the Taíno tale in which the women have gone off to Matininó and the children have been transformed into frogs. He is assured the children will return if he "calls" them to a spirit-house by smoking tobacco:

3.They have been. noted above by parentheses.

But in those days men knew nothing of tobacco, which grew on an island in the middle of the sea. The island was called "Man—without," because **it** was peopled entirely by women. The sorrowing father sent a gaulding bird to fetch some of the tobacco seed: he never returned, and the other sea—birds he sent all met with the same fate. They were all killed by the woman guarding the tobacco field (Levi-Strauss, HA:424).

Rather than seeds the inhabitants of Matininó guard an ingredient necessary for transforming ordinary tobacco into the numinous *guanguayo*. Nonetheless, the similarities of this tale to the Taíno version of the Güeyo Women are clear.
The subsequent events of the Warao tale are also important for the information they supply After the hummingbird, aided by a crane, is successful in procuring tobacco, he provides the father with the skills necessary to grow, cure, and smoke the leaf. The myth concludes:

The man then started singing to the accompaniment of the rattle. His son and the other two lads appeared. They were now the three Spirits of tobacco and always came in answer to the call of the rattle. For the father himself had become the first medicine—man, all through his great grief at losing his child and longing so much to see him once more (Levi-Strauss, HA:425).

I conclude that because the parallelism of the opening parts of the Taíno myths and this comparable tale are so similar, it is likely that the maraca is a part of the gift to Guahayona. Although the mention of *cibas* is in the context of a necklace, stones as well as seeds were placed within the gourds that became maracas. It seems that the principal focus here is upon the numinous origin of the stones and their power rather than upon the instrument with which they might have been used.

The Hummingbird and Guanín

Arrom considers that Pané's text becomes highly confused here, no clear distinction between Albeborael, his father, or the meaning of the name Hiauna. Suspicion arises that the myth is incomplete or hopelessly jumbled by Ulloa's translation. But the textual problems are partially resolved if Arrom is correct in identifying Hiauna

with Híali, a well-known figure of Island Karina myth *(Relación:64,*nn. 43—44). Like his counterparts in the Warao and .other Arawak myths, Híali is related to the pursuit of tobacco. In one version, he has a son born of incest who must travel back and forth between his sky father and earth mother in the form of a hummingbird; in others, he is punished for incest with his sister and made into a moon star. His name means, "He Who Was Made Brilliant" (Taylor, 1952:269), thus providing some grounds for comparison with Anacacuya, who was transformed into the "Star of the Center."

The most relevant identity for this personage, however, is as the inventor of tobacco usage, a context in which the association with the hummingbird is constant. Lévi—Strauss says the hummingbird is related to tobacco as the woodpecker is to honey (RC:205—08). The cosmological symbol of Híali as a hummingbird is the rainbow, for the colored plumage of the species is said to contain within it all the colors of the rainbow (Breton:293). If Rodriguez Herrera is correct in his suggestion that the Taíno word for hummingbird was *"guanín"* (58, 656), the connection of the Híali myths with this episode of Guahayona's adventures may be substantiated by a study of archaeological pieces.

As noted above, the *guanines* worn by the Taínos were religious symbols because they were examples of uncanny gold alloyed with copper (Chapter 4). The color of the *guanín* gold, especially when copper (turned green by tropical humidity) was affixed, would indeed suggest several of the colors of the rainbow. But perhaps more important than the colors of this gold, described as "reddish" by the Spaniards (Herrera cited in Vega:27, n.17) were the shapes into which it was hammered by the Taínos.

The *guanines* uncovered by archaeologists to date have generally been in one of three shapes: trapezoid, circle, and crescent (Vega). The chronicles are virtually unanimous that these golden ornaments distinguished Taíno rulers from the *naborías,* or worker Indians. Oviedo records that the *cacique* Agueybana "wore on the chest a *guanín,* or gold piece, which the Indian leaders were accustomed to hang around the neck" (XVI:9, cited in Fernández Méndez, 1957:58). Such a piece has been found and presently is a part of the collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Measuring 8.6 cm, or about 3¼ inches in diameter, the piece is made of shell inlaid with gold, rather than. cast in this metal thus indicating some variety in composi-

tion materials (cf. Oviedo as cited in Garcia Arévalo, 1986). More common as archaeological pieces are golden *guanines* meant to be worn as earrings (Vega:46 n.75, citing Las Casas, *Apologetica)* and through the nose (Chanlatte Baik).

Columbus noted these nose pieces in a diary entry in 1496, describing them as "a half-moon *of guany [guanín]* and another half-moon of twisted hair and certain small pieces of brass tied together" (Vega:46 n.76). Although the Spaniards perceived the shape of such pieces as a half-moon, I believe the crescent shape represented a rainbow for the Taínos. The shapes of a half-moon and a rainbow are the same, of course, but the perception and meaning attached to the *quanines* varies. For the Europeans, the points of the crescent moon pointed upwards; among the Indians, the points of the *guanín* pointed downwards like a rainbow. Mario Mattioni reported that golden pieces of a similar crescent shape were used by the Amazonian peoples he studied in 1971. After describing the mythological origin of such pieces for the Indians, he observes: "Today, the shaman takes tobacco water in

order to create a bridge between himself and the spirits and this bridge assumes the form of a rainbow that represents the soul" (Vega:47 n.77). The religious meaning of these shapes merits the more extensive development than I have offered elsewhere (1981: 183—86, 214), but I believe these archaeological pieces verify a link between the *guanín* and the rainbow.

Under the Rainbow

Several funerary adornments have been uncovered in which the rainbow is interfaced with another of equal size, so that the two semicircular shapes form a completed circle (Figure 9). According to Vega, this piece is made of a human cranium and worn around the waist as a kind of belt buckle (51). The two rainbows thus fitted together on the buckle assume the rounded shape of the *guanín* worn on the chest, and duplicate the symmetrical and dual forms on such a piece. In my interpretation, the twin but opposite forms represent a fullness of authority, and properly belong to the Taíno cacique.

As in the case of the Genesis Myth, I believe this episode of Taíno mythology emphasizes the power of the cacique. Because of the emerging power of central authority in the transitional economy and nascent tributory society of the Taínos, the cacique had a greater role

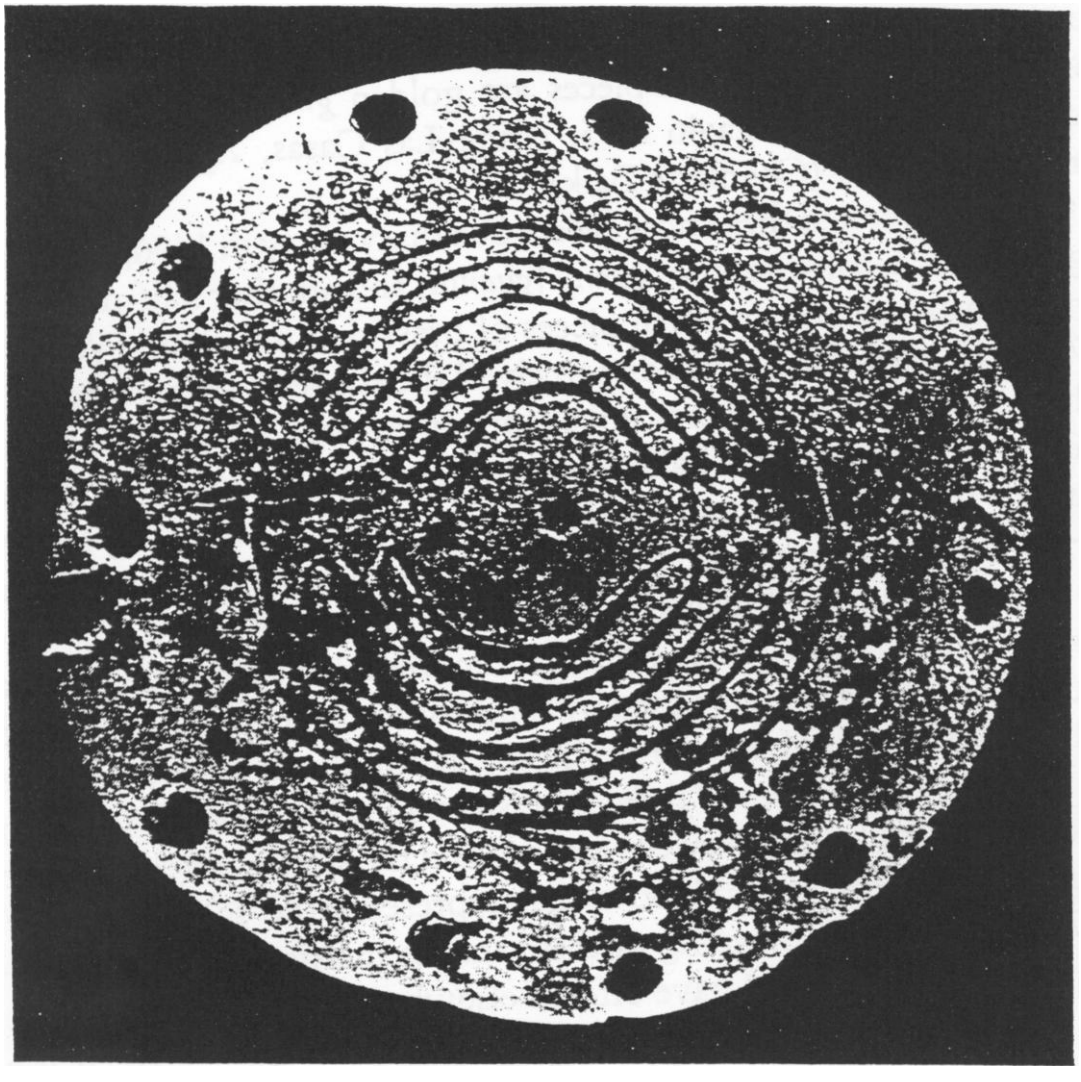


Figure 9. Belt ornament made from a human cranium. Design is of two sets of three half-circles (rainbow shapes in the Janus M ode). Santo Domingo. Bernardo Vega Collection. Courtesy Berardo Vega.

in their mythology than in that of neighboring peoples (Chapter 6). As an indication of this shift in religious meaning, the role of the *guanín* among the Taínos ought to be contrasted with the function of similar pieces among the Island Karina. Jean Baptiste du Tertre, who published an account of the Indians of Martinique in 1667, reported that the island people had the golden alloy pieces called *"guanín"* by the peoples of Hispaniola Expecting the Island Karina to attribute the source of such gold to the Greater Antilles, he says, with some surprise, that they were said to have come from the South American continent (cited in Cárdenas Ruiz:473—74). The name of such gold, however, was not *guanín,* but *"caracolis* or *coulloucoli."* The similarity of this name to the epithet of Deminán, "Caracaracol" is no accident.

As in the case of the syphilitic traveler, the Island Karina use this word to designate a shaman. Pane's version suggests that the roles of cacique and shaman had grown separate for the Taínos. As I will show below, the *guanín* is given to symbolize Guahayona's cacical authority.

The Guanín *as Bridge Between Close/Remote*

The role of the cacique, in my interpretation, was to bridge the gap between the two parts of the world represented by the interfaced rainbow. Since Taíno cosmology probably adopted the idea of a layered universe (Figure 8), the bridging of these layers represented an important social power. It was the Taíno cacique who made close what had been remote or could make remote again what others treated as close. The *guanín* as rainbow signified this power, and was worn by the cacique to emphasize his dominion over the several realms.

Bernardo Vega has suggested that the name given by the Indians to raw gold, *"turey,"* indicates the heavenly origin of *guanín* (53). The cosmology of the Taínos which I have developed earlier in this chapter helps explain this dual notion of gold's origins. The gold *"turey"* was swept down from heaven by the celestial seas; once under the earth, it was transformed into its numinous form as *guanín.* Put in other terms, *turey* was "remote," i.e., profane gold; *guanín* was "close," i.e., sacred gold. The power attributed by mythology to *guanín* made it a rainbow bridge between realms, both those in the sky and those under the earth, and from east to west.

It was through the mediation of the mysterious Guabonito that Guahayona acquired *guanín.* With the gold came the power to make other "remote and profane" objects like *cobos,* brothers—in—law, and women into sacred and, therefore, "close" gifts of Taíno culture. These notions, as well as the Taíno practice of celibacy while looking for gold, will be readdressed in Chapter 11. What remains in this analysis of the final episode is to identify Guabonito and her functions.

The Guanín Woman

No one as yet has been able to translate the meaning of the names

• "Guabonito" or "Albeborael." But she shares many functions with the bestower of the rattle in the mythology of other South American

peoples. For the Warao, the woman at the bottom of the waters is the guardian of tobacco and of the women alone on the Amazonian island. This Taíno woman interupts the journey from Matininó, where the Güeyo Women are hidden, and makes the hero return to Cauta. Her gift of *cibas* to Guahayona may refer to pebbles which could be placed inside a rattle, or maraca, used by the Taínos in the *cohoba* rite, thus linking her to tobacco. In addition, if Guabonito is kin to Guahayona as her counterpart is to Hiauna, she may be the victim of a brother-sister incest that is related in the Island Karina myth of the creation of a moon—star (Taylor, 1952:269). Perhaps if Pane had recorded more about Hiauna, we would have been given something of Guabonito's genealogy. But though these notions are rooted in solid comparative scholarship, they are, at best, "circumstantial evidence." Even if they offer an accurate picture of the kind of powers attributed to Guabonito, they are not a taxative description of her numinous functions for the Taínos.

Whatever the case, her identification with the *cibas* and the *guanín,* here described as symbols of cacical authority, parallels the shift towards a mythological justification for central authority in Taíno society. The name "Caracaracol," like the maraca, is a symbol of the shaman, while Guabonito and Guahayona concern something different.

The feminine water spirit of the Arawak myth cited by Brinton (1871:444) possesses attributes similar to those of Guabonito. Although Arrom cites this research in his identification of Attabeira, the "Mother of Waters" referred to in Pane's prologue (Arrom, 1975:44— 45), the two are different spirits. Guabonito is not Attabeira, anymore than Guahayona or Deminán can be identified with Yucahuguarná, "Lord of the Yuca." The disjuncture between the heroes of Taíno mythology and the spirits of cemieism seems absolute (see Chapter 12).

I believe Guabonito is a hero spirit, a greater figure than Guahayona, and the representative of feminine culture and its tasks among the Taínos just as Guahayona represents masculine culture. But whereas Guahayona is represented in the myth as acquiring powers only after the completion of his journey, Guabonito is suddenly introduced as already possessing *mana.* The narration of Pane, however sparse, does give us valuable clues as to the basis for Guabonito'S preerninence.

Guabonito As Healer

Whatever her genealogy, Guabonito is presented as a healer of venereal disease. Arrom notes that recuperation for a serious disease is often the cause among South American peoples for bestowing a new name *(Relación:64* n.38). When Guahayona undergoes this experience, he receives the epithet, "Albeborael." The nature of syphilis among the Taínos has already been discussed (Chapter 4), and its religious meaning was explored in the tale of Deminán (Chapters 6 and 7). In this episode, Guabonito is repulsed by Guahayona on account of his disease. This rejection of sexual relations characterizes her as the "indifferent seducer," who, says Levi-Strauss, often figures in myths as the counterbalance to an "untrustworthy companion" (OTM:153, 135—61, *etpassim).*

The sexual nature of the disease is, I think, also a reference to the incest prohibition. The jumbled reference in Pane's text to "the son by his father" and the incest theme in related versions offer good reason to suppose that this notion is included in the myth. But the episode concludes without the report of any sexual contact between Guahayona and Guabonito. Like similar myths which refer to an incest taboo, this myth may be a confirmation of exogamy. As a kinswoman, i.e., sister, Guabonito may not be the object of sexual desire. This echoes the theme of closeness/remoteness that has been the motif of Guahayona's travels.

Guabonito heals Guahayona from syphilis when she places him into the *"guanara."* Arrom observes that *"guanara"* is the name of a species of mountain dove in Cuba, while in Guahiro, an Arahuacan language, *"guanöru"* means "illness" *(Relación:* 63, n.36). Whether the meaning of the word for the Taínos was a secluded place or quarantine is not clear, but its use suggests a kind of vigil or initiation ceremony added to the healing process. As has been suggested in the discussion of the Creation Myth concerning the healing of Deminán by opening the sore on his back (Chapter 7), this healing is probably a mythological event rather than a medical description. Interestingly, a mountain town in Puerto Rico which is famous for its salubrious fresh air is named "Aibonito," suggesting that this name may be linked etymologically to "Guabonito."

Finally, Guabonito is somehow related to the island of Guanín, because that place becomes her symbolic gift to Guahayona, who then

returns to Cauta, his original departure point, before concluding his adventure. What is the relationship of Guabonito and Guanín to the Güeyo Women of Matintinó? The answer, I think, can best be understood by recognizing that both mythological islands are home to remote women who became close. In the case of the Güeyo Women, they are remote because without fathers they cannot be ordinary brides. But because the *güeyo* they stole originally belonged to the people in the cave, when they are eventually found they can become Taíno wives. Guabonito is also a remote woman, because in an exogamous society she cannot be married to kin. Her closeness to Guahayona is not achieved by sexual relations, which would be incestuous. Instead, by denial and mastery of sexual desire learned in the isolation of the *guanara,* Guabonito becomes close to Guahayona in psychological terms. In other words, she becomes his companion and subject.

The Psychology of Sexual Restraint

In terms of structural analysis, Guabonito is the opposite of Guahayona before his transformation. She is as indifferent towards him as he was untrustworthy to Anacacuya. Just as the *cobo* at the bottom of the sea was remote for the erstwhile cacique, this woman is also first seen at the bottom of the sea near Guanín but is likewise remote for Guahayona, Anacacuya's rival for cacical power over women. She is able to control her sexuality, while Guahayona is not. She has mastered the use of numinious cacical gifts—the *cibas* and the *guanín*— while he is ignorant of these things.

At the conclusion of the myth, however, their positions are reversed. Although Guabonito initially exercised superiority over Guahayona, the myth records that after his cure "she asked him for permission to continue her journey." Why would a superior rely on an inferior? The answer, I think, lies in the nature of his power. In the myth of the caves (Chapter 8), Mácocael had a power "to see whence he would send away and divide the people." Sending and dividing, I conclude, are a cacique's prerogatives. For Guabonito to ask permission to continue her journey from Guahayona is to emphasize cacical authority. In other words, despite the personal limitations of Guahayona, his transformation by isolation in the *guanara* has given to him the dignity of a cacique. Guabonito defers to the office in seeking to go on her way. The now-chastened Guahayona grants her permis-

sion, thus proving the completeness of his newly acquired self-control.

An interesting parallel can be found in Malory's *La Morte- d'Arthur.* The Lady of the Lake gives the legendary sword Excalibur to Arthur, who gradually masters his passions and learns to be a king (Bulfinch:340—41). This may also be a reference to the rite of marriage, which, as described in Chapter 1, required the woman to feign seduction by the clansmen before ritually proclaiming resistance. The Taínos apparently understood that marriage entailed sexual restraint.

The message of this episode is contained in the notion of transformation. Guahayona and Guabonito have attained powers over culture-giving, because they have learned to do the opposite of "what comes naturally." They have both perceived the latent reality that lies beyond the senses, rather than acting impetuously upon the readily apparent and becoming foolish. Thus, the episode concludes the development of closeness/remoteness that is found in manipulating sacred and profane time. The conjuncture of these powers and the ability to bridge them is signified by the double and opposite rainbows on the *guanín.*

To the sociological, geographical, and cosmological dimensions described by Levi-Strauss, a new level of emotional meaning has been added to this myth. And although the myths related by Pane end at this point, the portraits of Guahayona and Guabonito offer psychological profiles of a Taíno hero and heroine. This consideration suggests the relevance of another kind of structuralism—the archetypal psychology of Carl G. Jung, which is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Archetypes of the Taíno Cosmos

In previous chapters, I have placed figures such as "the indifferent seducer" and the "Amazon" side by side. As is probably obvious to the reader, the former comes from Levi—Strauss, while the latter comes from Jung. I have also frequently compared the Taíno myths not only to tales of South American peoples like the Arawak and the Warao but also to the classical mythologies of Greece and ancient India. Such comparisons are not intended to illustrate some coincidental similarities. Levi-Strauss' approach provides structural components essential to the reconstruction of Taíno myths, while Jung's Concepts have been utilized on the premise that they supply otherwise missing psychological elements. I have argued in Chapter 1 that the use of Levi-Strauss' methodology enables an accurate recreation of Taíno myths, insuring that the research in this book constitutes a scientific enterprise; but not much attention has yet been devoted to the psychological aspects of mythology. It seems appropriate, then, to briefly summarize Certain methodological issues, especially since Lévi-Strauss has explicitly rejected the comparison of his method with that of Jung (SA:204; Hayes:38,n.28).

Levi-Strauss bases his structuralist theory of myth on a notion of universality in the human mode of thought. While the materialist socio—economic realities of peoples vary, as do their languages, religions, and cultures, there is, according to Levi-Strauss, a mythmaking need in human beings that is the same everywhere. Rather than a learned trait, myth-making is comparable to a biological function of the brain (SA:197—200; Hayes:7). In this way, human thought produces symbols made of "the debris of events" in an arbitrarily chosen logic that Levi—Strauss calls *"bricotage"—a* sort of Rube Gold— berg approach to making things out of bits and pieces (SM:17—22). But while the sets of symbols are particular in the *way* they are assembled, that they must *be* assembled is universal. Levi—Strauss uses an analogy with music to explain this concept. The notes of a composition are assembled in a unique pattern, but all the notes that can be used in music are the same everywhere (RC:15—30).

Levi-Strauss describes myths as complex elaborations in a symbolic language of social relations. Relying on Marx, he insists that myths are descriptions of social relations that, articulate the dialectics of political and economic power (SM:253—54; SA:290ff; Rossi:124). According to Levi-Strauss myths have two basic functions. First, they serve as cultural reflections of formal opposites, as life/death, close! remote, nature/culture. Second, they provide an intellectual resolution of antinomes by means of mediation (Rossi:326). All myths can be reduced to a core of "constituent patterns" (SA:206), which may be called "mythemes." The universality of mythemes is based upon what Levi-Strauss calls "the collective unconscious," which has been described as a kind of "empty stomach" with no content of its own, but through which pass all the drives, emotions, and feelings of individuals (Shalvey, citing Ravis:43 n.75).

When he turns to a discussion of the psychological aspects of myth, Levi-Strauss cites Freud, not Jung (Rossi:16—19, 110—11; Hayes:37— 39). He stresses that while myth is independent of psychotherapy, **it** often runs in a parallel line of meaning (NM:561, 616). One commentator summarizes his thought by observing:

> myths are like dreams; they express the subconscious wishes of men, while the incest taboo is, as for Freud, the corner-stone of social relations. The lesson of these relations lies in myths; they are kinds of coded laws, arid to ignore them is to court disaster (Chiari:165).

Yet Levi-Strauss differs from Freud on the role of myth in society. Instead of trying to rationalize and explain away myths as Freud does, Levi-Strauss emphasizes the human need for symbolic meaning such as is found in myth (Hayes:190—91). Indeed, in stressing the intellectual equality of peoples in their use of mythic allegory and symbolism, Levi-Strauss suggests that modern secular persons may rely on myth far more than they care to admit (SA:178—79; 226—27).

According to Levi-Strauss, the human mind knows only its own thoughts, but myths stand midway between words and discourse as a collective invention enabling a society to express its social traditions in code, a function now largely fulfilled by the politics of contemporary society (SA:204—08; Leach, 1967:60—64). Ultimately, Levi-Strauss accepts Paul Ricoeur's categorization of his method as "Kantism without a transcendental subject" and adds that "my ambition. [is] to discover the conditions in which systems of truths become mutually convertible and therefore simultaneously acceptable to several different subjects, [since] the pattern of these conditions takes on the character of an autonomous object, independent of any subject" (RC:11). He concludes by reiterating the unconscious in myth: "I therefore claim to show, not how men think, but how myths operate in men's minds without their being aware of the fact" (RC:12).

Carl G. Jung (1875—1961) claims some of the same intellectual roots as Levi-Strauss, citing Kant and Mauss as his mentors (9a:66). As a doctor in a mental hospital at a time when psychoanalysis was being formed as a profession (1900—1909), Jung was struck by the frequency with which his patients recalled themes of mythology in their dreams, drawings, and conversations without having had previous contact with classical sources. He began to search for an explanation for these uncanny manifestations of virtually identical psychological symbols, or archetypes. After a discipleship with Freud, whom he first met in 1907, Jung broke with his teacher in 1913 to explore his own theories of these phenomena, eventually founding a field of study which he called "analytical psychology" rather than "psychoanalysis."

Jung addresses the same oneness in mythology that Levi-Strauss describes (1967:204). How can so many different cultures produce mythologies that share so many traits? Against Freud's theories, Jung argued that the archetypes are not projections or repressed sexual experiences (9a:58—68). Rather, "one is profoundly impressed by their

manifold and unmistakable connections with mythological ideas completely unknown to the layman" (9a:286). Jung suggested that the archetypes were located in a "phylogenetic substratum" which he named the "collective unconscious." This, he felt, differs from the "personal unconscious" in that it is not acquired by each individual but is a universal phenomenon for all persons:

> My thesis, then, is as follows: In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of preexistent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents. ... The hypothesis of the collective unconscious is, therefore, no more daring than to assume that there are instincts. One admits readily that human activity is influenced to a high degree by instincts, quite apart from the rational motivations of the conscious mind. So if the assertion is made that our imagination, perception and thinking are likewise influenced by inborn and universally present formal elements, it seems to me that a normally functioning intelligence can discover in this idea just as much or just as little mysticism as in the theory of instincts (9a:43—44).

Jung describes the archetypes—the word is taken from Dionysius' Pseudo—Areopagite——as "the images of instincts" or "the patterns of instinctual behavior" (9a:47). The archetypes do not predetermine behavior, because each individual is different in one way or another and the archetype "takes its color from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear" (9a:5).

What is the difference between the mythemes of Levi—Strauss and the archetypes of Jung? According to Levi-Strauss, his idea differs from Jung's on the question of content:

> Jung's idea [is] that a given mythological pattern—the so-called archetype—possesses a certain meaning. This is comparable to the long-supported error that a sound may possess a certain affinity with a meaning: for instance, the "liquid" semi-vowels with water, the open vowels with things that are big, large, loud, or heavy, etc. (SA:204).

In Levi-Strauss' structuralism, on the other hand, neither the my-themes nor the collective unconscious from which they emerge have

any content, since they are completely structural in nature. For Levi—Strauss, this idea of the content of archetypes is the single greatest difference between Jung's thinking and his own. One is tempted to close the case here—except that Levi-Strauss is wrong. Jung does not claim that archetypes have a specific content. Jung has written that:

> Again and again I encounter the mistaken notion that an archetype is determined in regard to its content, in other words that **it** is a kind of unconscious idea (if such an expression be admissible). It is necessary to point out once more that archetypes are not determined as regards their content, but only as regards their form and then only to a very limited degree. A primordial image is determined as to its content only when **it** has become conscious and is therefore filled out with the material of conscious experience (9a:79).

It is not surprising that Levi-Strauss might have missed Jung's repeated assertion that the archetypes have only form and not content. As Jolande Jacobi observes, **it** was only after 1946 that "Jung distinguished (although not always explicitly) between the archetype per se, that is, the nonperceptible archetype which is present only potentially in every psychic structure, and the actualized archetype which has become perceptible and already entered into the field of consciousness" (40). Jung has stated the cause of the confusion even more succinctly: "Nobody reads my books arid I have such a hell of a time to make people see what I mean!" (cited in Storrs:1O1).

It is my opinion that Levi-Strauss and Jung are talking of the same reality, but that they do **it** from different perspectives. Jung is a Swiss-born psychoanalyst, speaking to an audience that had been trained in the philosophical premises of phenomenology. Levi-Strauss, on the other hand, emerges from the Marxian. intellectual heritage of France and addresses anthropologists with a functionalist orientation. Moreover, they belong to different generations: Levi-Strauss had not yet been born when Jung made his break with Freud. Is **it** surprising that the terminology and the methodology of a Swiss analytical psychologist trained in phenomenology during pre—World War I Europe is different from that of a French-reared structural anthropologist who did not begin to publish his mature studies until the 1950s? But the value both place on mythological thought is central to each scholar's lifework. Indeed, an unexplored link between the two is their reaction to Lévy-Bruhl's studies on archaic man *(Twig,* 1933:125—51: Lévi-Strauss, SM:251, 268; SA:229, 370). Although less critical of the evo-

lutionary premise than Levi-Strauss, Jung does anticipate the tenor, i± not the substance, of some of Levi-Strauss' insistence on the normality and sophistication of mythic thought. In my opinion, the passage from the world of one scholar to that of the other enriches the work of both, and I have used **it** frequently in the text.

Someone trained in anthropology or another of the social sciences will likely find Jung's methods problematic. The examples from mythology which he uses are taken almost exclusively from Greco-Roman sources and his categories always sound ethnocentric. He never hesitates to use Latin and Greek terms, perhaps reflecting the classical bias of upper-class education in turn-of-the-century Europe but certainly bordering on pedantry by today's standards. His notion of "proof" is showing a logical connection between concepts.

Yet these constitute a small price to pay in order to uncover the psychological richness of Taíno myth and its relationship to world mythology. Despite all his limitations, Jung preserved an authentic scholarship in his writings, constantly correcting and upgrading them. He included anthropological insights into his diagnosis of culture arid became outspoken in his field concerning the need to embrace non-Western concepts Moreover, he was a pioneer in establishing a scientific understanding of the human mind. Quite properly, proof in Jungian. psychoanalysis is a "mind game."

The adoption of Jung's notion of archetypes allows for an psychological enrichment of this analysis of the Taíno cosmos. Whereas Libido for Freud was rooted in sexuality; Jung described **it** as "psychic energy" that allows communication among the various parts of the personality (Jacobi:52). This psychic communication is a lifelong process and the foundation for creative personality. The archetypes provide this psychic energy, and their repression has an. effect not unlike that of stalling a car, thus depriving the personality of its growth. Unlike Freud—arid surprisingly in harmony with Levi-Strauss— Jung saw myth as exercising a positive role in the development of the human personality because without these symbols, such development is impossible ([9]a:8—16; 63). To emphasize his difference with Freud, Jung avoided calling his methods "psychiatry," believing that his approach was valuable for everyone, not just the disturbed.

Jung pictures the normal human personality as a jumble of contradictory extremes, the psychic element balancing physical (hylic, animal) drives with spiritual (pneumatic, intellectual) impulses. The healthy personality integrates these differences through feeling and

symbols. According to Jung, ancient mythology utilizes the archetypes as an analogous scientific explanation of proper social behavior, thus harmonizing the cosmic order and human life: "Primitive man is not much interested in objective explanations of the obvious, but he has an imperative need—or rather, his unconscious psyche has an irresistible urge—to assimilate all outer sense experiences to inner psychic events" (9a:6). Nor have archetypes disappeared along with past civilizations. Human society transmutes the Hero, the Great Mother, and other archetypes into new guises expressed in literature, cinema, and television (9a:157—58).' This Jungian conception of the function of mythology is not very different from Levi-Strauss' symbolic coding of social relations. A psychological dimension is added to. each myth, however, so that the connections with universal human experience can be amplified.

The Jungian journey is an archetype of central importance that serves well to illustrate how myth explains psychology. According to Jung, the adventures of mythological personages represent how society envisions "the normal person." The adventures in the journey express in symbolic language the phases in the development of a mature psyche. What the psychoanalyst must do is to interpret the symbols of the myths into life experiences. Jung, who sought to interpret society's myths in order to understand culture, went beyond Freud, who focused upon the interpretation of an individual's dreams to diagnose neurosis.

Thus, for example, the way society views the encounter with a violent mythological creature may be a coded ethical lesson demonstrating how to behave in the face of violence. The actions of the victor over a mythological enemy helps the Jungian psychoanalyst to understand social culture just as a dream discloses to a Freudian the unconscious desires of an individual. Joseph Campbell (1968) has suggested that, once viewed in this Jungian way, the hero has "a thousand faces." Perseus, Jason, Hercules, Odysseus, Aeneus from the classical Mediterranean world share this heroic role along with Prince Rama of ancient India, Galahad of Arthurian legend, and Beowulf of Scandinavian mythology. Each acts out for a culture the proper behavior in the face of danger.

1. Archetypal analysis provides insights into a television series like Scar Trek, a movie personage like Rambo, or even political movements. See the magazine *Spring.*

In the Taíno myths there are two journeys which merit psychoanalytic study. The first entails the travels of the syphilitic twin, Deminán, who comes to earth in a deluge and, after meeting with various adventures, is beset with a swelling on his back in the shape of a tortoise shell. The myth ends with a cure and the appearance of a female turtle whose shell provides a sacred house in which propagation of the race takes place.

The second mythological journey consists of the exploits of Guahayona, who leads the women away from the cave on Mount Cauta to Matininó, an island hidden from men. After betraying Anacacuya, his own cacique, Guahayona spies a woman at the bottom of the sea near the mythical island of Guanín. He returns to Cauta and is cured of his desire for her as well as of his sexually caused disease, whereupon he receives a golden guanín as symbol of his acquisition of cacical authority. The episode concludes when he allows the woman, Guabonito, to go on her way.

In both myths, the journey ends when the hero is transformed after being cured of a sexually related disease. The tale of Deminán is of a one-way passage, not allowing for reentry into the primordial home; moreover, the myth ends with sexual delight in mating with the Female Turtle—the Taíno guise for Levi-Strauss' Clinging Woman (Chapter 7). On the other hand, Guahayona desires, but does not come to sexually know, Guabonito. His journey ends where he began, back on the sacred Mountain of Cauta, following a land-sea-land itinerary.

According to archetypal theory, these two journeys symbolize aspects of psychological development. At the start of each journey, the hero is joined to a symbol of parenthood; by the end of the travels, his personality has become independent and capable of relationship with equals. Jung has shown that such journeys of psychological development conclude by bestowing complete transformation on the mythological hero.

As a psychoanalyst, Jung looked for symbolic manifestations of the hero's transformation that was repeatable in many cultures. He concluded that psychic completeness is usually represented by a closed design to which sacred powers are often attributed (13:290—354; 35584). These are mandalas, which are enriched with cosmological symbols depicting all of creation and are used as sacred artifacts to invoke the numinous. In Hinduism, Jung notes that the mandala is known as a *"yantra,* an instrument of contemplation. It is meant to aid con-

centration by narrowing down the psychic field of vision and restricting it to the centre" (9a,356). The connection between the energies of social existence and of one's own personality is represented by the mandala. And since the notion of reconciling the numinous and the personal is often repeated in religion in virtually all cultures, the mandala can be found under many guises. For Jung, the great round stained-glass window in the Cathedral of Notre Dame is as much a mandala as are Hindu artifacts. All of these serve as expressions of the passage from "chaotic, disordered states marked by conflict and anxiety" to "the idea of a safe refuge, of inner reconciliation and wholeness" (9a,384).

Another form of the mandala is the figure of the uroboros. Jung adopted this term from alchemy, in which a serpent swallowing its own tail represents the final achievement of lead transformed into gold. The idea of self-consumption resulting in alchemy is seen by Jung as the consummate psychic maturity. The serpent swallowing the tail is a zoomorphic representation of the mandala, and both symbols project the merging of psychic forces and social energies. When such merging takes place, the negative symbol of the parent as a terrible Great Mother is altered. Cojoined to the transformed hero, the feminine parent image loses its authoritarian aspects and is likewise converted into a companion. It no longer dominates the hero's ego, but helps define the frontiers of his consciousness of selfhood. The uroboros thus symbolizes the change of the feminine from a negative psychological element into a positive one (Neumanri:255; Jung 14:3—29; 457—553).

The symbolism of the mandala and the uroboros are not casual coincidences to Jung. Psychoanalytic theory is built upon the premise that the archetypes must of necessity be universal. Correspondingly, the appearance of the mandala symbol and its function of linking the hero's journey to the Great Mother are necessary. It is also important to relate these notions of Jung to the development of Levi-Strauss' method of analysis. The alteration of the feminine through the uroboros is similar to the close/remote woman of structuralism. Jung's fearsome Great Mother is "remote" in psychological terms; as loving companion, on the other hand, the woman is "close." The different terminology reflects the special focus of each approach. Levi-Strauss adopts a sociological, or kinship, perspective; Jung adopts a psychological one.

In order to verify whether psychoanalytic theory should be applied

to the journeys in the Taíno myths, one should look for mandala symbols as signs of successful transformation in the journeys undertaken. These symbols should also be related to a parent or Great Mother figure in order to connect the transformation to psychic maturity. I believe the Taínos graphically presented their uroboros on the stone belts used in *batú,* their ball game. As will be detailed in Chapter 12, the ball game allowed the Taínos to view the interplay between different realms of reality which can be identified in Jungian terminology as the conscious and the unconscious. But the image is an artifact, easy to examine in terms of shape and design. A far more subtle category is the mythological function which can only be known through the textual analysis of mythology.

I believe that mandala symbols are present in Taíno myths and that they are linked to female maternal personages. In the Deminán myth, the mandala is the trapezoid shape traced on the back of Itiba Cahubaba (see Figures 4, 5), whose name, Bleeding Ancient One, helps to identify her as the Great Mother, the autochthonous generator of life identified with the earth (Neumann). Arrom has tentatively suggested that this trapezoid shape may represent the Taíno conception of the world. For his part, Jung believes that "when presented as a trapezoid, the mandala emphasizes wholeness" (1964:199—200). As I pointed out in Chapter 10, besides the trapezoid shape, the *guanín* can also be found in a half-moon shape, although frequently it is composed of matching halves, such as interfaced rainbows.

Had he known the Taíno myth, Jung would likely have confirmed the identity of Itiba Cahubaba as the Great Mother, because she has both masculine and feminine characteristics. This is how psychoanalytic theory interprets autochthonos birth. The four twins issue from a mother without prior male impregnation (Chapter 6). Like the Inca Pachamama, the Aztec Coatilicue, or the Chinese P'un Ku, Itiba. Cahubaba signifies the unity of all created things, which are nonetheless different. In symbolic language, the disintegration of this primordial parent unleashes all the elements of creation.

The all-inclusive mother must be eclipsed in order to allow for individuation. In the initial stage of psychological development, the mother is all things to the infant. But this perception of his or her parent as the total universe retards the maturation of the child's ego. The all—embracing mother is a threat to the separate existence of her child, until in adulthood the child comes to realistically understand both the mother's love and her limitations. In mythology, these

psychological stages are represented by tales in which the Great Mother is abandoned by her child, although once the hero asserts psychological maturity, they meet again to complete the journey.

In the TaIno Creation Myth, Itiba Cahubaba is the mother of Deminán and his three brothers, but she dies as she gives birth. Yet Deminán encounters femininity again in the person of the Female Turtle. Disguised as a disease which produces an ugly and unattractive swelling on his back, the woman is hidden inside a turtle shell and persists in clinging to him until she eventually emerges as a female companion. Through their mutual acceptance, both the woman and Deminán are transformed.

I believe that the Taíno tale expresses a common mythological theme. The concepts are found in the fable of the Beauty and the Beast, which Joseph L. Henderson has identified with the Great Mother of the Dionysiac mysteries (in Jung, 1964:137—41). In this Taíno version, the sexual identities are the reverse of those in the European story—the Beast is feminine, the Beauty is masculine—but the application to psychoanalytic theory is virtually the same. The myth refers to the preadolescent who eschews the company of the opposite sex and only gradually comes to recognize that what was repulsive has become beautiful, i.e., sexually attractive. The structuralist binary pair of close/remote is thus endowned with a psychological dimension.

Moreover, at the end of the tales the empty turtle shell becomes the *caney,* or chiefs lodge. The oval shape suggests another mandala symbol in which the feminine principle has been transformed from a fearsome, i.e., remote form, into an attractive and close companion. The shell becomes a womb from which come the children of all the four primordial brothers. Interestingly, the uterine terminus of Deminán's journey is the departure point for the second set of travels.

The journey of Guahayona begins in a uterine empty place—a cave (Chapter 8). The people are covered with the juice of the *jagua,* which makes them black, the hylic color of the Great Mother (Jung:9a,185). They await the plant that will cleanse them of this color, thus freeing them from the control of the Great Mother. The woman companions of Guahayona, whom he entices from the cave to Matininó, are "unattractive" sexually, as is the Female Turtle in her first appearance to Deminán. But when Guabonito, the mistress of these women, is seen at the bottom of the sea, the hero enters into the process of transformation. His healing merits bestowal of the *guanín,* a golden

piece associated with the hummingbird, and hence with the shape of interfaced half-circles, or rainbows (Figure 9).2

The *guanín* is appropriately understood as a mandala symbol because *it* consecrates the transformation of Guahayona and his deliverance from an inhibiting sexual disease first perceived in the presence of the woman, Guabonito. The deliverance of each hero from a sexually related disease is achieved by the intervention of a woman. The tale of Inriri Cahubabael (Chapter 9) provides a link between the adventures of Deminán and Guahayona. The meaning of the hermaphrodites as remote women who must be made close permits the same psychological elaboration as the other myths. In all three Taíno tales, there is some symbolic echo of the Great Mother before a final transformation of the feminine. Moreover, the prorminence of cacial power, especially in the tale of Guabonito, is not without its psychoanalytic application.

Masculinity assumes different forms in describing the hero. Deminán fulfills the definition of what psychoanalysis would call the introverted hero. He is "the culture-bringer, the redeemer and savior who discovers inner values, exalting them as knowledge and wisdom, as a law and a faith, a work to be accomplished and an example to be followed" (Neumann:220). Deminán and his brothers receive *cazabe,* the *cahoba,* and knowledge of healing rites from Bayamanaco. But because he is "the scabby one," Deminán Caracaracol merits the final honor of recognizing the fruitful femininity of the Female Turtle.

Guahayona is a centroverted hero, described as "the creative individual who in the name of the collective—even when he is a lonely figure standing out against it—molds **it** into shape by molding himself' (Neumann:221). Guahayona attains his distinction first by trickery and then by learning self-restraint. This gradual and self-conscious process is different from that of Deminán and fits the Jungian notion of centroversion. This is complemented, as will be shown, by the Trickster, still another archetype.

Those familiar with Jung's treatment of psychological types will ask, 'Where is the extroverted hero of the Taínos?" In Deminán and Guahayona we have figures who circumvent, retreat, deceive or are deceived, but never take upon themselves a decisive and confrontative act of liberation that opposes authority. Neither is an extroverted

2. For those who are interested in this theme, Jung reproduces drawings from jakob Bohme of two-half circles representing the cosmos (Jung: 9a,297ff).

hero, the type so common in Greco-Roman and Scandinavian mythology. Only Yayael, glimpsed briefly and in a negative light (Chapter 6), qualifies as the rational and decisive taker of action. His "journey" is only referred to in terms of his banishment, but it ends violently when he murderously confronts Yaya, his father. Even more ominously, the suggestion of cannibalism is the result of this intent at parricide. Jung and other psychoanalysts consider the fish to be a symbol generally associated with the child (Jung,9b:72—94, 103— 72; Neumann:71; Eliade, 1974: 75—76, 240 n.2), noting its dependency on all—enveloping water as a nurturing environment. Hence, the disruption of the half-filled gourd containing Yayael's bones (the uterine symbol in the first myth) carries with it the notion of a rupture with dependency upon the parental image. Once again, I think, the psychological meaning suggested by Jungian analysis squares with the social interpretation of fissure in the myth of Yayael which has been derived from the structuralism of Levi-Strauss.

It would not be hard to recognize in this tale the Freudian notion of primal conflict with the father image (1913). As has been explained above (Chapter 6), Freud's interpretation posed the child against the father over the love of the mother. Jung, on the other hand, preferred an interpretation of conflict between masculinity and femininity (Jacobi:61—67; Jung, 1933:115—24), and accordingly diverted, the focus from sexuality to psychic individuation.

The application of authority in myth is recognized by Jungians as a symbol for the psychological struggle to balance social responsibilities with individual growth. Surrender to an unbending discipline imposed from outside constitutes the annihilation of a child's personality. Escape from this iron law of authority is obtained when feeling displaces law and pardon supplants punishment. Parents are the primal symbols of both authority and emotion. A mother and father set rules for their children, and although they love their offspring, they ought to punish them when they are disobedient.

Parents provide both overprotective love and authority in raising their offspring. Psychoanalysts categorize unconscious and spontaneous emotion as "feminine," while the masculine represents "the bulwark of law and order," the triumph of reason and continuity (Neumann:142ff) These roles, for a Jungian, are not identified exclusively with the female or the male. As noted above (pp.1 55), gender is not the same as sexuality. Gentleness and passivity are required by everyone seeking maturity, just as aggression and boldness have their place.

Yayael, the single example of an extroverted hero in the Taíno myths, is the only one whose disobedience is presented as culpable and meriting severe punishment. The introversion of Deminán and the imagination of Guahayona, on the other hand, are directly rewarded. In my opinion, this pattern in Taíno mythology indicates a cultural preference for the centroverted and introverted hero. The symbolic and mystic experiences that fashioned the Taíno hero were considered to be more efficacious for encountering the numinous than reason. The emphasis in Taíno religion upon shamanistic divination induced by narcotic trances corroborates this interpretation. For the Taínos, the unreasoning, intuitive mind was esteemed as a vehicle more attuned to the attainment of wisdom than unaided reason. Yayael's negative fate is a clear warning to all would-be Taíno heroes to eschew confrontation on the road towards leadership.

This Jungian analysis of the myths demonstrates that in terms of the psyche, Taíno society had strikingly different values for the hero than those of contemporary Western culture. The Taínos interpreted what Jung describes as "masculine" and "feminine" in a manner just the inverse of most European cultures. For the Taínos, the feminine in heroic virtue is stronger than the masculine. But if it is true that Taíno men are more feminine than Western European-American men, it is also true that Taína women are more masculine.

The notion of the "masculine woman" in Taíno leadership is linked to the idea of the Amazon, who is virtually identical with the Anima archetype described by Jung (9a, *25—28,* 71ff. et passim). But whereas for Jung the Anima was at first a shadowy, unrecognized alter ego of the opposite sex, the Amazonian woman is a clearly defined equal. René Malamud believes the Amazon myth can be traced to the vestiges of a matriarchal culture in the Mediterranean region that predated the advent of the Indo-European peoples.

Greco-Roman mythology incorporated the Anatolian feminine leader of the society into the religious pantheon, so that the Cretean Britomartis is linked to the Grecian Artemis (Hall:37). But the Indo-European culture was uncomfortable with such unrestrained feminine power, says Malamud. Moreover, the hunting society Arternis represented was supplanted by city-states. Eventually these social changes affected mythology, so that the vestigal Anatolian matriarchal power is shared by Arternis (or Diana) and Athena (or Minerva). Malamud suggests that Athena is the Indo-European rationalized version of the independent Artemis. Whereas Artemis, twin sister of

Apollo, dwells away from men in the depths of the forests, Athena is protectress of the city. She springs full-grown from the mind of Zeus, without dependence on another woman, whereas Artemis and Apollo are children of Leto, a mortal, and Zeus.

Whatever the origins, these goddesses had the role of helpful companions to the hero. In the *Iliad,* Athena restrains the hero Achilles. She advises him that his goals can best be achieved by patience, not action. Thus, her femininity transforms destructive psychic energies into constructive forces. Artemis also has the ability to offer guidance, although her gift is much more spontaneous than the rationalized performance of Athena, the "civilized" Amazon. As huntress, Artemis contributes to "goal-directedness, goal-consciousness, hitting the bull's-eye and reaching for far—out possibilities" (Malamud:11). This skill with the bow and arrow makes Artemis the model for the community of androgynous huntress virgins—the Amazons—who each severed a breast in order to better shoot with their weapons (Hall:55—57, et passim).

The similarities of the Amazonian Artemis and Athena of Greco-Roman mythology with the Taína Guabonito are noteworthy. The residence of the Amazon away from men is a geographical symbol of the psychic reality of independence. Artemis' patience with Orion, Athena's counsel to Achilles, and Guabonito's lesson to Guahayona are all parallel in their transmission of the feminine values of heroism. Nor Hall asserts that the Amazon "is unconventional in any culture:

she is wild mountain woman, woman alone, fighter, hunter, dancer, lover of animals, protectress of all newborn sucking and roving creatures, a sister to men and teacher of women" (109).

The image of the Amazon, however, is not always a comforting one. As Hall remarks, when night falls, she may put on bird wings and appear as Nemesis, who wreaks justice upon those who have deceived the law (123). Her sacred tree is the poplar, whose leaves contrast in color from one side to the other and symbolize "the gateways between shadows and light" (Hall:124). Arternis is both beautiful maiden and horned bitch. In cruel fashion, she took vengeance on Actaeon for his imprudence in looking upon her naked body (Bulfinch:33—34). In later mythology, the sorcery attributed to Hecate is fused with this negative aspect of the Amazon (Hall:116—17; 124—25).

Neumann associates the dark side of femininity with the Gorgon, Medusa. In the tale of Perseus, the Gorgon was a woman so terrible

that no man could gaze upon her face without being turned into stone. The most fearsome of the Gorgons was Medusa. Perseus, the hero, obtains help from Athena and cuts off the head of Medusa, placing it in a sack. The terrible countenance of the Gorgon later becomes a weapon for Perseus in his liberation of the virgin Andromeda. She has been promised in marriage to another, despite the heroism of Perseus in rescuing her from a sea monster. Her pretender is frozen into stone when he defies Perseus and gazes on Medusa's head (Bulfinch:96—1O1). These negative aspects of the Amazon bear some similarity to the Female Turtle in the Deminán adventure. She also is ugly and destructive at first but later becomes the object of a mature love relationship. In a sense, the Taíno Female Turtle is both Medusa and Andromeda.

In these Taíno myths that present an encounter with the Amazon woman, transformation depends in great measure upon the ability of the hero to assimilate the feminine values she offers him. Accepting patience, self-control, sexual continence, and isolation are the chief measures of Taíno heroism. In previous chapters, the socio—economic referents, especially exogamy and bride exchange, have been described. The psychological interpretation presented here does not eclipse those meanings. Instead, psychoanalysis supplements such external meaning with an inner psychic dimension. The Amazon underscores what has already been suggested as the central message of the Taíno journey: the feminine dominates the masculine in achieving the mature Taíno personality.

The bridge between external society to the inner psyche and the pathway to maturity is found in religious ritual. The *cohoba,* the use of other narcotic drugs for hallucination, deflowering, and isolation in the *guanara* were rituals which apparently reflected beliefs derived from Taíno mythology. Not surprisingly, the mandala and related symbols are found in certain Taíno artifacts that can be linked to these rites. Principal among these is the *guanín.*

Arternis, the Amazonian figure of the Greeks, known as Diana to the Romans, appropriates the half-moon symbol of the Anatolian Great Mother. But the semicircular shape is attributed to many female figures, including those as different as Ishtarte in Babylonian mythology (Hall:11—17) and Mary the Mother of God in the Book or Revelations (Rev. 12:1). The shape of the *guanín* bestowed by Guabonito upon Guahayona is also a crescent like that of Artemis except

that the tips of the rainbow point downwards, whereas the ends of the half-moon point upwards (Chapter 10; Jung, 1964:277). When interfaced as two rainbows, the crescents become a full circle and a symbol of cacial power over both realms. But because the Amazon stands midway rather than at the end of the journey, the crescent rather than the circle belongs to the Amazon of the Taínos.

Of crucial importance in this analysis is the identity of the crescent with the Taíno rainbow. Such an identity relates the shape to the hummingbird and the reddish gold of the *guanín.* The search for this gold in the streams of the Antilles assumed a ritualistic function for the Taínos. The Indians practiced celibacy when they were searching for gold in the river waters. Their rigorous enforcement of continence and fasting during the mining process was explained by Oviedo. He noted that the Taínos believed that without this sexual abstention "they would not be able to find the gold" (Oviedo:V,3; cited in Fernández Méndez, 1957:86). Columbus, with his Franciscan piety, ordered his soldiers to do likewise. He told his colonists that before going to work each day they should assist at mass and take Holy Communion, reasoning: "...if a savage people celebrated such rites, could Christian men do less than go forth prepared, free from sin, in order to be aided in their enterprise by the Almighty Creator?" *(Idem).* In my opinion, this link between celibacy and the discovery of gold in the river waters as based upon the Guabonito myth. The sexual self-discipline enforced by Guabonito upon Guahayona for his liberation was ritually repeated in ritual celibacy while the Taínos searched for gold. To make raw gold *(turey)* into *guanín* (Chapter 10), Guabonito had to be invoked and Guahayona's behavior imitated.

Jung notes that psychology, much preoccupied with male consciousness, has been slow to develop the inverse situation, in which "a feminine consciousness confronts a masculine personification of the unconscious" (9a:177). But he recognizes that in certain cultures, notably those expressed by East Indian philosophy, "the 'higher' consciousness corresponds to what we in the West call the 'unconscious" (9a:282—83). Such a psychic understanding of the cosmos places the Taíno world view in a category usually reserved for Eastern religions. "Mysticism" is probably not the best term to describe this classification, because collective wonder rather than personal illumination serves as the basis for the Taíno notion of the numinous. The myths place such contact with the numinous at the apex of Taíno

religion, and familiar encounter with the unconscious was esteemed as a hallmark of the mature person.[3] In this context, Jung has observed: "Personality need not imply consciousness. It can just as easily be dormant or dreaming" (9a:283). For the Taínos, I would say, the person in a trance, communicating with the numinous, was more likely to know what was real than a person in a "normal" state.

The male opposite of the Amazon is the Trickster, another archetype. Paul Radin is generally credited with having defined the Trickster in his study of Amerind mythology (1972). Jung adopted this concept and found parallels with medieval fools and European picaresque heroes of eighteenth-century literature (9a:255—72). The Trickster archetype is a clown, a rogue, a fool, constantly playing tricks upon others and then falling victim to his own mistakes. In the Amerind legends analyzed by Radin, he takes on names like Coyote and Raven, but his experiences almost invariably involve some sort of ironic reward for his foolishness. Levi-Strauss has identified at least some of these tales from North American peoples with tales found in his own research on the Bird-Nester Myth among South Americans

(HN:501 —34).

As an archetype, the Trickster is a reflection of immaturity. He evokes therapeutic laughter because his antics evoke a collective memory of the infantile past. This dimension of humor is not found in Pane's narration of the Taíno myth about Guahayona, but his tricks and mistakes echo the pattern. Guahayona's failings open pathways to achievement. Thus, for instance, his deception of his comrades, allowing them to search alone for *digo,* and beguilement of the women alone on Matininó precede acquisition *of the guanín.* But Guahayona's trick in making Anacacuya believe the *cobo* was close, leads to his own misjudgment about the woman at the bottom of the sea.

Jung's description of the serious side of the Trickster are relevant to such traits. The Trickster has a numinous quality, recalling the pristine freedom of a Golden Age. And, as Jung notes, he approximates a hero and savior, for his is "a confirmation of the mythological truth that the wounded wounder is the agent of healing, and that the sufferer takes away suffering" (9a:256). If Guahayona is a fool, **it** is in the same sense that Jesus Christ is a fool in his acceptance of the Cross. As Paul the Apostle states:

3. The controversial suggestions from Julian Jaynes (1976) concerning a "bicameral mind" might be compared with this conclusion.

> the foolishness of God *is* wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. . . for God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong (I Cor. 1:25, 27).

Jung considers the Trickster a figure who reconciles opposites in his escapades, containing "the seed of enantriodromia, of a conversion into its opposite" (9a:267). Such is the case of Guahayona, who is afraid to leave the cave, preferring that others go first. He deceives his cacique brother-in-law, thus rejecting tribal authority, but finally becomes a cacique himself when he receives the *guanín.* At first he gropes lustfully for Guabonito at the bottom of the sea, but he becomes like her in his self-control after undergoing the *guanara.* Thus, his transformation is from the Trickster into his very opposite:

> he stops being an impulsive, emotional man and becomes like the strong, powerful Amazon woman.

In each of these cases, the inner zone of the Taíno psyche is connected to the outer experiential world. Psychoanalysis serves like structuralism to show that myth provides bridges from society to the mind. Hence, the structural and the archetypal analysis undertaken in this book lead one to the other. The final chapter will present an overview of the Taíno world view. In order to accomplish this task, it will be necessary to first consider Pane's observations about Taíno *cemieism.*

Taíno Cemieism: **Coincidentia Oppositorum**

Pane's narration contains references to twelve *cemíes.* In some cases, he does little more than give the name; in others, he tells chapter-long tales about the possessor of the sacred image, its appearance, and its powers. Arrom has rendered an invaluable service in his recompilation of these fragments together with an analysis of meaning that has been published in Spanish with various reproductions of archaeological pieces. In this wonderful book (Arrom,1975), one can see the *cemíes* of which Pane wrote. Despite lengthy description of the *cemíes,* rivaling in detail the narration of the myths, however, the Jeronymite Friar distinguishes between the myths on the one hand and descriptions of the spirits represented by these sacred images on the other. Thus, while **it** is essential to rely upon the scholarly work of Arrom, some new questions must be asked about the relationship between the *cemíes* and the myths of Taíno religion.

Pane's prologue ascribes special importance to the *cemíes,* Yucahú and Attabeira *(Relación:21).* In Chapter 6, Yaya was identified as the Taíno high god, and I argued that invisibility, immortality, and lack of dependence upon a progenitor were expressions of omnipotence. The high god, however, is distant from the everyday affairs of human

beings, and the administration of certain numinous powers are left to intermediaries (Eliade,1959:118—25). Eliade offers many examples from religions around the world to illustrate the nature of the high god, who becomes a "*deus ottosus":*

> …. after creating the cosmos, life, and man they [the high gods] feel a sort of fatigue, as if the immense enterprise of the Creation had exhausted their resources. So they withdraw to the sky, leaving a son or a demiurge on earth to finish or perfect the Creation. Gradually their place is taken by other divine figures—the mythical ancestors, the mother-goddesses, the fecundating gods, and the like (Eliade, 1959:122).

In my opinion, this function of the high god belongs to Yaya, the primogenitor of the first myth. I think my analysis of the name of Yaya, "Spirit of Spirits," explained this point (Chapter 6). Hence, the spirits who are the *cemíes* must be viewed as intermediaries in Taíno religion between the high god and the world of human action. Yucahú and Attabeira, who are described by Pane in his prologue, exercise special influence upon aspects of Taíno daily life for Yaya, the remote diety. One is free to differ with this hypothesis, but to do so would be to remove from Taíno religion a high god who is common in the belief systems of other American peoples (pp.87).

The Taíno distinction between the personages of the myths and the *cemI* spirits, while not the most frequent form of religious expression, is not an unusual one. In a belief system, the numinous power is distributed according to a conception of order that often mirrors the political organization of the believers' society (Balandier:100 et passim). The alteration of traditional forms during a socio-economic transition may produce uneven configuration within the conception of religious power, much as secular politics undergoes a similar ambiguity.

Even within the same religion, competing sets of sacred personages may represent deep social conflicts within the bosom of the church. Catholic devotion to the Virgin Mary under her various titles offers examples of such conflict. As Jacques Lafage (1976) has shown in his study of the cult of saints in New Spain, Our Lady of Guadalupe represented the formation of a national Mexican consciousness against imposed Spanish devotions to Our Lady (see also Picard:188—92, et passim; Lopetegui and Zubillaga:345—54). None of these beliefs is

based upon biblical sources, however. Within Catholicism, belief in the tenets of the creed often competes with, but does not vitiate the cult of the saints. The creed is based on the Scriptures and teaching of the church, while the cult of the saints is an extension of these beliefs to the exemplary lives of some believers. Historically, the cult of the saints has waxed and waned within Catholicism—indeed, it was attacked at the time of the Reformation. Moreover, even today, the popularity of certain saints is often defined by factors of national and local culture. Henry James noted that because of the cult of saints, Roman Catholicism offers to the believer a culturally adapted example of perfection (239).

In my interpretation, Taíno *cemieism* is analogous to the Catholic cult of the saints, while the Creation and Hero Myths are comparable to the Scriptures. As I hope to show below, this gap between the personages of the myth and the *cemíes* corresponds to the uneven matching of diverse elements in Taíno society. Before considering *cemieism* as a total system, however, it is important to examine in detail the available information on each of the twelve spirits named by Pane.

Yucahú is a Taíno spirit of fertility. His is masculine power, and his variant title, Yucahuguamá, means "Lord of the Yuca" Other epithets are "Bagua = Sea," possibly a reference to dominion over fishing, and "Maorocoti = Without a Male Ancestor," suggesting a supremacy of this *cemí* over all others. His representations are frequent and distinctive among the *cemíes.* One side is anthropomorphic, while the other shows Yucahú to possess haunched legs, somewhat like a frog. The top extremity of the three—pointed stone is the male organ of fertility. In some instances, this point suggests a sprouting yuca (Figure 10). In virtually all of his representations, Yucahú has his mouth open to eat away the soil and thus make room for the growing yuca tubers (Figure 11). His feet are joined under his head to paw away at the ground, suggesting that in a wooden model these feet may have been movable, like a kind of shovel (Arrom, 1975:29). Arrom offers many ocher three—pointed stones, suggesting that the various animals are zoomorphic representations of Yucahú, although he recognizes that such suppositions are not proven (1975:42).

Attabeira, whose name is translated by Arrom as "Mother of Waters," is a feminine personage, associated with the fresh water in rivers and ponds. She is described as the mother of Yucahú *(Relaczón:21).* Certainly, rainwater is necessary for the maturation of *yuca,*

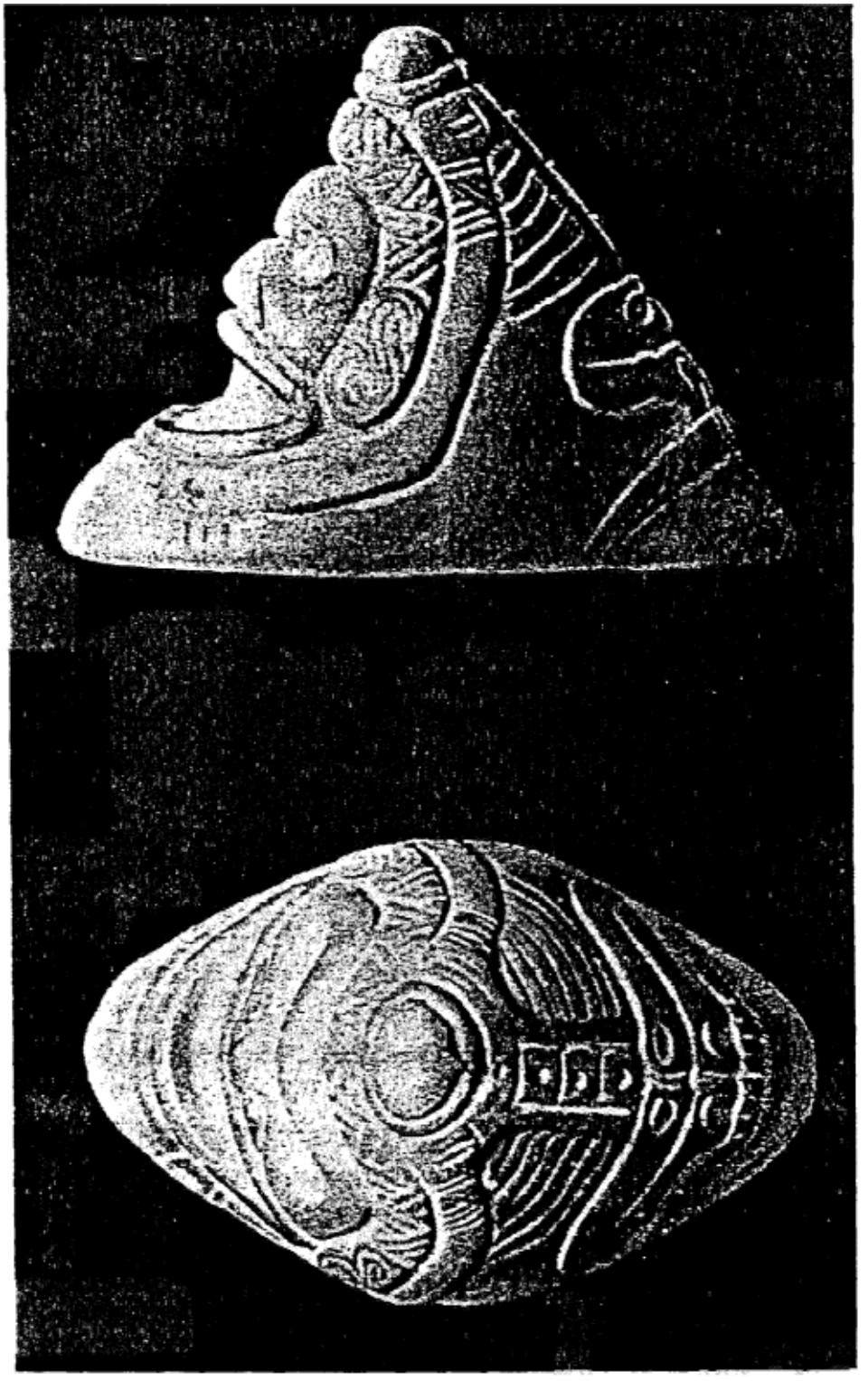


Figure 10. Cemí *of Yucahuguamá in* white *marble. Puerto Rico. 7.5 cm. Side and top views. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. After Fewkes, 1907. Plate XL VI. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.*

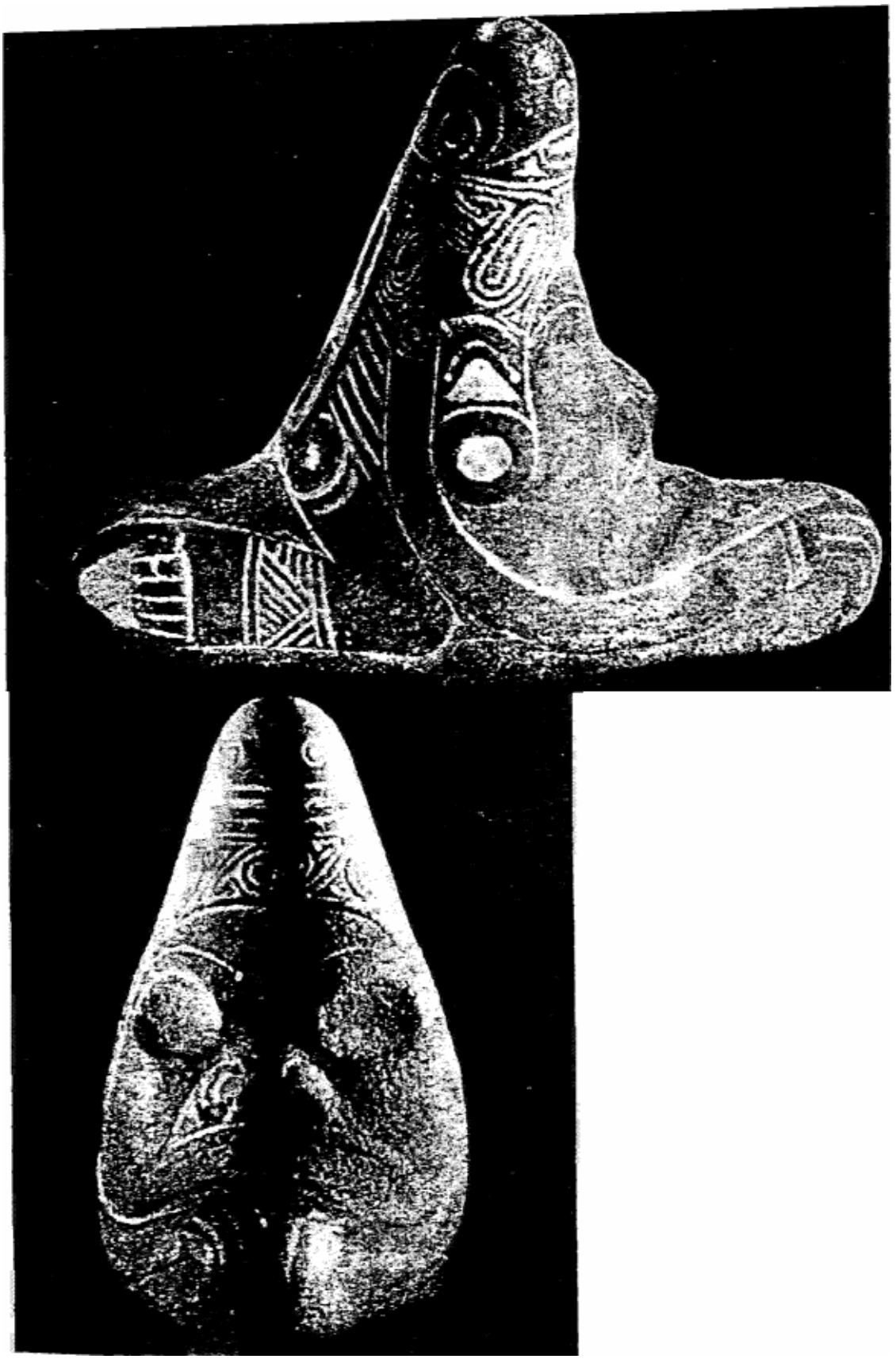


Figure 11. Cemí of Yucahuguamá in gray stone. Puerto Rico. 21.5 cm by 17 cm. Frontal and side views. Museum of Anthropology, History and Art of the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.

and in previous chapters it was shown that yuca was planted during the rainy season (Chapter 9). Like Yucahú, however, Attabeira fertility provided convergence between the generation of yuca and human procreation. Both Columbus and Las Casas describe the predeliction for these *cemíes* among women praying for a safe childbirth (Fernando Colón:62; Las Casas, *Apologética:19;* cited in Arrom, 1975:48 nn.9,1O).

Among the representations of Attabeira, there are tripointed *cemíes* which feature a representation of a female breast. But perhaps more striking are figures identified by Arrom which show Attabeira as a woman in stereotyped poses. In one stone pillar, she holds her arms under her chin while a child emerges from her torso (Figure 12). In pictographs, discussed above in reference to the froglike posture (Chapter 9), she is recognizably human and the child is in an inverse position, emerging from her womb. Arrom considers a headless female torso, probably pregnant (Figure 13), to be a specimen of Attabeira in her function as fertility spirit for all females. Olsen (p.106, Fig.28) offers an abstract rendering of impressive artistic technique that he calls the "Venus of the Arawaks." Both of these representations resemble European paleolithic artifacts of which the "Venus of Willendorf" is perhaps the most famous. Of the four other titles listed for her by Pane, Arrom has as yet translated only Guacar, which probably means "Our Moon" (Relación:58, n.5). But the lunar reference probably strengthens the identity of Attabeira as the guardian of feminine fertility (Hall:226—27, et passim).

Chapter XI of Pane's narration carries a description of a cave in the territory of a cacique named Mautiatihuel, in which two *cemíes* were placed:

> there are two *cemíes* made from stone, as small as half a forearm, with the hands tied and it seems that they sweat. Such *cemíes* were much esteemed and when it did not rain, they said that they entered in there to visit them and it would rain immediately. And of these *cemíes* just mentioned, one they called Boinael (Son of the Grey Serpent) and the other Márohu (Cloudless) *(Relación:31).*

After explaining that the name, "Grey Serpent," is a reference to darkened rain clouds, Arrom reproduces these figures (Figures 14, 15). He shows that, in fact, the stones did "sweat," because the smooth surfaces would have accumulated the condensation of mois-

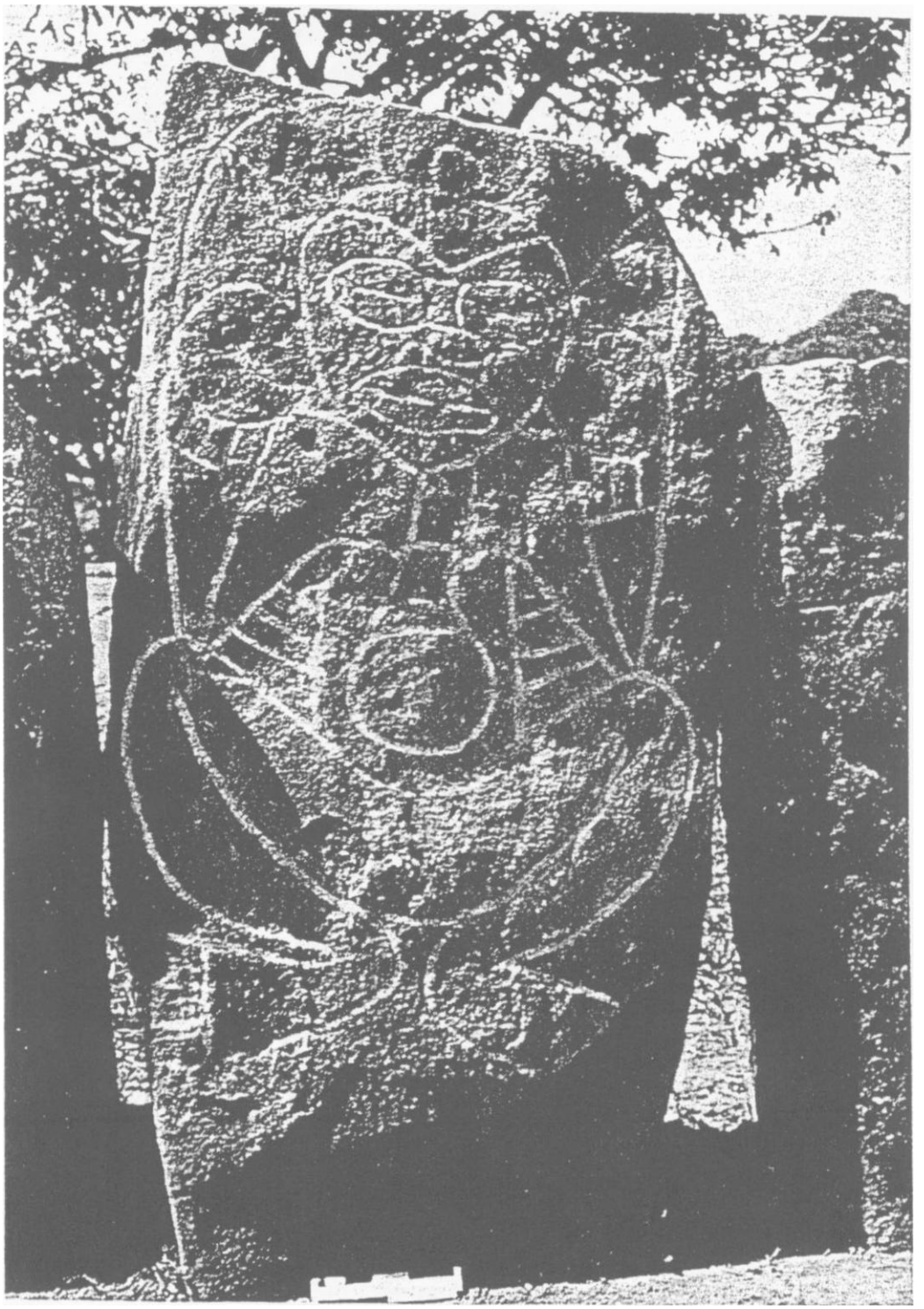


Figure 12. Stone pillar of squatting Attabeira in the Janus Mode, with babe emerging. From On the Trail of the Arawaks, *by Fred Olsen. Copyright 1974, University of Oklahoma Press.*

Figure *14. Twin figures of polished stone depicting the weather spirits Márohu and Boinayel, with "weeping eyes" to catch condensed water droplets. In the Janus Mode. Greater Antilles. 20 cm. After* Loven, *Plate XIV Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.*

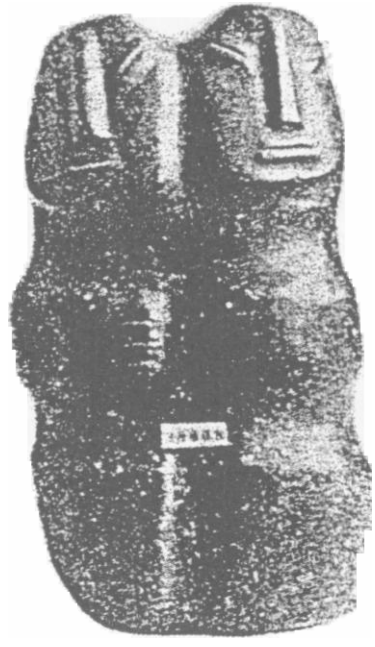


Figure 15. Smaller example of twin figures of weather spirits Márohu and Boinayel. Greater Antilles. 14 cm. After Loven, Plate XIV. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.

Figure 13. Fragment of torso of pregnant female in clay. Puerto Rico. 5.8 cm by 4.5 cm. Museum of Anthropology, History and Art of the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras. After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.

ture liable to occur in a tropical cave. Graven into the faces of the *cemíes* are furrows that allowed the drips of water to simulate tears. These "crying images" of the Taínos ingeniously reproduced the condensation process that is essential to rain.

Arrom suggests that the twin figures of these *cemíes* represent the forces that control the daily tropical weather. His opinion on this matter seems likely, because the best balanced period of the year in the Antilles has nearly equal amounts of sun and rain. Hence, the conception of each day as "twins," one of whom resembles rain clouds and the other a clear sky, would account for the rapid daily transitions from sun to rain. Moreover, as suggested in the narration which highlights the power of these *cemíes* to bring rain, the twin powers were associated with favorable weather for agriculture.

Chapter XII of Pane's narrative describes the Taíno belief in an afterlife and the *cemí* who rules over this realm. The abode of the dead ... is named Coaybay and it is alongside an island called Soraya The chief personage in Coaybay is called Maquetaurie Guayaba" (see Table 9). As the Lord of Coaybay, "the house and home of the dead" *(Relación:32),* he is like Pluto, the Greek King of the Underworld. Arrom suggests that "Maquetaurie" may be translated as "Without Life" *(Relación:71* n.80), while the name "Guayaba" refers to the tropical fruit from the tree, *Psidium paniferum.* Arrom has identified the visage as that of Maquetaurie Guayaba. The face has wided eye sockets and an open mouth, usually without lips. Strikingly, many representations of Maquetaurie Guayaba show a nasal cavity, very much like that of a skeleton (Figure 16). Such a visage confirms the function of this *cemí* in connection with the dead. Arrom notes that images of this spirit are frequently notched at both ends so that they could be attached to cord belts, probably in connection with the Taíno ballgame. This important point will be addressed in greater detail below.

In Chapter XIII, Pane offers additional information on Taíno beliefs in the dead. Apparently they made a distinction between the soul of a living person, the *"guaíza,"* and the spirits of the dead, *"opía"* (the Island Karina variant of this word is *"maboya"* (see Hernández Aquino:241; Taylor,1961). According to the Talnos, one could tell the difference between the two because the *opta* lacked navels. Two pieces of carved bone found by Rainey in Puerto Rico feature greatly exaggerated navels, represented by a large perforated disk, with the opening extending to the hollow of the bone (Rainey:I, 31). While Fer-

Figure 16. Face made of andesite, possibly Maquetaurie Guayaba. Puerto Rico. 22 cm. Musée de l'Homme, Paris. After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.

nández Méndez considers this to be connected to the *guanín* (1972:50), I think it more likely that the amulet is related to this myth about the-dead. Perhaps it was a talisman that secured the navel with a cord and provided protection against sudden death. As long as the believer held onto his navel, represented by the carved bone figure, he could not be changed into the shadowy *opía.* Nor should the mandala symbolism of the navel be overlooked; without the navel, one's life is incomplete. The *opía* were supposed to come out of their forest hiding places at night and feast upon guayaba fruit. Pane adds that this belief in the dead is widespread among all ages and that on account of the *opía,* "only with great fear does anyone dare to walk alone at night" *(Relación:33).* The nighttime consumption of guayaba fruit is accomplished principally by tropical bats, not by wandering ghosts. But the connection between the dead and these noctural creatures who inhabit caves during the day is common to various cultures. Because of the frequency of the bat motif in Taíno artifacts, it is possible they believed the form. *opía* assumed during the day was that of sleeping bats. A lacuna in Pané's text makes it impossible to confirm this supposition *(Relación:32* n.83). It seems that the bat and owl motifs are zoomorphic representations of this *cemí* and symbolize the realm of the dead, however (Garcia Arévalo, 1984).

Chapter XX of Pane's narrative describes another *cemí,* whose name, "Baibrama," is accompanied by two epithets, *"buya* = ugly" and *"aiba* = bad" *(Relación:75—76,* nn. 111—12). The description of this *cemí* allows for an interpretation of its functions in connection with the planting of the yuca by slash-and-burn techniques, as well as the preparation for ingestion by washing away the venomous juice:

". when there was war, they burned it and afterwards, washing it with the juice of the yuca, its arms grew and the eyes appeared again and the body grew" *(Relación:43).* The eyes referred to in the text may well be the spuds on a yuca, similar to the "eyes" of a potato left too long in the kitchen cupboard.

Representations of Baibrama (Figure 17) have a small bowl on the head of the figure, which may have been used to hold the narcotic powders in the divination rite, the *cazabe* of the yuca harvest, or both. In either case, the visage of Baibrama is an angry one—he carries a frightening grimace in all of his representations. But his relationship to fertility is symbolized by the erect penis that characterizes this *cemí.* The description of the cemí Corocote in Chapter XXI associates this spirit with amorous sexual escapades. Of importance in deciphering

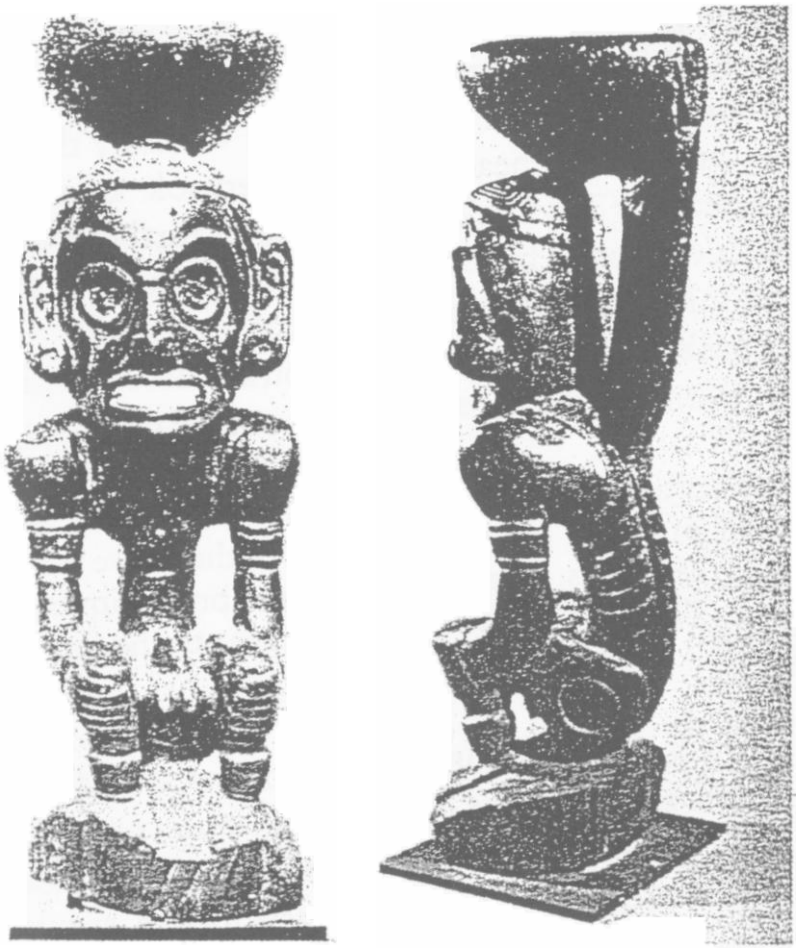


Figure 17. Left: *Frontal view of wooden figure of Baibrama, Lord of the Harvest, in squat position with incrustations of seashell. Bowl on the head is* for *offerings of crops, both of yuca and narcotics. Jamaica. 68.5cm. Museum of Primitive Art, New York. Photograph by Charles Uht. After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.* Right: *Side view of same figure. Photograph by Elizabeth Little.*

the religious function of Corocote is the meaning of the name and the reference to crowns in the text: "And they also say that on his head two crowns appeared, so that they are accustomed to say 'Since he has two crowns, he certainly is the son of Corocote'" *(Relación:44).* Arrom says the name may be derived from the Arawak word *"korrokori* gold" or *"corucuri* bronze" *(Relación:76* n.114). There seems to be a relationship with the *guanín,* which is also made of gold; this metal is associated with sexual fertility in the cases of both Guabonito and Corocote. But as *was* pointed out in Chapter 11, the shape of the *guanín* is as important as its color. Indeed, as pure gold, *turey,* it is a different kind of object than the *guanín.* I believe that while gold symbolizes continence as *guanín,* in the amorphous condition of color

alone, it may have possessed a different symbolism. Since Corocote is our only clue, if gold has another meaning, it is promiscuity.

No one as yet has identified any artifact of the Taínos that can be linked to this *cemí* (Figures 5, 6), so the meaning of the "crowns" is uncertain. It may refer to the ceremonial caps worn by the Taínos, or to the practice of head—flattening they undertook as a measure to insure beauty (Fewkes:29—31). In the absence of further evidence, this supposition about head flattening remains conjecture, nor is it clear how it might refer to the sexual escapades of Corocote.

Arrom's research on the *cemí* Opiyelguobirán, described in Chapter XXII, is one of the most satisfying in his book. Pane says:

> They say a certain *cemí,* Opiyelguobirán, had four feet like a dog and is [made] of wood, and that often he comes out of the house at night and enters the forests. They go there to seek him and bring him back to the house. They bind him with cords, but he returns to the forests *(Relación* :45).

The name is derived from the Taíno word for the spirits of the dead. Arrom suggests that the function of this *cemí,* who constantly sought the woods where the *opías,* or spirits of the dead, dwelt, was to serve as daylight guardian. Greek mythology assigned a similar role to Cerberus, the three-headed dog who stood at the river crossing that marked the entrance into the realm of Pluto (Arrom,1975:1O1—06). The representation of this *cemíes* an excellent specimen of Taíno art in wood (Figure 18).

Chapter XXIII of Pane's narrative introduces three more spirits, and also provides important clues for an overall understanding of the Taíno pantheon of *cemíes:*

> This cemí Guabancex was in the country of a great cacique among the most important, named Aumatex. This *cemí* is a woman and they say that there are two others in her company: one is a herald and the other a sweeper and ruler of the waters. And they say that when Guabancex becomes angry, she makes the winds and waters move and casts houses to the ground and uproots the trees. ... The two other *cemíes* that are in her company are named Guataúba, and he is the herald or precursor who by order of Guabancex commands all the other cemíes of that province to help make much wind and rain. The other is named Coatrisquie, who, they say, gathers the waters in the mountain valleys and then lets them flow so that they destroy the countryside *(Relación:45—46).*

Figure 18. Doglike figure, Opiyelguobirán, carved from a single piece of wood. Santo Domingo. 100.3 cm. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.

It should be observed that this triad of spirits, with Guabancex as the major spirit and two other forces to attend her, echoes the notion of twin spirits that is recorded in the description of Boinayel and Márohu. In other words, the notion of twins with complementary functions would seem a part of the Taíno vision of the cosmos.

The clear reference to the hurricane in Pane's description of Guabancex has been enriched by Arrom, who has produced the sacred image of this wind spirit. Citing Fernando Ortiz (Arrom, 1975:75—76 n.6), he produces a bodiless head with serpentine hands. The hands of Guabancex are positioned in the direction of the winds of the hurricane, which move counterclockwise. The representation shows amazing precision in reproducing the actual pattern of a hurricane's motion. Even the head of Guabancex lies in the "eye" of the storm. This accurate portrayal of natural forces in a sacred image parallels the representation of the condensation process found in the *cemíes* of Boinayel and Márohu.

The twin helpers of Guabancex represent thunder and flooding. "Guataúba" should be pronounced with the "b" as loud as possible to suggest the sound of a thunderclap *(Relación:77* n. 122). Coatrisquie can be compared with the Aztec Chalchiuhtlicue, sister of the Water Goddess, Tlaloc *(Relación:77* n. 123), who carries the bitter and destructive water from the sea to the earth while passing through the sky. On this premise, it has been suggested that representations of water birds in the Taíno *cemíes* can be identified as Coatrisquie (Fernández Méndez, 1972:51—55; see Figure 19).

The notion of pairing the feminine Guabancex and her twin helpers with a masculine opposite was first suggested by Fewkes (264—65). He believed that the stone belts "have a certain resemblance to serpents with tail bound to the neck," and concluded that this signified the celestial union of Guabancex with Yucahú. Oviedo, in his haste to demean the religion of the Taínos, perceived all images of serpents as representations of the devil (cited in Fernández Méndez, 1957:73). Hence, either because of the association of Guabancex with the serpent form in the stone belts or because of the snakelike position of her arms in other representations, this feminine deity was perceived by some of the Spaniards as diabolical. Moreover, since she is the spirit of the hurricane, less precise historians jumped to the conclusion that the tempest of the Caribbean was an evil spirit. This notion was based on the phonetical similarity between Kulucán, Mayan patron of artisans (Shapiro and Hendricks:105), and the Taíno word, "huracán" (see Arrom, 1975:77—78). In time, historians fabricated a spirit named Juracán, who became the Taíno equivalent of the devil (cf. p.81). While Guabancex is an angry woman in contrast to the ever-fertile Attabeira, she is not evil. Rather, her femininity complements that of

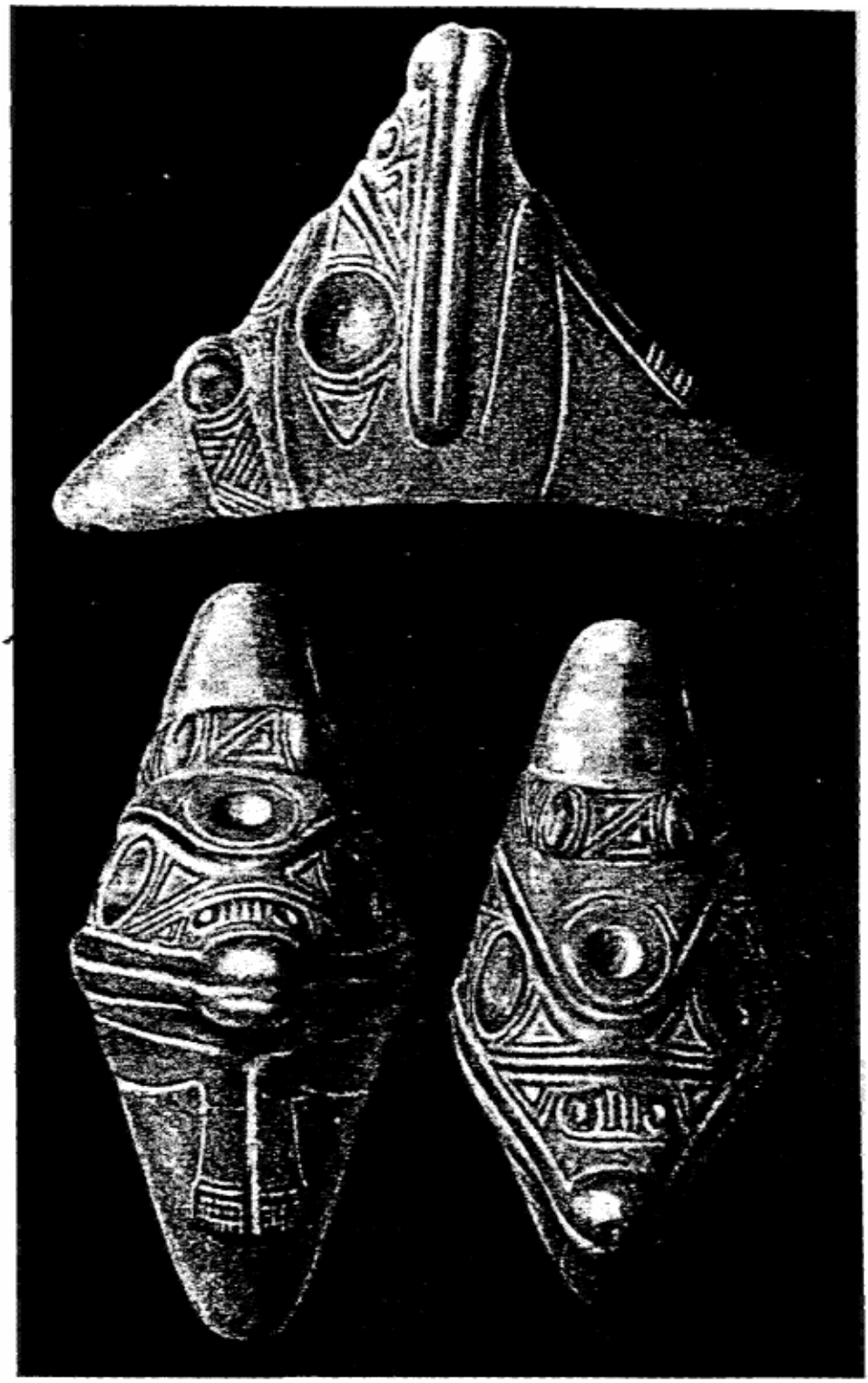


Figure 19. **Cemí** *with various motifs, including a sharp-billed bird (lateral view). Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Lateral, top, and frontal views. After Arrom, 1975. Courtesy Siglo XXI, Mexico.*

her more gentle counterpart, much as the virgin Amazon compares with the Great Mother (p.211).

The twelfth and last *cemí* described by Pane is named "Baraguabael," having something to do with the sea *(Relación:77* n.124). The narration is found in Chapter XXIV of the narrative:

> They say that one day, before the island was discovered—in the past time, they don't know how long ago—while stalking on the hunt, they found a certain animal, which they ran after, but it escaped to a hole and while looking for it, they saw a branch that seemed to be a living thing. . . Taking this bough, they built it a house. They say that it left that house different times and went to the place from which they had taken it, but not now to the same place, but [one] nearby.
>
> they found it hidden, and they tied it again and they put it into a sack. And with all of that, thus bound, things went as before *(Relación:46).*

This is one of the most difficult descriptions of a *cemI* to interpret for its religious function. Significantly, Arrom omits **it** from his 1975 book that offers illustrations of artifacts corresponding to the descriptions of Pane's narrative. This living bough always escapes to the forest, suggesting a similarity to Opiyelguobirán, who guards the realm of the dead. But the notion of growing back, implicit in the description of the return to a nearby place, echoes the irrepressible Baibrama. I suspect that the religious function of this *cemI* is to explain how wild plants can be cut down but still grow back and replenish nature, much as Baibrama represents the same force for the domesticated yuca. The occasion of the hunt for an animal that disappears into the same hole where Baraguabael is found makes it possible to extend the metaphor to wild animals. Even after being hunted, the animals will reproduce. Finally, the allusion to the sea in the name suggests that the same phenomenon applies to the fish in the ocean. It will be remembered that Yucahuguamá also had the name "Bagua = Sea," probably to extend his fruitfulness to this source of Taíno food. I conclude that the *cemí* Baraguabael is related to Yucahuguamá as an accompanying power, much as Guataúba and Coatrisquie function as servants to Guabancex.

I have taken these twelve *cemíes* and grouped them in a chart (Table 7), describing their mythological functions. As just mentioned, Yucahuguamá has Baraguabael and Baibrama as his attendants to parallel in terms of fruitfulness the triad of the feminine Guabancex and her attendants, Guataúba and Coatrisquie, who are described by

Table 7. Schema of Taíno Cemieism.

Gender & Generation	Order of Fruitfulness	Order of Inversion
Masculine	Yucahú [guamí] Lord of the yuca plant; bitterness and strength; life symbol of the guayaba	Maquetaurie Guayaba Lord of the Dead; sweetness and delight; of worker on earth; root symbolism berry, bat symbols
Twins Generated from the Masculine	Baibrama Guardian of workers; fire to clear earth for planting yuca; fire of oven for making *cazabe*	Opiyelguobirán Guardian of the Dead; of privacy and felicity Dog God
	Baraguabael Guardian of plants, animals, and fish; replenisher of nature	Corocote Guardian of sexual delight, romance, and spontaneity; picaresque spirit
Feminine	Attabeira Fertilizing earth water in ponds, rivers, and lakes	Guabancex Driver of wind and water, wind on sea, rider of the hurricane
	Earth and Serpent Mother, protectress of childbearing and lactation	Mistress of the hurricane; the Amazon Woman, menstruating, untamed, and indomitable
Twins Generated from the Feminine	Márohu No Clouds, announces the sun	Guataúba Thunder, announces the stormy rain
	Boinayel Son of the Grey Serpent, clouds, announces the fertilizing rain	Coatnsquie Carrier of water to the mountains, drifting storm clouds

Pane in terms of destructiveness. I have placed the twins of sun and rain, Boinayel and Márohu, with the Mother of Waters, Attabeira, so that there is a feminine triad of fruitfulness in consort with Yucahuguamá and his attendants. That leaves Opiyelguobirán, the guardian of the dead, and the promiscuous Corocote as servants in the realm of Maquetaurie Guayaba.

Although I do not believe the credibility of this division hangs on the resulting symmetry, it is important to note that such a process of classification leaves us with a pantheon of four triads, one masculine and one feminine for each of two contradictory orders. On one side are the Spirits of Fruitfulness that bring plant and food life, provide water for drinking and irrigation, and insure family fertility. On the other side are the unpredictable spirits who destroy this order. Death, sexual promiscuity, the intrusion of dead spirits into the affairs of the living, and the terrible hurricanes are powerful manifestations of numinous power. But unlike the Spirits of Fruitfulness, the unpredictable spirits serve to invert rather than to establish what is ordinary.

> These Spirits of Inversion, as I have named them, correspond to what Jung would call the unconscious in human psychology. They are the intuitive and irrepressible emotional forces that supplant reason, yet provide a feeling in tune with the numinous. They cannot be denied, yet neither can they be anticipated. They come and go as they will (cf. John 3:8), and they are more powerful than the ordinary Spirits of Fruitfulness since they can overwhelm them.

My analysis of the pantheon of *cemíes* and their relationships to each other strengthens the hypothesis first advanced in Chapter 11, namely, that the unconscious realm prevailed over the conscious activity in the religious vision of the Taínos. Several world cultures have this characteristic. The Chinese Taoists conceive of the world as a conjunction of the Yin and the Yang, the Masculine and Feminine perceived in all living things. Indian philosophy describes Brahman in terms that suggest that the numinous is the unconscious world soul of the cosmos (Berry:23—31; 56—61). The Buddhists have elaborated this notion and seek *nirvanah,* the "snuffing out" of individual consciousness in favor of entering into the collective unconscious of all living things (Berry:144—47; 158—62).

The Taínos can be understood by comparison with these great religious traditions. Obviously, the Taíno religion never developed the sophistication of Indian philosophy or the involved rituals of Chinese Taoism, but the absence of written tracts does not mean that the Taínos were incapable of some of the same religious nuances that are found in Oriental religions. The notions of intense meditation, of asceticism through fasting and celibacy, of mystical identification with the numinous, and of ritualized warfare may all be attributed to Taíno' religious practice. Each, in its own way, emphasizes the power of the unconscious realm within Taíno religion.

While fasting, ritual celibacy, and divination through use of hallucinogenic drugs have all been described above, the ritual nature of Taíno warfare merits some elaboration here. In another work (1986), I have analyzed the historical references to Taíno warfare by comparison with other ethnological materials. I concluded on the basis of this evidence that Taíno warfare had a ritualized dimension, making it quite different from European battle. For the Taínos, armed conflict was generally meant to dem6nstrate superior skills to those of the opponent; killing was not the principal object of the contest. Moreover, by citing Las Casas *(HistorIa:II,18),* I have shown that in some cases, the superior battle skill was construed by the Taínos as the power to touch an opponent without being touched. Only when desperation forced the Taínos into the ultimate form of warfare did the Indians bum Spanish settlements and slay the invaders (Stevens Arroyo, 1986; 1981:84—97).

Thus, Taíno reluctance to mobilize for an all-out war against the Spaniards had much to do with their religious conception of battle. This contrasts sharply with the culture of the Aztecs, warriors quite capable of military violence (Brundage; Leon Portilla, 1962) but whose interpretation of the Quetzalcoatl myth impeded resistance to the Spanish invaders (Todorov: 116—119). I believe that the religious belief system of the Talnos also affected their encounter- with the Spaniards, but in a way different from that of the Mexicans. Rather than departure from their usual mode of warfare, the Taino encounter with the Spaniards represented their preferred behavior in the face of conflict. It was behavior that borrowed heavily from the ideal heroism of the centroverted or introverted personage of Taíno myths. It was not an erroneous belief in the immortality of the Spaniards that prevented direct confrontation, but a religious disposition to trust in guile and the numinous power. It was only after a generation of Spanish colonization had passed in the Antilles that the Taínos under Enriquillo successfully utilized subterfuge against the Spaniards, extracting an honorable peace treaty in 1533 (Stevens Arroyo, 1986).

These conclusions about Taíno warfare are closely linked to the two orders of reality that undergird Taíno *cemieism.* As suggested above, Taíno religion consisted of two orders, one dominated by the Spirits of Fruitfulness and the other by the Spirits of Inversion. If the order of inversion was generally thought to be superior, as has been theorized, behavior characteristic of the unconscious realm would have been preferred by Taíno believers. This is the importance of ritualized

warfare, since it was not the only, but rather the preferred mode of TaIno resistance. When proven ineffectual, the Taínos were capable of abandoning evasive warfare and adopting a confrontative mode.

The interplay of the two contrasting orders in *cemieism* is reflected, I think, in what is known about the Taíno ball game. Attention has been paid above to the serpent form in connection with the stone belts used in the Taíno ball game. While the identification to Guabancex may be erroneous, the relation of the snake symbolism to the ball game is important. Earlier, it was shown that the stone belts with the serpent swallowing its tail are virtually identical to the uroboros of psychoanalysis. This symbol, like the mandala, is generally an expression of fullness. The *guanín* used by the cacique had a similar function, whether as interfaced rainbows that formed a complete circle or as matching patterns that mirrored each other.

I believe that Fernández Méndez is correct in suggesting that the lateral panels on one of the stone belts found by Fewkes may represent the field for playing ball (Fernández Méndez, 1972:47). In that design, there are four quadrants divided at perpendiculars by a narrow rectangle in the center. Two opposing teams attempted to advance a ball to goals at either end of the field, but without using their hands to advance play. Movement came from kicking and the use of thighs and hips in ways similar to those used today in soccer (Oviedo, *Histo*ria:VI,2; Las Casas, *Historia,* cited in Gómez and Ballesteros:182, n. LXVII; Alegría, 1951). Olsen's reconstruction of how the game was played (Olsen:195—214) supports Algeria's conclusion that the game served much the same purposes for the Taínos as it did for the Aztecs and Mayas (Alegría, n.d.:5). For the Mexican peoples, the ball game reenacted the struggle between light and darkness, with divination depending upon how the ball traveled when scoring a goal (Brundage:1O—12). I believe that the quadrants found on the Taíno stone collars represented the four triads of the cemí system. Hence, if the ball game symbolized cosmic purposes as it did for the Aztecs and Mayas, the outcome of the Taíno game would have signified the triumph of one of the orders over its rival. One can say without exaggeration, then, that victory in the game indicated to the Taínos whether the Spirits of Fruitfulness or those of Inversion would determine the future.

For the Taínos, the competition indicated which realm of life would determine outcomes, not only for the game but in other facets of life as well. The invocation of *cemíes* was affected by the grouping per-

ceived to be in ascendency at the time. Such a notion of portents is not foreign to contemporary society. Wall Street analysts are often classified as "bulls" or "bears" depending on how they see the future. Even and odd numbers often are perceived as bringing luck on given days by those who play lotteries, both legal and extralegal.

Perhaps a better homologue can be found in the Hindu notion of *karma* (Berry:13—14), which serves the sociological function of reconciling tensions in the society, offering religious justification for their good fortune to those who enjoy a particular social advantage and hope to those who do not. The dualism of Taíno faith was reflected in the popular celebration of the ball game, where it could always be hoped that one's fortunes would be affected by a victory for the right team.

My assertions about the interconnectedness of Taíno *cemieism* and the ball game are supported by sound archaeological evidence. No less an authority than Rouse notes that archaeological remains of the ball game accompany artifacts of *cemieism.* The frequency of the evidence of the ball game and *cemieism* run parallel in chronology, and the remains are found in virtually identical places (Rouse, 1982:52). The solid scholarship that has established this association of the ball game with *cemieism* is also butressed with the analogy to the Meso-american version, wherein a cosmic conflict occupied a- central role. Like the Aztecs, the Taínos utilized the ball game as a symbolic theatre for the enactment of the dualism of their religious system. Even the preference for the Spirits of Inversion and the unconscious reality that they signified has a convincing archaeological foundation. The frequency of the bat and owl motifs in Taíno artifacts (GarcIa Arevalo, 1984) suggests that the Indians had a predilection for the values these creatures symbolized. The Spirits of Inversion might well have been the favorites of the deprived majority of *naboría* in Taíno society.

The relationship between *cemieism* and the dualism of Taíno religion may also be seen in their rites of healing. Described in detail by Pane *(Relación:33—41)* and analyzed above in terms of abreaction (pp.[1] 18—120), the identification of the *behique* with his patient is of prime importance here. The Taíno healing process through the *behique* interpreting the numinous power had brought suffering to the victim. The *behique's* role consisted first of invocation of the responsible *cemí.* But ultimately, healing flowed from spirit possession that enabled reconciliation in the human order of the troubles that had arisen in the unconscious realm.

The Taíno religious system, then, depended for its dynamism upon a form of spirit possession. Maya Deren suggests that some aspects of Afro-Caribbean religion are vestiges of a syncretism of African beliefs with Taíno rituals (271—86). A comparison with the *dogó* rite of the Black Caribs also (pp. 146—147) offers an example of such syncretism, as this ritual also depends upon possession (Taylor,1951:115-32). Similarities with the genesis myths of the Taínos are striking: the canoe-shaped baskets hung from the house, the call for grandparents, the dwelling house, or *gaiunare,* whose name resembles that of the *Taíno guanara,* and the important role of the bird, Iriyuna—a possible homologue to the Taíno Inriri—are some common elements linking this practice to Taíno belief. African customs are also plain to the observer, however, (Taylor,1951:123, n.12; 28,31), **50** in this case African and Native American religions have been synthesized.

Singing and dancing among the Black Carib in their celebration of the *dogó* rite (Taylor, 1951:126—27) are virtually identical with the description offered by Oviedo, who witnessed the Taíno *areíto (Historia;V,1;* cited in Gómez and Ballesteros:181—84):

> sometimes they take each other by the hands, at others, they link arms by crossing them, putting themselves in line (or in a chorus, by that measure). One of them takes the role of guide (either a man or a woman) and that person takes certain steps forward and backward, just like a well-ordered contradanza. Everyone does the same instantly, and thus they make their dance in turn, singing in the high or low tone that the guide employs. . The entire multitude responds with the same steps, words and style; and when they respond to him, the guide keeps quiet, although he does not stop taking his dance steps (cited in Gómez and Bailesteros:183—84).

Oviedo adds that the dancing often continues from one day to the next. Such marathon chanting and dancing also characterize the *dogó* rite.

Among the Black Carib, the *dogó* rite ends either when the ancestral spirits are pacified or when one of the dancers becomes possessed by an ancestor spirit and requires purification. While such rites are often considered African in origin, Taylor cites seventeenth-century sources to underscore that communication with spirits through possession was known to the Island Karina (123—24 n. 12). Today's *dogó* shaman is made black with body paint, while the red dye of the believers presumably makes them vulnerable to communication. The rite de-

pends upon the washing of the body, however, in order to ensure a return to the ordinary realm once the possession has delivered a communication (Taylor,1951:124). I believe that such use of music and ritual to invoke spirits that serve the intuitive and spontaneous realm was likely a part of Taíno religion. Frenzy or some other form of possession allowed the believers to contact the Spirits of Inversion, who were otherwise hidden from contact.

These communal rites serve to emphasize the elastic nature of *cemieism,* whose dynamism depended upon the ability to pass from one order to another. They were forms for celebrating the unconscious, much as the Dionysian rites that arose among the Greeks compensated for the emphasis upon the rational or Apollonian aspect of Greek social life (Jung, 6:136—46). Sufism in Islam, the Kabala in Judaism, and the charismatic movements in Christianity reflect the constancy of this unconscious element of religion—even in creeds that seek to supplant it with rationality.

I believe the Taínos viewed the two orders of Fruitfulness and Inversion as twin and complementary life forces. The ordinary in life was regulated by the spirits under Yucahuguamá and Attabeira, while the extraordinary, the fantastic and exotic, were ruled by Maquetaurie Guayaba and the fearsome Guabancex. The believer was forced to render worship according to specific needs, but always- to maintain a balance between these two orders. The essence of *cemieism,* therefore, was to be found in the conjunction of opposites, which insured that reality was constituted by both appearance and illusion, the conscious and the unconscious, the lawful and the lawless, the regulated and the spontaneous, the expected and the unpredictable. The balance between the two orders was also a tension. One order did not exist independently of the other; in fact, each was defined by its opposite. Reality consisted in reconciling the two. Thus, for instance, the Amazon woman is rationality made compassionate and the Trickster is impulsivity in search of control; the ideal woman is masculine and the ideal man is feminine.

That the numinous is composed of complementary dualities is an idea both ancient and new. References have already been made to Chinese Taoism's forces of Yin and Yang and to Indian philosophy. The pre-Socratics also understood divinity in terms of opposites. Heracitus said: "God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, satiety and hunger; all opposites are in him" (Fr. 67). But it was the theologian of the late Middle Ages, Nicholas of Cusa (1400—

1464), who used the concept *"coincidentia oppositorum* = the coincidence of opposites" as a formal methodological device. Nicholas applied this notion to explain Christianity, following the writings of theologians like Bonaventure (Cousins:15). In the secular nineteenth century, the contradiction of opposites was adopted by Hegel and Marx as a mainstay of their dialectical thought. Thus, the two Taíno orders contain inchoately a profound philosophical notion.

I believe that the dualism the Taínos perceived in their cosmos can be based on the ambiguous forms of natural replenishment in the tropics. When fruit falls to the ground, is it dying as it decays or is the seed inside beginning the process of gestation towards a new tree? The Taínos were surrounded by such paradoxes. Rapid decay in their tropic ecology was handmaiden to an equally rapid gestation. Such perceptions must have led to questions on the nature of life and death.

The complementary duality of Taíno *cemieism* is graphically represented in their artifacts. Almost as if underscoring the ambiguity of dualism, the Taínos fashioned images that had two faces. While working at the Museum of the American Indian, Michael Sellon analyzed this phenomenon in the fashioning of Taíno artifacts. Sellon called the style the "Janus Mode," after the Roman guardian spirit of the gates whose effigy is a bearded figure with two faces looking in opposite directions. It was said that Janus watched over those who entered and those who left the city at the gate. The term "Janus Mode" has been applied to other peoples' art, particularly to primitive religious artifacts whose configurations include more than one image (Ehrenzweigh:21—27; Kris:246—48; Burnham). Among North American Indians, the Janus Mode is often expressed in symbols that are carefully drawn in sections so that the two figures are replicas of each other, but facing in different directions (Epes Brown:1O).

There is a special style of dual art that characterized the production of the Taínos, however. Sellon explains:

> The fundamental difference between the Taínan Janus and the classical depictions of this figure is that the Taínan has created an integrated dual-face, and in both attributes of the Taínan Janus, the two faces are perceived by means of the visual manipulation of the figures (119).

As Sellon describes, Taíno art departs from the simple depictions of Janus in classical forms. Instead of separate and completely distinguishable faces, the Taíno figures are integrated, literally one on top of

the other. By turning the zoomorphic face upside down, 180 degrees, an anthropomorphic configuration is apparent.

The style of the Janus Mode is so pervasive in Taíno artifacts that it cannot be attributed to the whims of individual artists.[1] Rather, the Janus Mode in Taíno art would seem to be a visual confirmation of a religious vision of the world and of oneself in the world. Just as the Taínos held that the social order and the mystical realm were different manifestations of the same reality, they crafted faces in which the identity as totem and as human coinhered in the same configurations. Only by changing perspective could the observer discover which image was hidden and which revealed. While there is some resemblance here to the Aztec notion of the *nahual,* a zoological form identified with every human being (p.139), the Taíno style of the Janus Mode is not found in Mexican art. Even more sophisticated examples of Taíno art place the different faces in tiers or within other figures.

The Janus Mode represented paradox artistically and the ball game dramatized it in the daily life of the people. Moreover, such faith in the nature of reality was transmitted by Taíno rituals wherein possession, frenzy, and hallucination provided contact with the numinous. What was communicated through these religious forms was an attitude towards reality. Since the time of Aristotle in the West, schoolchildren have been taught that a thing cannot *be* and *not be* at the same time under the same formal aspect. But such logic did not prevent the Taínos from achieving a coincidence of opposites whereby the same figure takes on another form. For the Taínos, numinous power was never what it seemed to be but had another and necessarily hidden dimension that could only be discerned by manipulation of reality and discovery of the tricks human thought plays on perception.

Although my treatment in this chapter of *cemieism* and the duality it represented to Taíno religion has not included an examination of the social and political factors which affect culture, these elements have been treated throughout the analysis of Taíno myths as major influences on meaning. Particular attention was paid in earlier chapters to the transition toward a more centralized political authority, the emergence of a tributory system, and the impact of a harvesting economy. If such sociological and political elements made a significant differ-

1. The chronological placement of this style in Talno pottery requires further study (see Rouse, 1982:53).

ence to Taíno mythology, is it not logical to expect a similar impact upon *cemieism?* As noted in Chapter 4, *cemíes* are found in abundance in Taíno settlements dating from about A.D. 200 to 600. But there is a period (A.D. 600—1200) roughly coinciding with the rapid extension of Taíno culture westward into Hispaniola and Cuba in which *cemíes* become less frequent. It is only later, in the era coinciding with the intrusions of the Cariban peoples and immediately proceeding the advance of the Europeans, that *cemieism* seems to have undergone a restoration. Rouse compares this phenomenon to the eclipse of Western culture during the Dark Ages (Rouse, 1982:52). If *cemieism* is central to the Taíno religious experience, then how could it suffer such shifts of disfavor within the Taíno religious system? This is what I call the "problem" of *cemieism:* its apparent eclipse and subsequent restoration at different epochs of Taíno culture in the Greater Antilles.

To the best of my knowledge, this thorny question has not as yet been tackled in the context of a religious system by Taíno scholars. To offer an adequate hypothesis, a great deal of data from fields as diverse as archaeology and Comparative Religions would be necessary. It does seem safe to day, however, that the restoration of *cemieism* can be explained by reference to social crisis. Theoretical explanations of religious revival may be left to others,[2] but whether out of fear that the crisis is a punishment for neglect of religious duties or because a dominant group uses religion to assert social control, religion usually figures as a social factor in a time of abrupt change or external pressures.

Incontestably, Taíno society experienced social pressures after A.D. 1200. Among the causes of crisis, one may list intrusions of peoples from the East, the transitional state of the Taíno social organization in the harvesting economy, the movement towards a tributary political system, and increased population pressures. But if these forces were the conditions for the restoration of *cemieism,* why did the cult begin and what led to its eclipse in the middle period?

I suspect that migration from the Lesser Antilles before A.D. 600 would have been favorable for developing *cemieism,* because economic adaptations to the ecology of the Greater Antilles required subordination of migratory groups to a more intricate social organization. During the period of diffusions through the Greater Antilles

2. A good summary *of* the issues involved can be found in Robertson, 53—69.

(A.D. 600—1200), however, social bonds among the Taínos became looser, with the migratory groups at the frontiers asserting greater independence from each other (Rouse, 1982:52). In a sense, this middle period allowed an eclipse of *cemieism* and the ball game, because the social specialization and stratification implicit in *cemieism* was no longer required among the Taíno settlements. After A.D. 1200, the factors described above provided a reason for increased dependence on a cacical authority. Perhaps more importantly, in the political development of a tributary system from the harvesting economy, cacical authority needed religious justification for its legitimacy. Increased attention to communal rites of planting, harvesting, and distribution, along with an enlargement of their magnitude and frequency, elevated the cacique in importance. The role of cacical authority, it has been shown, entailed the joining of the two realms, and the *guanín,* symbol of this power, consisted of matched opposites (pp. 193—194). The dual system of *cemieism* (Table 7) and the ball game, which reenacted the coincidence of opposites, reinforced the unity of the total system. By extension, then, the cacique's role as representative of social union was enhanced by the celebration of *cemieism.*

While my hypothesis concerning *cemieism* and its relationship to Taíno culture requires fuller study, there are comparative religious bases upon which my theory has been constructed. My interpretation is adapted from Gottwald, who has examined the formative period of pre-biblical Israel with this socio-political perspective. He argues that the political heritage of freedom from earthly authority was basic to the nomadic experience of the Hebrews, and continued even after the formation of the confederation under Saul to fight the Philistines (490—97; 591—649). The establishment of the Davidic monarchy required a subjugation of this ancient spirit of tribal autonomy to the notion of a divinely appointed king. Gottwald notes, however, that the tension between the ancient tribal confederation and the later monarchy was never completely resolved. He argues that the institution of prophecy became a mode of forcing the kingdom to respect tribal prerogatives (Gottwald:707—09). The conflict between the demands of kingdom and the righteousness of prophecy remained within Judaism until the destruction of Jerusalem shortly after the time of Jesus.

In my opinion, Gottwald's link of the tribal confederacy with prophecy and of the messianic kingdom with the emergent monarchy is an important insight that can be applied to Taíno *cemieism.* The

assertion of cacical authority within the Taíno religious system amounted to the subordination of the shamanistic leadership that still predominates among South American peoples such as the Tukano (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975:103). The Spirits of Fruitfulness represented the ordinary realm wherein social authority was ordered under authority, much as is reflected in the myth of the Taíno Social Contract (Chapter 8). Religious obedience was due the cacique as chief of social authority. This allegiance supplanted the personal inspiration that flowed from contact with the numinous through the Spirits of Inversion. Hence, the core meaning of *cemieism* was that the social cohesiveness of the Taínos hinged upon obedience to cacical authority. There is evidence that the cacique sought to become a shaman by enduring the rigors of the divination rites (Gómora as cited in. Fewkes:65).

But, as in the case with prophecy in ancient Israel, the denial of the spontaneous and mystic elements of Taíno religion could not completely obliterate the attractiveness of such direct contact with the numinous. Moreover, the survival of the unconscious was tied to a looser, less centralized form of social organization. I suspect that the Taíno Spirits of Inversion also represented such a symbolic identification with the pretributory social organization.

This comparison with prophecy in Israel should not obscure the fact that divination among the Taínos was a different kind of religious phenomenon. For the Taínos, contact with the numinous in extraordinary circumstances was facilitated by the use of drugs which served to induce visions. Communication with the numinous was not through prophetic words as had been the case in Israel, but through experienced feelings. The ceremony of the *cohoba* has been amply discussed above (pp.lf7—l19), as has the ritual celibacy practiced by the Taínos when searching for gold (pp.216). To these can be added fasting, described by the chronicles, and ritual bowel purification by induced vomiting, evidenced by spatulas among Taíno artifacts. But like prophecy in ancient Israel, these modes of invoking the Spirits of Inversion were interwoven with the same faith that bestowed legitimacy on centralized authority.

The tension between the different realms within the system of *cemieism,* then, was a permanent part of Taíno religion and rested upon a basic social conflict. The predilection for the unconscious realm has already been noted, so that the use of *cemieism* by the caciques as a means of legitimating their own power was not without

its contradictions. The victory of the Spirits of Inversion in the ball game symbolized a protest against the centralization of the chiefdom, and recourse to shamanistic divination undercut the authority of the cacique. This religious conflict within Taíno society previous to the arrival of the Spaniards ought to be considered one of the reasons for the rapid and complete destruction of cacical power within three decades after Columbus' arrival (Stevens Arroyo, 1981:84—123). Since *cemieism* was based on such a fragile foundation, the disruptions of Spanish conquest swiftly destroyed the inner dynamism of Taíno religion. With the binding authority of the cacique discredited, Taíno believers retreated into the half of religion that was immediate to them: trance, dream, curing, and individual illumination.

Not surprisingly, the Spaniards labeled Taíno cults of the unconscious, as well as anything that carried with it symbols that in Spanish Catholicism symbolized the diabolic, as "devil worship" (Oviedo cited in Fernández Méndez, 1957:73—75). These were the rites that were forcibly suppressed by all the conquerors, including otherwise benign defenders of the Indians like Las Casas. Even Pane shows uncharacteristic impatience in this area, suggesting the use of force to punish nonbelievers (Relación:53—55). But as Jung asserts: "Once the unconscious gets into active opposition to consciousness, it simply refuses to be suppressed. . . the unconscious impulses simply seek other outlets that are less easy to recognize" (Jung, 6:522).

The process of Spanish colonization eliminated the manufacture and worship of cemíes. But as a religious system, cemieism had an inner psychic power that was impossible to extirpate:

> The alteration of the conscious attitude is no light matter, because any habitual attitude is essentially a more or less conscious ideal, sanctified by custom and historical tradition, and founded on the bedrock of one's innate temperament. The conscious attitude is always in the nature of a Weltanschauung, if it is not explicitly a religion. . . The opposition between the types is not merely an external conflict between men, it is the source of endless inner conflicts; the cause not only of external disputes and dislikes, but of nervous ills and psychic suffering" (Jung, 6:522—23).

It would require another study to elaborate upon my earlier description of vestiges of Taíno cemieism in contemporary religious forms in the Spanish Caribbean (Stevens-Arroyo, 1981), but I am not alone in finding Taíno roots to cultural resistance. The same spirit of rebellion

has been attributed by the Puerto Rican-Dominican writer, José Luis Gonzalez, to "the people of color," who continue today to be the source and inspiration of both cultural creativity and political rebellion in the ancestral island homelands of the Taínos. Indeed, one is tempted to say with Maya Deren, "In a sense, the Indians took their revenge on the white man through the Negro" (Deren:11).

Epilogue

In this book I have examined the historical and archaeological evidence of Taíno religion to reconstruct the belief system of the Taínos, the first Native Americans to meet Columbus. From the observations of Friar Ramón Pane, as they have been masterfully edited by José Juan Arrom, I have analyzed Taíno mythology for its inner logic. On the premise that religious symbols are constructed upon the observation of natural phenomena, I have paid considerable attention to details of ecology and the characteristics of Caribbean flora and fauna, and I have used the methods of Claude Levi-Strauss to compare the structure of Taíno mythological thought with the body of South American myths. I have employed classificatory criteria from the field of Comparative Religions throughout the study, and have introduced some of the concepts of psychoanalysis derived from Carl G. Jung.

Two major tales emerge from this review of the data: a Creation or Cosmogonic Myth and a Hero Myth. Each of these sequences have within them other fragments of mythological themes, which Levi-Strauss calls by such names as “The Bird-Nester Myth,” “The Woman Mad About Honey,” “The Clinging Woman,” etc. Likewise,

the Jungian motifs of the Journey, the Hero, the Great Mother, the Amazon, and the Trickster have relevance to the Taíno myths. Throughout my analysis, I have tried to emphasize the coherence of these beliefs as part of a system, which has led to some theoretical explanation of structuralism, Marxism, and Jungian archetypes. In concluding this study, I think it is important to summarize the major issues which emerge from a consideration of Taíno religion as a totality.

Like the world view of other peoples, the Taínos' perception of reality was focused principally upon nature. But, in addition to this notion, the Taínos added a dialectical dimension that matched opposites. Sun and clouds, soft breezes and ferocious hurricanes, salt water and still water are just some of the pairs in the Taíno system. Moreover, the dialectical premise extended to social reality. Migradon, with its human and sociological consequences both for those leaving and for those staying after the fissure process, is an important mythological theme. Sexuality, too, with the contrast between the social need for procreation and the personal desire for companionship, emerge as concerns for Taíno religion.

This dialectical impulse remained a religious one for the Taínos, however. The Taínos perceived not class interests, but cosmic unpredictability as the source of stratified social configuration. The uncontrollable in nature was seen analogously as a reason to tolerate the imbalances of human organizations. This dialectical perception was explained away by an appeal to a mythical past, with its complex references to symbols and legendary personages. I would conclude that Taíno social perception was accomplished without historical consciousness.

Religion enabled the Taínos to envision reality as an organic total*ity*. Plants, weather, animal behavior, and human conduct were interconnected by elaborate manipulation of symbols, tightly bound to logical progressions. The myths served as a framework for explaining the dimensions of the Taíno cosmos. In this book I have attempted to unravel the analogical thinking that underlies much of Taíno mythology. Symbols such as the frog have been described in detail, and reveal the impressive sophistication of Taíno thought. For the Taínos, the sacred meaning of life revealed by religion was more important than any of the elements considered separately as "profane" reality.

The particularity of Taíno belief that distinguished their versions from the mythology of related peoples was the emergent power of

the cacique. Perhaps more than its neighbors, either at the time of the conquest or down to the present day, Taíno mythology emphasized the power of a chief. This new political configuration of a society in transition, related to changes in the economy, was reflected in the myths, where cacical power exercised an important role.

This emphasis upon the cacique did not, or perhaps could not, erase a fundamental preference for the shaman, however. Still dominant in the religion of related peoples, a deep—rooted preference for spontaneous communication with the numinous and for shamanistic intermediation at times of crisis was never lost by Taíno religion. These notions, manifested in rites such as the ball game, fasting, asceticism, possession, and the use of hallucinogenic drugs, were for the Taínos part of what Jung called "the unconscious."

The cult of the *cemíes* formed the core of Taíno religion. Taíno *cemieism* is not simply a matter of their being the only people with a cult to carved images or who shaped artifacts into the familiar threepointed(shape. Even if other peoples fashioned similar images, the comprehensive mythological system developed by the Taínos to locate the powers of the *cemíes* remains a singular accomplishment. In this book, I have presented the pantheon as one divided into two orders, one of Fruitfulness and the other of Inversion. Like the Yin and Yang of ancient Chinese religion, these were forces of life whose constant interaction was the assurance of divine energy in the Taino biosphere. As evidenced in the Janus Mode of their artifacts, this belief in the dualism of the cosmos permeated Taíno religion.

Yet the two counterbalanced orders did not make for a schizophrenic Taíno world. The principles of Fruitfulness and Inversion were not independent of each other. They were, rather, what the Hindus call *"advaita,"* a denial of opposition between matter and spirit, between the numinous and the world. The Janus Mode of Taíno artifacts, the mandala symbolism of the *guanín,* the Amazon Woman, Trickster, and sundry symbolic opposites in the myths all underline and explain the conjunction of opposites which is so frequent in Taíno mythology. I believe such a notion merits the theological name *of"coincidentia oppositorum,"* upon which the cardinal ambiguity of the Taíno belief system rested.

For the Taíno believer, the cosmos was a complex and contradictory jumble of energy that could be managed only by employing extraordinary psychic efforts. Hallucinogenic plants offered the principal mode of entry into the order of Inversion, where unconscious

reality dwelt. Divination of the unseen and the unpredictable demanded excursions outside the parameters of human consciousness. This "seeing" while one was in hallucinogenic trance was a high form of Taíno wisdom. Only after the dualistic nature of appearances was thus penetrated could a Taíno act religiously with regards to society and nature. The dialectical perception of reality was central to Taíno belief, and because *cemieism* was constructed on this juxtaposition of opposites, it formed the unique foundation for their religious system.

The religious aspects of the Taíno legacy have remained largely unexplored by anthropologists, probably because the lack of data on Taíno beliefs permitted analysis only of bits and pieces of their religion. A lack of conceptual integrity for the Taíno belief system has made *it* relatively impossible to interpret some of these questions until now. I hope that my efforts in this book have opened the way for new research. For example, I have offered materials that show not only the similarities of Taíno myth to the body of South American beliefs but also the structural basis for the comparison. In the future, Taíno scholars should be able to discuss myths in the specific terms of the Bird-Nester, close/remote women, and other concepts developed from Claude Levi-Strauss.

I have described the psychological richness of Taíno belief by adding a Jungian dimension to the analysis. I recognize that switching back and forth from history, anthropology, and structuralism to a psychoanalytic perspective has complicated matters, but I trust that the final result was worth the effort. Moreover, through the introduction of psychoanalytic terminology, it became easier to compare Taíno belief with the myths of the classical world and of Asian religions. I hope that on the basis of my research, references to Taíno dualism, the cult of the *cemíes,* the coincidence of opposites, the unconscious path to the numinous, the centroverted hero, and other such concepts will become more frequent in Taíno studies.

Nor ought the results of this study be limited only to a now extinct people. Since the predilection for the unconscious over the phenomenal world required great interiority of the Taínos, their religion endowed the adherents with a marvelous capacity to merge their beliefs with those of other religions. Long after the Taínos had ceased to practice their cults, their dualism permitted simultaneous belief in different religious expressions, both of which could be simultaneously true arid contradictory to the Taíno mind. In other words, acceptance of the Christian faith did not automatically exclude the

persistence of Taíno belief: Such a religious attitude towards syncretic religion is common in today's popular religions of the Caribbean, where a mystic, hidden meaning is often ascribed to Catholic practice. Although such dualistic ambiguity is generally attributed to Afro— American beliefs, it utilizes a pattern developed by the Taínos. The alchemy of religious attitudes lies in the domain of cultural traditions which should not be attributed only to African origins. Indeed, as this study suggests, some Taíno beliefs seem to have assumed African forms.

I would like to think that in some way I have shown the Taíno religion to be like Baibrama—the *cemí* said to have the ability to grow back and restore his arms and legs, eyes, face, hands and feet—no matter how often he was cut up and spread about. As the patron spirit for sowing, Baibrama was like pieces of yuca which were cut apart from the stem and then grew into whole plants. Perhaps the words that the Egyptian Book of the Dead attributed to Osiris (cited in Neumann:228) can be paraphrased and put into the mouth of the Taíno spirit and his Caribbean descendants today: "I have knit myself together: I have made myself whole and complete: I have renewed my youth: I am Baibrama, the Lord of the Taíno people".