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The Josho Nahuanbo Are All Wet and Undercooked: Shipibo Views of the Whiteman and the Incas in Myth, Legend, and History

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My interest in the interrelationships of history and myth among the Shipibo Indians of the Peruvian *montaña* accidentally began while I was researching the Late Prehistory of the upper Ucayali River. In excavations of the hitherto poorly understood eighth and ninth centuries A.D. Cumancaya ceramic complex (Lathrap 1970:136–45) at the type site of Cumancayacocha on the upper Ucayali, I recovered a staggering amount of whole and smashed vessels, the analysis of which yielded incontrovertible proof of the riverine Panoan cultural affiliations of their makers (Roe 1973, 1976; Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe 1975). These discoveries are relevant to the study of narrative traditions among the contemporary riverine Shipibo-Conibo peoples of the Ucayali basin, since one of their myths identifies Cumancayacocha as the origin site of their ancestors.

To paraphrase two variants of the myth, a large village of "Incas" (in a literal sense the Quechua-speaking members of the Andean empire conquered by the Spanish in the sixteenth century) lived there until one day either a woman shaman or the "Inca" poured flight medicine (*noiaraq*) on the ground surrounding the village and it slowly rose. As the village levitated to the sound of drums and flutes, some pots fell to the ground and smashed (the explanation for the ancestral power-impregnated *quēnquēsh*, or pot sherds, which abounded at the site). The village flew over the Ucayali to descend either upon the mysterious Cerros de Cansahuaya on the lower Ucayali, downriver from Pucallpa, or at Masisea (see Gebhart-Sayer 1986a:16 on the Conibo; Roe 1982a:94, 139–40 on the Shipibo).

During the course of excavating sites in the Ucayali basin, my Shipibo workers discovered a ceramic artifact which they promptly (and in some hilarity) identified as a *shēbēnanti*. Archaeologists usually label any enigmatic artifact for which a technical function is not immediately apparent a "ceremonial object," and in this case they would be right. It was a small, slightly concave, baked ceramic rectangle with incised designs on one surface; the modern counterpart is painted with prefire designs in the Shipibo style. It serves as a "vaginal bandage or cover" and is an integral part of the Shipibo-Conibo female puberty rite, the *ani shēati* (big drinking). Applied after a radical clitoridectomy (Roe 1982a:93–112), it is discarded onto the midden after the girl heals, precisely where we recovered it. A veritable "Naven" in the Batesonian sense (Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester 1985:78), this ceremony was a "condensed metaphor" giving insight into the whole of Shipibo-Conibo cosmology. Since this ceremony and the artifact that is central to it are unique to the Shipibo-Conibo, the modern cultural affiliations of the archaeological complex seem clear.

We also recovered a cache of one pure native copper axe and one copper spokeshave at the site. Both of these artifacts were far too soft to have been actually used for technical purposes and must also have had ritual or ceremonial functions. Metallurgical analysis indicated they could only have come from the Andes to the west. In addition to documenting long-distance trade between the Andes and the jungle (Lathrap 1973:181), these metal artifacts indirectly supported the "Inca" (in the sense of a generalized "highlander") affiliation of the ancestral inhabitants of Cumancaya Lake.

Taken together with other similarities in the general artifact assemblage, there seemed little doubt that we had proof of the full fiesta and initiation complex in Cumancaya times and also of 1,000 years of riverine Panoan cultural continuity on the upper Ucayali. We also had the first secure archaeological context for Andean contact on the Ucayali, which validated "a historical kernel of truth in at least one Shipibo mythological account" (Roe 1982a:94).

These archaeological conclusions lead us to question the extent to which Shipibo-Conibo mythology, or at least one or more genres within it, is not "mythology" at all but rather carefully encoded oral history. Recently, Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester (1985) did just that by assembling a complex and powerful argument based on archaeology, ethnography, and historical linguistics, respectively, to isolate one genre of Shipibo-Conibo verbal art, the "Inca tales," as "literal" renderings of the historical past. My position here is slightly at variance but is reconcilable, inasmuch as I stress both the mythic and historical ele-

ments in these tales. Thus, I treat them as the overlap category of "legend."

Faced in a similar way with the apparently "historical" basis of a part of Shipibo-Conibo mythology, I set about collecting versions of the Cumancaya myth, other myths related to it, and information concerning the *ani šhëati* ceremony itself from older women who had undergone it (the ceremony passed out of currency in the 1950s due to missionary and mestizo pressures). The purpose of this fieldwork was to fill in some of the missing pieces in the ethnographic analogy employed in my earlier archaeological studies.

This essay encompasses a rather deep chronological column beyond the customary ethnographic present. It also alludes to time frames beyond the rubber boom of the last century and beyond even the era of the Inca Empire to the Late Prehistoric period of the Peruvian *montaña* during the ninth century. My experience suggests that not only is it appropriate to mention "legend" in the ethnographic context of myth and history, but it benefits the discussion to encompass prehistory as well.

Theoretical Considerations

Before discussing what "myth" and "history" are, one must ask why they exist and what they are intended to do. In his commentary on the papers in this volume, Terence Turner offers a compelling reason for the existence of history apart from the chronicling of facts: it serves to provide the members of society with a sense of "social agency." Through a record of things people did (history), individuals can recognize their unique ability to "make their own world" through personal and collective social action. A society thus lodged in history contains members who are not mere recipients of cultural gifts from the gods or spirits as recorded in myth. In documenting when and how others actively altered the conditions of life in the past, people are free to change other conditions in the present and thereby affect circumstances in the future.

Turner's analysis makes intelligible the common response of Shipibo informants to foolish questions about origins, such as "Where did the *quëñë* [their unique geometric designs] come from?" The answer they often give—"The Inca taught us how to make them"; or "The World Boa [Ronin] instructed us to make even better designs" (Farabee 1922:96; Gebhart-Sayer 1985b:149, 153; 1984:10; Roe 1982a:88)—thus yields more insight into the general mythic viewpoint than it does into the phenomena at issue.

The durability of myth is shown by its seeming ability to "validate"

its accounts via reference to the empirical, sensate world. It does so through a process of "reading in" (to use Boas's term for the variable assignment of "meaning" to geometric motifs) the etiological function of myth and folktale to nature. For example, the Shipibo note that the *jori*, or the green jay (*Cyanocorax yncas*), has purplish streaks below its beak. Their "Stingy Inca" myth says that these streaks derive from the *bile* (*tahui*) that leaked out when the bird ate the Inca's liver, and they remain the distinguishing mark of all the *jori*'s kin to this day. A Shipibo informant will point to the bird's beak as proof that the story is true. The whole landscape, from each whirlpool in the river to every strange tree along a well-known path, is filled with such palpable desiderata of the mythology. Only the most profound anomalies disturb this network of explanation. Yet the creators of myth are quick to attack chinks in their intellectual armor, and so the process continues.

Purely logical concerns do not give the whole reason for the existence of myths (Malinowski 1955a:108). Myths provide explanations of perceived features of nature via analogy and also furnish useful social charters for the cultural status quo. Yet, Beidleman (1980) has shown that myths and folktales do not merely reflect or support social reality but often invert it. By providing a simplified social stage of only a few actors (in contrast to the plethora of actors in a small face-to-face society), who are themselves simplified "cartoons" of single, and often extreme, human emotions (greed, jealousy) or actions (cannibalism, incest) rather than the emotional complexity and ambiguity of actual individuals, they "mind-game," or simulate, the usually disastrous consequences of behavior against the norms. Myths present incorrect behavior precisely to subtly reinforce the social charter underlying correct behavior. This "mythic schematization and inversion" is evident in the role of the "Stingy Inca" in Shipibo mythology.

Drawing upon these anthropological concepts, we may affirm that myths exist to resolve the contradictions of the imperfect matching of conception and action, by simplifying the social world and simulating behavior acceptable to the social charters of the status quo and showing, through the inversion of inappropriate (extreme) behavior, the disastrous consequences of contravening these social charters. The "contradiction" these Shipibo myths attempt to resolve is a novel but compelling one. The Shipibo, like other South Amerindians, are no longer alone. They cannot continue the luxury of dealing, both conceptually and in action, only with other similarly constituted "alien tribals." Such beings comfortably constituted their ultimate "other," the infra- or subhumans of non-Shipibo-Conibo cultural affiliation like the backwoods Panoan Cashibo, Amahuaca, the backwoods Arawakan Campa, or the riverine

Tupían Cocama (Roe 1982a:76–90). Against these peoples the Shipibo-Conibo stand out, in their own eyes, as paragons of civilization. All of these other groups appear as either “less than human” or “more than human”; that is, they are nonhuman and exist as minor ogres in the Shipibo “ethnoanthropological” (Magaña 1982) classifications of human beings, fit only to be killed and their young women “harvested” as captured wives. However, a technologically and socially more powerful set of beings has recently burst onto the scene in South America, forcing all of the Indians, at one time or another, to the brink, or beyond, of social and cultural extinction. These beings are the White Men, the Black Men, and the Mestizos (all capitalized as mythic beings) of Western state societies. Unlike their native enemies, whom the Shipibo managed to either raid or trade with in aboriginal times, the Westerners have engulfed them and still seek to exploit or capture their labor, goods, land, women, cultural allegiances, and souls.

One expects, and finds, the Shipibo-Conibo choosing the simple response of merely redefining the traditional subhuman, or anticultural (cannibalistic ogre = incestuous animal) mythic categories so that they can stuff these Westerners, their artifacts, and even their domesticates into them. Thus, the White Men, the Black Men, and so on, become just another kind of Aquatic Seducer or Forest Ogre in accordance with the aboriginal culinary code. Yet the real-world disparity of wealth and power between these intrusive aliens and the Shipibo does not allow the White Men to remain as just minor animalistic ogres. The Shipibo are caught between their admiration of the Westerner’s machines and a desire for their wealth and social potency, on the one hand, and their contempt for the Westerner’s subhuman, hairy appearance, libidinous (cannibalistic) tendencies, and stingy (anticultural) ways. They are torn by ambiguous and conflicting feelings about the Westerners, which they project in equally ambiguous and conflicting tales. As a reflection of this ambiguity, the Westerners in Shipibo tales often mutate into dual opposed figures. In short, the basic logical contradiction that Shipibo myths about White Men–Black Men–Mestizos attempt to resolve is: How can these new beings, who behave like the Failed Proto-Humans of the remote mythic past or the evil anticultural spirits of the current sacred periphery possess such wealth and power? Attributes like that ought to be the exclusive trappings of truly cultured beings like the Shipibo’s own “Inca” culture heroes and mythic ancestors.

The dual answers to this conundrum are mirror images of each other. Some say the Shipibo’s own ancestors failed by misunderstanding the intent of the Incas and, through greed or lust, brought poverty and powerlessness upon their descendants. Others say the Westerners are to

blame since they stole power, wealth, and machines from the Incas, either by kidnapping them or stealing their treasure—or at least trying to. Hence the “original inequality” among White Men, Black Men, Mestizos, and Indians. While such answers are not unique, the “indirect” Shipibo “Inca transformation” of the Westerners is.

The Hypothesis

Perhaps due to their pivotal *montaña* position, wedged between the societies of the Andes and the Amazon, and their complex history of contact, first with the Inca Empire or even earlier Quechua-speaking “elites,” and then with White Men and other Western aliens, the Shipibo have developed an intergrading set of narrative genres that addresses this conundrum. These genres range from mythologized “personal reminiscences,” to thinly disguised oral history mixed with mythic elements, to myths proper, each of which roughly corresponds to a type of “past time” into which the Shipibo-Conibo readily sort the temporal loci of their tales (Gebhart-Sayer 1986a:1):

1. *Moatian icani*, or the *tiempo de Noe* (time of Noah) in Spanish, a remote and mythic “beginning time”;
2. *Moatian ica*, or *Moatian ini*, the intermediate past of the “time of the Incas,” after the time of creation but before the world of the “Grandfathers”; and
3. *Moatian*, the relatively recent past of the “Grandfathers” that encompasses the last fifteen generations or so, which chronicles the rubber boom and the smallpox epidemics of the nineteenth century.

The “middle time,” or the “past time of the Incas,” is really an overlapping, or “medial” (T. Turner n.d.), category between the remote mythic past and the recent “historical” past, since it incorporates some of the specificity and reliability of the recent past but also retains some of the fantastic or supernatural events and characters of the mythic past. It is the “legendary” past because it fits admirably within Malinowski’s (1955a) hoary typology of “myth and folktale, legend and history.”

I argue that all of these stories are “mythologized” to some extent insofar as they build upon a pre-existent and basal set of dualistic Magical Twins: the Sun and the Moon and their key animal avatars, the Yellow Jaguar and the Black Jaguar and the (Black Cayman-Anaconda) Dragon respectively. The Sun and/or his avatar was the benevolent “culture donor” who gave the secrets of cultural existence, like fire and cultigens, to humankind, thereby making life easier. The malevolent

Moon and/or his avatar was a "stingy," "culture-withholding custodian" who sought to keep humans in a state of nature and who, although defeated by guile with the help of bird intermediaries, remains the origin of all difficulties in this life and, ultimately, of mortality itself.

Through direct or indirect contact with the Inca Empire, the "Incas" were dichotomized into a Good Inca mapped onto the Sun and a Stingy Inca or Evil Inca mapped onto the Moon, but with the same mythic functions. (Still other secular tales record in very naturalistic detail the "cultural" consequences of this contact with an alien elite.) Then the Westerners arrived. At first they were generous, showering the Indians with wealth. But through the trauma of the rubber boom and the *patrón* system, they revealed themselves to be like the Stingy Inca, Yoáshico.

The Good Inca fled and the withholding aliens, who are assimilated with the Evil Inca, kidnapped him or took his buried wealth and now rule. Their god, either God the Father or Jesus, becomes the "Good Inca" and the Sun. But the Shipibo are not fooled and await the millennium, the return of the "real" Good Inca, who will bring with him the White Men's wealth and power while expunging their obnoxious physical presence. A new "Golden Age" (literally, for the color and "preciousness" codes coincide in attributing both kinds of "gold" to the Good Inca = Sun) will dawn, recapitulating the "beginning time" of mythic origins when the Good Inca first gave the people fire. The doomed Whitemen and their ilk will be "melted" in World Floods and/or "cooked = civilized" to death in World Fires. Since these future catastrophes repeat the disasters of the dawn of creation, they reveal that the Westerners were just another kind of Failed Proto-Human from the distant past, supernaturally eruptive into the regrettable present. Westerners masquerade as real people, but their goods and powers are nothing but the stolen patrimony of the Indians. The existence in the 1950s of an abortive but well-documented millenarian movement, centered on a new kind of "fire," shows that this "sacred topology," which warps the mythic past into the mythic future, has had, and may have again, concrete social correlates.

Whether this progression actually happened does not matter. What matters is that the Shipibo do not interact with or conceptualize about White Men and other aliens directly, as do other lowland groups. They have been through this before with the "Incas," whom they use, via the quasi-historical genre of their "Inca tales," as a "conceptual bridge" to understand, via a similar dualistic transformation, these new aliens. The Westerners become Incas also, and they are "two-minded" ones at

that. The existence of a second genre of narratives, Shipibo "personal reminiscence" tales, which also inject myth into history and sometimes involve both "Incas" and White Men, shows that this transformation is not unique to the Inca tales. It is, in fact, the transformation of "legend."

Just as Malinowski (1955a:106) showed that legend is the medial point of conceptual overlap between myth and history, so too do the Inca tales of the Shipibo build a bridge from their memories of the White Men to personal reminiscences about them, and from thence to their folktales of the White Men and their companions. While the Westerners appear as "supernatural" Forest Ogres and Aquatic Seducers in the Shipibo myths, the Inca tales portray a singularly "nonsupernatural" aspect of even archaeologically verifiable historical accuracy. In these three genres we see the birth of myth out of history, just as they reveal the kernel of history in myth.

While the Inca tales readily fall into these categories, which other investigators also have recognized, the only term I have been able to elicit for these types is *moatian joi* (beginning time, word or story). Thus, there is a general term for "jokes," *shiro*, but no term for "trickster tale," even though the latter can be recognized as such and are common (Levy, personal communication, April 14, 1986). In addition to other forms, like origin myths, cosmological myths, and tales of ogres, Gebhart-Sayer (1986a) has recognized Inca tales, which I shall treat here as legends. Levy (n.d.:3) has defined stories of odysseys and trickster tales, and I have isolated animal seduction tales and "personal reminiscences."

What unifies these various kinds of myths, folktales, legends, and reminiscences, in addition to their respective subject matters, are a number of linguistic features that inform the anthropologist that he or she is not hearing ordinary conversation or speechifying. One such feature is the *-ni* suffix, which marks the tense of an action as the distant, unspecified past, that is, mythic or beginning time (Levy n.d.:22; see also *Moatian icani*, above). Another linguistic feature is the *-ronqui* attributive suffix. Like many South Amerindian languages, Shipibo is not only ergative and iterative in structure, but it also pays close attention to rules of epistemological evidence, that is, whether something is hearsay or was attested to by one's own eyes or ears. The suffix *-ronqui* is thus best translated as "they say" and connotes action of great antiquity and indirect attribution, with an implication of "ancestral truth."

It is on the level of subject matter, the identity and nature of the characters, and their activities in time and space that this loosely integrated set of genres reveals its coherence. I will discuss these aspects

in terms of the dynamic or dual triadic¹ dualism evident in the Shipibo creation myth.

Of Proto-Culture and Supernature: The Domain of Myth

The Shipibo often begin their creation myth with the phrase (using the *-ni* and *-ronqui* suffixes): "They say that long ago, when animals could speak like people and people could turn into animals, that the heavens lay so close upon the earth that our ancestors could cook their food in the rays of the Sun, for they had no fire." The analysis of two long myths, *Páno Huëtsa Nētē* ("The Giant Armadillo and the Other World = Light"; see Roe 1984) and *Shopan Baquēbo* ("The Calabash Twins"; see Roe 1982a:63), shows how Shipibo myths are sacred stories, believed to be true, that deal either with Proto-Culture or with Supernature. These terms represent dual medial categories that derive from a binary set of Culture/Nature dyads—not the old "structuralist shell game" of creating a triadic classification out of opposed dual entities and their overlap, but an example of a more sophisticated "dynamic," or "interpenetrating," dualism than the static oppositional dyadic relations Lévi-Strauss (1969, 1973a, 1978, 1981) employed in his otherwise admirable summaries of Amerindian mythology. Figure 1 suggests that there are two categories of overlap between Culture and Nature (necessitating two Venn diagrams). What distinguishes one from the other is a shift in the point of view of the individual using them. A's overlap with B from the point of view of A is something different (C1) than A's overlap with B from the point of view of B (C2). This conceptual tendency to create new entities by shifting one's point of view is uniquely stressed in Shipibo culture, appearing in a number of different domains.

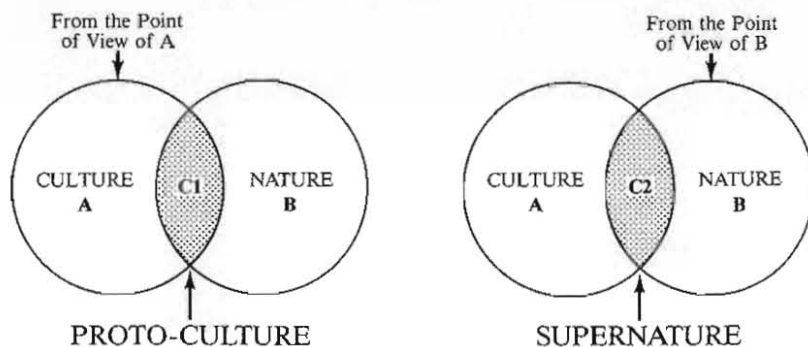


Figure 1. A schematic representation of dual triadic dualism.

Just as the Shipibo can play with "figure/ground" perception in painting, beadwork, and embroidery (by manipulating contrast in their *quēnē* so that the background becomes the figure in one layout and, with a change of contrast, the same figure becomes the background in another; see Roe 1980, 1982b), so too do they weave warp-patterned textiles in "double-cloth" so that the figure on the front of the fabric changes contrast values with and becomes the background on the reverse side of the cloth (A. Rowe 1977). The same principle is present in Shipibo constellations, wherein both "positive" (star-to-star) asterisms and "negative" (black cloud) constellations in the Milky Way are emphasized (Roe 1983a). This frequent recourse to mentally "shifting gears" between the concepts Culture and Nature also produces dual medial zones that form the subject matter of their myths and folktales.

Proto-Culture

Proto-Culture is the first overlap category between Culture and Nature from the point of view of Culture. It is represented by the medial² fire, the false natural fire of the proximate Sun. That this fire was unsatisfactory because it merely "warmed" food rather than cooked it is evidenced by the subsequent attempts of the first animal-people to acquire "real" fire from the Dragon. This liminal time is populated by theriomorphic or anthropomorphic Culture Custodians, who possess the elements of culture, like fire, but use it "naturally," that is, by vomiting it forth when they want to cook with it and devouring it when they are done. They keep the fire hidden in their mouths or stomachs, away from human culture heroes (Roe 1982a:211). Since they know how to use fire but cannot make it, these Culture Custodians lack the key cultural trait of being able to generate transforming fire at will. Therefore they add a medial "rare" category to the opposed categories of "Raw" and "Cooked" in Lévi-Strauss's (1969) original system.

Once humankind has stolen fire from them, the Culture Custodians revert to being just spirits, *yoshi*. As such they can be kept at bay or killed by fire and other hot things like peppers and the colors red and orange. A curing shaman at Caimito noted, "As the *yoshinbo* ["spirits, group of"] all prefer the cold, you can easily deter them with burns" (Illius 1982:3), as well as burning substances like resinous incense and, above all, tobacco smoke (Roe 1982a:106, 208). Their cold and wet nature, the exhalations (*nihuē*) of their presence, like the humid, earthy, pungent vapors that rise from the rotting vegetation in the jungle after a heavy rain or cling to the land in the fog at night, are the stigmata they wear as "left-over beings" from the dark dawn of creation.

The other key element of Culture in Shipibo thought is cultigens. Not only do people refuse to eat their meat raw, they also eat "cultivated" food rather than strictly wild food. This is why "wild" foods like fruits and honey will always have "natural" connotations in their mythology. Just as the Shipibo have to steal fire from Yoáshico (The Stingy One), so too must they outwit him of his cultigens. He has in his garden plot all the plants the Shipibo will come to use, but he does not want to share them. He posts vipers and wasps on them to sting the luckless, animalistic humans and anthropomorphized animals who seek this gift of Culture.

As a symbol of animality, Yoáshico turns the unlucky animal-humans into real animals when they fail in their quest (Kensinger 1975:43 on the Cashinahua). If his stinginess, itself uncultured behavior, does not turn them into animals, then it forces them to behave like animals. It compels these first beings to become thieves who must steal the cultigens so they can plant them, just like the present-day animal thieves, the agouti and squirrel, who steal from humans' garden plots. Even worse, if Yoáshico accedes to their pitiful requests, then he gives them only toasted maize kernels with cynical instructions to plant them (of course, they do not grow); or he gives them tubers but chops them up so they too will not germinate. In either case, he is preventing them from "generating" culture. This is really why Yoáshico and other Failed Proto-Humans are doomed. While they may possess cultural items, they do not behave culturally. Their secretiveness is tantamount to stinginess with knowledge, just as their envy is equivalent to their meanness with things. This contrasts to the essence of true Culture and the truly "cultured" being, which is to share and reciprocate, in knowledge as well as with things.

Ultimately, in the absence of the Magical Twins as culture hero intermediaries, a helpful masculine-affiliated bird intermediary (a high, fast-flying, brilliantly colored bird, not a low, slow, dull-colored, female-affiliated bird) steals the fire and deposits it in the trees for future firewood. Other, but equally helpful, animal intermediaries steal the tubers and seeds. At that point, Yoáshico is challenged to an arrow duel and, being an ogre and therefore totally self-absorbed and stupid, he falls into a pit and dies, full of arrows. Birds come to bathe in his blood and so acquire their plumage colors in the local Shipibo form of the pan-Amazonian "bathing in the blood of the Anaconda" mytheme. The similarity of this Shipibo variant to the more common one, in which the protagonist is the Anaconda, proves that the anthropomorphic Yoáshico, or the Evil Inca, is really a transformation of the Dragon (Roe 1982a:90). Ever since his demise, people can generate fire or grow crops

at will, just as they are free to share them with others because they now possess true Culture.

We thus have three states, not the simple two of Culture/Nature: (1) a state of Nature with no cultural items (fire, cultigens) and no cultural behavior (sharing/reciprocating); (2) a state of Custodial Culture with cultural items but not the ability to generate them and no cultural behavior; and (3) a state of Culture wherein items can be generated at will and shared on demand. Myths are rather like the "rites of passage of the mind"; they translate us from Nature to Culture in a Van Gennepian indirect tripartite process. In other words, myths are about the medial elements and behavior, how we got them and how we transcended them. But that is not all they are about.

Supernature

Myths are also about "unity." Following Dumont (1976), I call this facet "Supernature." Myths are tales about the "Golden Age," when all aspects of reality (time, space, and human/animal nature) were part of a single seamless unity. It is the function of myth to explain what that union was like, how it was lost, and how it can be regained.

In their creation myths, the Shipibo incorporate an integrated worldview that ties the differentiation of human/animal nature with the spatial segregation of the planes of the universe and the beginnings of temporal periodicity. Just as it represented union in lacking the differentiation of Culture from Nature, and hence was represented by Proto-Cultural fire (the heat of the Sun), so too was Nature primordially undifferentiated. If the current world of everyday experience is marked by an alternation of day and night, the Shipibo "beginning world" was uniform, either a continuous day, the *Nētē Ehua* (day or world, great), or a night without end, the *Yamēcan Ehua* (night, great), the Eternal Night. Just as we use the diurnal/nocturnal alternation as the basis for our divisions of time, whether in minutes or seconds, the Shipibo speak of the position of the sun in the sky to mark the time of day, or of how many moons ago something occurred. Therefore, without this daily succession there was no time. Instead, it was always day, a world illuminated by a burning Sun that hovered motionless, too close to the earth, lethal in its unabated heat, the cause of a World Fire; or it was always night, a cold world dominated by a stationary Moon and filled with the waters of the *Jēñēn Ehua* (water, big), the World Flood, in whose dark waters carnivorous caimans and anacondas thrashed.

Just as time was homogeneous, so too was space. The separated worlds of the Underworld, the Earth, and the three superimposed Heavens of

the current Shipibo cosmos (Roe 1982a:113) did not yet exist. Rather, they all nestled together, undifferentiated, as a single world platter. That is why the Sun lay close upon the Earth (Eakin, Lauriault, and Boonstra 1980:57; Tessman 1928:199).

The Shipibo case thus illustrates the general principle. In contrast to the "uniformitarian" X-Y grid of equivalent time and equidistant two-dimensional space, which locates persons and events in history (e.g., Ssu-ma Ch'ien lived and wrote his *Shih Chi* in Han Dynasty China in 200 A.D.), as Eliade (1959) noted in his distinction between sacred and profane space/time, the grid of myth is a deformable, three-dimensional, topological torus. While a nanosecond now may be equal to one in the Devonian, or a micron across the ice in the Arctic equal to one in the Antarctic for a scientist or a historian, one square centimeter in the Sinai desert is not equivalent to a square centimeter in the Old Temple, or the Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem, nor is one day now the same as one of the six days of creation to a believer in the Judeo-Christian-Muslim tradition. This is the world of myth, the world of Supernature.

Sexed Space: Of Territories Sacred and Profane

The Shipibo model of social space is a concentric one. It is a kind of "sexed space" where the sexual division of labor is mapped onto horizontal zones. During the day, the center of the village compound is sacred to the extent that the central hearth is the women's domestic axis (Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester 1985:99-100) in this uxorilocal society. A Shipibo village is a loosely articulated affair built around residential compounds (Roe 1980), strung together in a linear fashion, like beads, along natural levees or old alluvial bluffs near the rivers or lakes. The carefully swept plaza, the *jëma*, which surrounds the residential huts and the cook sheds of each compound, is coterminous with the village itself (Siegel and Roe 1986). The *jëma* represents cleared cultural space bordered by the green wall of the jungle and the house gardens (Roe and Siegel 1982c).

Gebhart-Sayer (1985a:7-8) uses the indigenous concept of *quiquin*, "the beautiful," to describe the village and compound *jëma* as the "obvious confirmation of the contrast between culture and nature in an ocean of vegetation which threatens to engulf everything. All things ordered, predictable and trustworthy are found within the village, while the forest wilderness is unordered, arbitrary and full of dangers," especially for this riverine-oriented culture. Since another term used to

describe the all-too-perfect "Platonic form" of *Nishi* (*Banisteriopsis* sp.)-inspired visions is *quiquin*, perhaps the Shipibo are striving, in the obsessive cleaning of their own "this-worldly" plazas, for the perfection of the "other world," the brilliant celestial *jëmas* of the Sky Spirits.

On the next ring out is the surrounding "profane intermediate region" of Nature, which encompasses the house gardens, secondary forest, and village garden plots, as well as the snaking paths that connect the compounds to each other, together with the canoe landing where the paths (*bai*) end. On the furthest concentric ring out, the world of Nature and Supernature begins, comprised of meandering rivers with their dangerous whirlpools (*toro*), vast swamps (*nëshba*), the feared deep forest (*ni mëran*, "forest," "deep in-side"), and, within the latter, the sinister isolated mountain (*ani mana*, "big," "hill"), outliers of the Andes. The riverine Shipibo particularly avoid the forest for there live the *yoshi* in their nature-fact huts, or hollow trees hidden beneath the gloom of the leafy canopy.

During the night this sacred periphery collapses into the sacred center and the Shipibo hasten to their huts (*šhobo*), their friendly fires, and the security of their cotton mosquito nets (*bach*, "egg"). Even the bravest hunter hurries back along the paths lest he encounter in the dusk a wandering spirit hungry for human flesh (Roe 1982a:91) or, just as deadly, one that is lonely for human company. There are thus two domains: one leafy and the other watery, where these Forest Ogres or Aquatic Seducers can be found. As leftovers from primordial time, they engage in distinctly anticultural activities (cannibalism, incest) and lack cultural institutions like fire and cultigens. They can be "civilized to death" by "cooking" their raw essences in fire. Myths concern these supernatural beings and the Alien Tribals, like the backwoods Panoan Cashibo (Vampire Bat People), who are assimilated with them. White Men, Black Men, and Mestizos are the new occupants of this anticultural niche.

Since these domains are supernatural space, and sacred space is time, we also find that as one travels out into these remote concentric regions—the swamps, the forest, the mountains—or into the night, one goes back in time, to their time. Thus, there are three times in which stories about Proto-Culture and Supernature may occur: the remote antiquity of beginning time; the quasi-historical time of the "Incas," in which archaic things and strange events may still occur; and the present, but the present of the sacred periphery. To begin with the present, we start with "new myths," or personal reminiscences, proceed back to legends, and end with established myths set in the remote past.

In this class of narrative, a personal reminiscence becomes a legend

and the legend behaves like a myth. In fact, these personal legends may eventually become assimilated into myths once they have been generalized. Below is one such instance of "walking into the ideology." My main informant, Manuel Rengifo, and I were discussing the "Incas," and he narrated this tale to me with a nonchalance that marked it as a bit of "real" personal history (field notes, text no. 67).

The Inca Who Was at Tsoaya Ihan³

It is said that in Tsoaya Ihan, the [water] was very transparent, crystal clear, during the time when the Šhetebo⁴ were new inhabitants there. The lake was clear all the way to the bottom. They say that one could see all kinds of things in there like *cabúri* [the *taricaya* water turtle, *Peltocephalus taricaya*], *huamë* [the *paiche* fish, *Arapaima gigas*], and *amaquiri* [the *gamitana* fish, *Serrasalmus* sp.]. One could see them swimming about very clearly. When it was like that they say that the *chaiconi* [invisible, transforming humanoids] turned the mirror over and therefore now one can no longer see to the very bottom. One can see something, but not down to the very bottom. This happened in Nētë Caya Ihan after the Šhetebo had recently been killed off [in the Jēnēn Ehua]. The newly deceased Šhetebo who had disappeared were there. The name of the lake was Nētë Caya.

The Inca lived there after the Great Flood had exterminated the Šhetebo. [They died] because they had buried his son. When they say that [the lake] was very clear one [man] headed toward the *caño* [intake/outlet rivulet] which debouches into Nētë Caya lake. [The man] went there to go fishing. On the shore of the lake there was a house with an aluminum roof. Looking from the mouth of the *caño* toward the house [the man noticed that] there were men talking inside. But just as he got closer, looking [again, he saw] that the men had disappeared. Attracted [to this strange thing] the man approached closer and saw that the men were [really] no longer there. Only the eggs of their chickens and ducks and a lot of *bimpish* [the *guayaba* tree, *Psidium guajava*] remained.

The chickens and ducks had laid their eggs beneath the *bimpish* [trees]. The house was well closed in and they say that in front of its door there was very clean sand. Both the *shahuë* [the *charapa* mud turtle, *Podocnemis expansa*] and the *cabúri* were laying their eggs there. Thus the *caño* was then, they say. Now it is all closed in [overgrown]. Now nobody goes there. That is why there is now a lot of game that abounds there.

Then, during that time in the past, we ourselves had gone there. Arriving and looking around, [we saw] that it was like that. [I] went [there] at night and while I was there I saw airplanes flying around. [Even though] it was very late, in the middle of the night, the planes flew without lights. Only the roar of their engines, ROON, was heard. It was very mysterious. They were different from the planes which fly about over here [in Yarinacocha].

Note the narrator's shift from indirect ascription to direct personal reminiscence, thus confirming the tales. The tin-roofed, closed-in mestizo-style house and the mysterious airplanes mark these "Incas" as Westerners while at the same time preserving the "flight motif" of the ancient, indigenous Incas from the flight medicine of the Cumancaya myth (see Gebhart-Sayer 1986a:16 on the Conibo). Other mythic variants directly equate the airplanes with the Indian Incas to achieve symbolic closure: "When the Spaniards came, also many Incas fled into the Ucayali forest. From these people, too, the Conibo and Shipibo learned many things. These Incas still live today. They own airplanes and everything. They are in the sky and hide in the forest. They had intended to teach us how to fly in airplanes" (Gebhart-Sayer 1986a:25). The "airplanes" and "flight medicine" of the Incas are mythic transformations of the avian avatars of the Sun. Solar birds like the Hummingbird and the Scarlet Macaw are the "planes" that traditional shamans used to reach the Sun. Since the Good Inca is assimilated with the Sun, and the Westerners are merged with the Good Inca (at least until they refuse to share their things with the Indians), both Incas and Westerners will fly about in magical planes.

From the perfect meshing of myth with personal reminiscence legends to the tales of the legendary Incas, all the genres intergrade in Shipibo-Conibo oral literature. Thus the Inca tales, of which this is partially an example, are a truly intermediate type between myth and history. While some have stressed their historic content, I emphasize their mythic attributes. Neither view is wrong, save when they maintain exclusivity. The overlap between the two polar types is, in fact, legend. Rephrased, the Shipibo mediate history and myth with legend.

Inca Tales as Legend

Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester (1985) have presented a bold argument, based on archaeology, ethnography, and historical linguistics, respectively, that one genre of Shipibo-Conibo oral literature, the Inca tales, is not really "mythology" at all but rather precise oral history. They point out that these tales are surprisingly homogeneous, numerous, and conspicuously lacking in the sort of supernatural events that characterize myth. The three extract paleo-ethnography from these tales to reconstruct details of the past migration of a ruling elite and its grafting onto an old Panoan substratum, treating the Inca tales as the record of the social relations between that elite and the

ruled from the perspective of the descendants of the ruled, the Shipibo-Conibo. Based in part on an argument I made earlier (Roe 1973), that prior to 800 A.D. the fine-ware component of the Panoan-affiliated Cumancaya complex revealed massive influence from the ceramic traditions of the Ecuadorian *montaña* far to the north, Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester (1985:66) identify that influence as deriving from the migration of a pre-Incaic, Quechua-speaking elite southward from the Ecuadorian Oriente along the flanks of the Andes into the Ucayali. In their opinion these are the "Incas" to which the tales refer, not the members of the historic Inca Empire.

Earlier authors, like Farabee (1922:96), who had the riverine Panoans beating off an actual Inca expeditionary force, or Waisbard (1958-59:24), who had all manner of exotic Andean populations migrating into and residing on the Ucayali, have offered equally literal reconstructions of population movements from the Andes, in spite of the lack of archaeological evidence supporting such "invasions." While Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester's thesis is more plausible, precisely because it incorporates archaeological evidence, Gebhart-Sayer (1986a:10) has also articulated a less radical thesis of indirect contact with the Inca Empire, via its *mitma* system of intentional colonization or via fugitives. These may have been the mechanisms that produced the specific Shipibo-Conibo "remembrances" of the "Incas" at a later pre- or postcontact time.

My command of Quechua linguistics is not adequate to evaluate the pre-Incaic argument, but my own Inca tales could lend credence to either of the more cautious positions: indirect contact during Incaic times, perhaps via trade, or postcontact Incaic colonization by highland Quechua fleeing to the *montaña* from the Spanish (as some highlanders are doing to this day). While I thus support Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester's historical reading of myth, I suggest that they have failed to notice the mythic elements in history. What they call "history" is really "legend." They are correct, however, that these tales form a specific genre in Shipibo-Conibo-Pisquibo oral literature. The tales also appear to be more common as one goes further upriver to Caimito, where Gebhart-Sayer worked, than downriver at Yarinacocha, Tsoaya, or Santa Rosa, Aquaitía, where I have done fieldwork. This is precisely as it should be, since in going upriver one approaches the Inca's Andean home.

The three are also correct that Quechua in general and Incaic knowledge in particular are pervasive and integrated influences in modern riverine Panoan culture (see Roe 1982a:86-90). Indeed, these riverine Panoans, and to some extent even the backwoods ones, have a veritable "Inca fixation" (Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester 1985:41; Waisbard

1958-59:24). The Incas act as benign culture heroes and are given credit for everything, from the invention of a portion of the design system to how one paddles a canoe! Yet there are also things the Panoans are credited with having before the Inca's arrival, in particular the female puberty ceremony, of which the "Incas" disapproved. This gives such attributions a "factual" aura since, if the Incas were just mythic culture heroes, they would be given credit for everything.

Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester's "literal" reading of Inca tales can be summarized as follows. As an Andean society with access to ore sources nonexistent in the alluvial lowlands, "they owned or introduced unknown techniques like flight medicine, how to catch large fish, how to use *Ayahuasca* [*Nishi*] and make fire, how to count days and soften stones, how to fly planes and make [metal] knives" (Gebhart-Sayer 1986a:7). Yet the Incas are also credited with the introduction of indigenous lowland crafts like pottery, textiles, and woodwork (Bardales 1979:34-35, 52-53). They brought in new cultigens too (Gebhart-Sayer 1986a:7). However, it was with their equipment that the Incas first instructed the Panoans in "high technology" and the use of stone axes and clubs, bows and arrows, "shining" or stone (probably metal) boats, and metal implements (Gebhart-Sayer 1986a:7). Being a stratified society, the Incas also brought class- or caste-based ethnic interactions. It is here that the texts take on an uncanny "historical" aspect (more so than with many of the above "gifts," like fire and cultigens, which traditional culture heroes also customarily bring in myth):

For purposes of our argument the themes of the Inca cycle can be summarized: (1) The geographical locations, "Where the Inca lived" or "Where we lived with our Inca," are always precisely geographically described or even named. Among them Cumancaya figures prominently. (2) The Incas arrived on the Ucayali in groups, families, or as individuals, bringing along women, secretaries, workers, servants, and soldiers, traveling the Perené, Pachitea, and Urubamba rivers and using a footpath called [*bai nashua*] (broad path). Bridges are described and located. (3) They established themselves in already existing settlements and treated the Panoans as tributary subjects, servants, or communal workers. Intermarriage was problematic. . . . [4] The punishments for rebellious Panoans were hitting over the head and the application of poisonous animals. [5] They propagated communal work (nowadays called the *minga* among the Shipibo-Conibo) and collective ownership of the gardens. . . . [6] They gave the Panoans advice, settled disputes, and cared for them as far as food and clothing were concerned. [7] The Incas caused both quiet resistance and open rebellion. In one reported case they had to flee to the mountains from the Panoans. (Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester 1985:64-65)

Dualism and the Incas

My differences with this view tend to undermine the apparent historicity of the Inca tales. I contend that while Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester are correct that this genre is more historical than other genres in Shipibo-Conibo verbal art, it nevertheless also incorporates mythic elements. The first of these mythic aspects is the fact that magical or supernatural events do occur in these narratives, albeit less than in other stories. This is especially true in the case of the Cumancaya and *Incan* Baquë/Jënën Ehua cycles, where one sees the Incas miraculously surviving internment, causing World Floods, and engaging in magical voyaging and village levitation. These magical episodes argue for the mythologizing of historical tales.

Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester also ignore the repeated and obvious parallels between the Incas and the pre-existent Magical Twins: Sun/Moon = Dragon of riverine Panoan mythology. It is true, however, that many, not just two, Incas are mentioned in the Inca tales. This supports both the historicity of the tales and the analysis of the Incas as an elite population and not just a twin set. Indeed, the mention of specifically identified Incas (Curi Inca, Chëshë Inca, Inca Nima, Para Inca, Shanö Inca, etc.) supports the social agency aspects of these figures as unique historical personages.⁵ Yet, the behavior of these multitudinous characters polarizes into the two stingy/generous twins.

Furthermore, both the Stingy Inca and the Good Inca appear in the same myths as contending figures (whether as asymmetrical pairs like the evil father-in-law and the smart son-in-law or as symmetrical twins), and with the appropriate animal avatars (Snake-Anteater = Evil Inca/Jaguar-Eagle = Good Inca). Gebhart-Sayer (1986b:1) recognizes these equations and offers the following myth in support of the Magical Twins being equated with the Inca:

Long after the Great Deluge and the ascension of the Good Inca = Christ to Heaven, the Bad Inca, who had stayed behind, inflicts the Long Night on mankind. During this time of perpetual darkness, giant cannibalistic Vampire Bats feed on people, and disease, earthquakes, inundations and fires produce continuous suffering. The Good Inca returns from the sky and "He first asked the Incas [these first people]: 'Who causes these catastrophes?' But no one knew."

He then travels downriver with two companions: the Black Iron Jaguar and the Steel Harpy Eagle and comes to the tremendous foaming sea. There the Good Inca transforms himself into a small red [jë] ant and floats out to an island on the sea foam. There, in a White Man's style house he overhears the Bad Inca plotting further destruction for "[his] children," in spite of his wife's remonstrances. The Bad Inca tells her not to worry since

he is invulnerable. He has hidden his heart inside a *Coma* (a tinamou) and has placed the Tinamou inside a *Chasho* (red deer), which, in turn, he has placed inside his Iron Giant Anteater (*Ahua shaëu* [shao = "bone"], "tapir anteater").

The Good Inca overhears this, and sends his Iron Black Jaguar into the water to kill the Iron Giant Anteater of the Bad Inca. After a terrible battle the Jaguar kills the Anteater, but the Deer leaps out of its opened chest when it is dragged to dry land by the Jaguar. The Jaguar pursues and kills it, but out of the opened chest of the Deer flies the Tinamou. The Tinamou is pursued by the Good Inca's Steel Eagle which overtakes and kills it at the zenith. The Good Inca now rips the pulsating heart from the Bad Inca's chest. However, he goes back to the Bad Inca's house and hears his voice, his threats and the sound of the Evil Inca's wife cautioning him again. The Good Inca throws the Evil Inca's heart onto the table and the latter finally expires.

But the Bad Inca's soul travels far away to the country of the *Gringos*, probably the United States. *Mestizo* fishermen, *Mozos*, claim they saw him "there on the beach, all dressed in gold." After being presented to the President there he builds himself a golden house inside the earth beneath the President's palace. There he taught the *Gringos* how to manufacture machines, factories and airplanes. The narrator reports a U.S. missionary who showed him a picture of the Bad Inca (possibly Jesus) "youthful and beautifully dressed" inside his golden house. Being ignorant of who the Bad Inca really was, the missionary claimed that he was their God who had given them everything they owned!

Then the Good Inca returned upriver from the ocean to the Ucayali and "promised his people that until his next return no further catastrophes were to be expected, because the originator of the suffering was defeated." And indeed, "since that time, eclipses, storms, inundations, fire and earthquakes" have caused little suffering. (material in quotation marks is Gebhart-Sayer's; paraphrase, orthography, and identifications are mine)

As Gebhart-Sayer (personal communication, 1986) points out, "I think it will help you in your twin issue, as it is another instance where the two Incas appear together, even in an antagonistic constellation (almost like God and [the] Devil)." It is a syncretistic myth since it incorporates an aboriginal astronomical myth (the Black Jaguar is the Coal Sack, while the Tinamou is probably another Dark Cloud constellation in the Milky Way; the Deer is the origin of the Deer's Eye, a bright star in the Milky Way = *Chashon Bai*, "Deer's Path"; see Roe 1983a), with modern imagery that accounts for the wealth and machines of the White Men and the Good Inca's "buried treasure" and his imminent return.

The positional and theriomorphic code relationships are maintained in this confrontation. The Good Inca is associated with the Sky and the Sun, the Evil Inca with the Water and the Lunar Subterranean realms. Each is assisted by an appropriate animal avatar "canoe": the Evil Inca

with the Giant Iron Anteater and the Good Inca with his Giant Iron Black Jaguar. While no snake is mentioned for the Bad Inca, an ophidian combinatorial variant, the Giant Anteater, appears. The Iron Anteater is a transformation of the Iron *Ácoro* (Black Anaconda) Ship Serpent of Shipibo mythology (Harner 1980:91-92) on two grounds. In ethology the Giant Anteater (*Myrmecofaga jubata*) is one of the few animals capable of holding its own against that "super predator," the Jaguar, and appears in animal trickster tales as its enemy (Roe 1982a:190). On the morphological/analogic level, the long snaky tongue encased in the hollow bony tube of this edentate's mouth is linked to the similarly sinuous body of the snake (Roe 1982a:188-90). In turn, the bony tube is related to the blowgun, which is itself a transform of the Anaconda (Roe 1982a:52).

All of the other "encapsulated" animals of the Bad Inca have evil connotations, while both creatures linked to the Good Inca have positive linkages. The Shipibo link the Deer inside the Anteater to souls and corpses, the prey of the Moon, while the Tinamou is one of those laboriously flying "feminine birds" (Roe 1982a:63) that are opposed to the high-flying birds of the Sun = Good Inca like the Harpy Eagle. The battles between the avatars of the major figures repeat, in a minor mode, the clash of the major Magical Twins: the Good Inca and the Evil Inca. The rebirth of the Evil Inca in the land of the White Men is another variant of the *Inca Cani* (Withdrawing Inca) mytheme and sheds light on the "buried Inca" mytheme to follow.

This battle between the two Incas continues on another plane, that between in-laws in adjacent generations rather than between siblings in the same generation. Due to brideservice and uxorilocal residence, the son-in-law/father-in-law dyad is a point of some friction in Shipibo society. A father-in-law looks forward to a long period of service from an industrious and skilled son-in-law, while the son-in-law desires as short a period as possible and a rupture of the uxorilocal pattern to return to his natal compound. This fosters an avoidance relationship between these two males to minimize contact and friction.

In mythology, the correct relationship of a generous father-in-law and a dutiful son-in-law is inverted to show the dangers of incorrect behavior. Within the sibling set, the elder brother is assimilated with the role of wise and benevolent father and the younger brother with the foolish and malevolent son (the Good Inca and the Bad Inca, respectively). When in-law relationships are used, the age differences become morally reversed. Now it is the evil father-in-law who becomes the cannibal and attempts to kill and eat his smart son-in-law. Numerous Shipibo tales thus use dragonic figures, like the *Bi Yoshin* (Mosquito Spirit; see Roe

1983b), to represent the father-in-law, who makes excessive demands on his son-in-law (not just of his labor but also ultimately of his body). Since the Evil Inca has already been linked to the Dragon, we also have tales about the Evil Inca as a cannibalistic father-in-law who presents his hapless son-in-law with impossible trials as a pretext to eat him when he fails.

In this role, the Evil Inca becomes specifically identified as Yoáshico, the Stingy One: "After everybody had seen how bad this Inca was, another Inca came and defeated him. He married the daughter of the bad Inca. One day the new Inca went fishing on the lake. His evil father-in-law followed him to transform him into a heron, but the young Inca could avoid the assault" and the next day he ambushed and transformed his father-in-law into the sinister *Manshanteo*, the *Toyuyo*, or Jabiru Stork (*Jabiru mycteria*; see Gebhart-Sayer 1986a:18). This is a huge bird that, when seen from a distance on the *playas*, the Shipibo say looks like a soldier (*sontáro*; from the Spanish *soldado*) in white coat and black leggings. In another variant, the Josho Inca (White Inca; possibly, White Man Inca) acts in the Yoáshico role and is also transformed into a Jabiru with his followers as Herons (*Manshan*)—all aquatic birds.⁶ Here the son-in-law is specifically identified as Rey Dios Baquë (King God, from the Spanish; child or son, from the Shipibo), or King God's Son, a form of the Baquë Mëraya (Child Shaman), son of the Sun (Gebhart-Sayer 1986a:20).

Thus, while these tales may refer to an alien elite in a historical sense, they are also a part of the Magical Twins mythic cycle. As the Incas have become mythologized by relating them to the dualistic culture hero Sun/Moon anticultural figures, history has become legend. Moreover, this prior experience with the "Incas" led the Shipibo-Conibo to do the same thing to the Westerners when they arrived. They too were mythologized, first into benevolent sun figures and then malevolent moon figures. The same fate awaited the Westerner's deities. This, in turn, leads to chiliastic expectations of the return of the benevolent Inca, who is still alive, perhaps buried, somewhere (Maxwell 1975:382).

The Inca and Chiliastic Expectations

The Shipibo-Conibo have elaborated the genre of Inca tales into a rich diversity of narratives and associated beliefs. These legends give cultural form to a variety of alien social practices and products which, from an indigenous perspective, are viewed in highly ambivalent terms: the Christian ideology of Good versus Evil, the inequality of trade

relations between white/mestizo merchants and indigenous laborers, and the technological tokens (e.g., firearms and metal currency) of the Spanish conquest and colonial domination over indigenous Andean peoples. A detailed account of these narratives would require monographic treatment, so in the following discussion I select only those legends that deal with chiliastic expectations and the social relations between the Shipibo-Conibo and the white/mestizo/black outsiders. It is precisely the mythic aspects of their millenarian expectations (Harner 1974) that lead the Shipibo-Conibo themselves to affirm the historicity of the Inca tales and "the asserted former presence of the Incas on the Ucayali river" (Gebhart-Sayer 1986a:3).

Since the mythic past will loop back into the mythic future of the coming of the millennium, these historical tales become legendary in their prophecy of the future. The Shipibo seek to throw the switch of time, to return White Men and Black Men to the past from whence they came. Led by shamans, they will expel the Westerners by rebelling in the future. Then, the intrusive White Men will be revealed for what they always were, another class of Failed Proto-Humans awaiting oblivion through their "tragic flaws," greed and stinginess. True humans, Indians, will triumph, but with the White Men's riches.

My informants, when talking about the revitalistic cult of Wasēmea,⁷ the rare female *mēraya* (the highest grade of transforming ventriquoistic shamaness) of the 1950s (Lathrap 1976:203), showed that this past was a proto-cultural one by affirming that she and her followers awaited the White Men's end in their thatched temples while cooking on a special "blue fire." This was their symbol, being a "new" fire different from the fire of the White Men. It marked the dawn of the new age, just like a new Sun, and showed that, like all Failed Proto-Humans, the White Men did not even know how to cook properly! The movement failed when the expected millennium never materialized. Yet the cult left behind a characteristic curvilinear design style that Wasemēa pioneered, as well as a feeling that she was an evil woman, a witch, who misled the people. Moreover, the resentment against White Men and Mestizos that was an element of that movement still exists, and a return of millenarian consciousness is always possible as acculturative and land pressures continue to mount against the Indians.

This vision bespeaks a more positive view of the "original inequality" between the Westerners and the Indians than the Shipibo "first theory" that defensively lays the blame on their own ancestors. The "second theory," in being more aggressive and showing greater pride, bodes well for the Shipibo's future relationships with Westerners. Only if the Shipibo have pride in themselves and their culture can they make the

decisions to accept some and reject other elements of Western civilization. The opposite stance of total acceptance, which backwoods Panoans like the Iscobakebu have shown, deriving from a low self-image, is tantamount to cultural death.

The heart of the Shipibo's argument lies in their use of the pre-existent "culinary code" (Lévi-Strauss 1969) to portray White Men and Black Men as imperfectly made and, therefore, Failed Proto-Humans vis-à-vis the perfectly fabricated Indians, the legitimate inheritors of creation. The following myth completes the formula by asserting that White Men are underdone and doomed to melt away in the coming cataclysm (field notes, text no. 61).

The Creation of [the Races] of Mankind by the Inca

In ancient times, the Inca made men from the dust [of the earth]. After modeling the form [of one of the men] the Inca put him in a kiln. In a little while he took him out and the [man] left the kiln slightly undercooked. From this man descended the *Josho Nahuanbo*. Then [the Inca] made another man. After forming him [the Inca] put him in [the kiln] again.

Then [the Inca] took him out. When he looked at him [the Inca] saw that he was too well cooked; [he was] black. We ourselves call him [the ancestor of] the *Rashico*.

Then the Inca said once more, "The two whom I have made are not as they should be. Now I will mold another." Speaking thus, he made another one and put him in the kiln to bake him. Then the *Panshinshaman* [yellowish; in some contexts, reddish] person left the kiln. He was what we call the color of the Indians. When he had looked at him the Inca said, "He is good."

This tale, which completes the survey of genres, from personal reminiscence to historical legend and finally myth, shows how the Shipibo retain a sense of superiority over Caucasians, even while acknowledging the intruders' technical supremacy. The White Men/Black Men do not just erupt like their diseases, they also come from the distant past—unfinished and "rare." This myth bridges the domain of Proto-Culture to the creation of "proper humans," the Indians, by placing the fabrication of the protohuman White Men and Black Men before the origin of the Shipibo but after the Good Inca creator god. The Good Inca is assimilated with the beneficent Sun, who baked the wet mud of the newly emergent land after the waters of the World Flood receded with the heat of his day. Not only do White Men act like boorish intruders from the proto-cultural past, they are the Failed Proto-Humans of beginning time. Nevertheless, they have managed to live on into the present, via a mythic torus that has topologically deformed sacred time-space.

These modern intruders, original denizens of the dark and aquatic past, come from the sacred wet periphery and are doomed to "melt away" again into it when the Inca returns in a new golden day.

Just as the Shipibo-Conibo have elaborated their Inca tales into a rich genre of oral narratives, so too have they developed an extensive corpus of narratives and beliefs mythologizing the White Men and Mestizos and their cultures. These narratives can be understood as transformations of Shipibo-Conibo narrative genres in which the mythic-historical genre of Inca tales, or legends, serves as a conceptual bridge between Shipibo-Conibo consciousness of their own society and that of their relations with white/mestizo/black outsiders.

The Mythic Transformation of History (Legend)

I have argued here that the Shipibo have gone from history, through legend, to myth in their understanding of the intrusive Westerners. Moreover, this is a direct reflection of the actual history of Riverine Panoan experience with the "ultimate aliens." Perhaps there was a happy coincidence of their history, which breaks into two contrasting episodes, and the dualistic basis of Shipibo ideology. During their first halcyon era of contact with the Spanish, which started in 1557-1691 with Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries competing for the souls of the natives by being lavish in their gifts of iron and cloth, the whites were likened to an earlier experience of "culture donation" and generosity on the part of the Good Inca. When later demands for labor and cultural change turned these benevolent beings into the Bad Inca, the Conibo erupted in a massive rebellion (1693-98), which closed their homeland to the Spanish (DeBoer 1981:31-37).

Another period of rapprochement ensued, which turned into the nightmare of the rubber boom and *patrón* exploitation (Tessman 1928:11-12). The present is marked by systematic encroachment on the part of the surrounding mestizos, mostly the acculturated descendants of the riverine Panoan's hereditary enemies, the Tupian Cocama, and an increasing politicization of the Indians themselves, as an indirect result of the bilingual educational program instituted by the North American Evangelical (S.I.L.) missionaries operating out of their huge aerodrome bases on Lake Yarina. It is no wonder that the present imagery of the Whites, Blacks, and Mestizos should tilt toward the "dragonic" end of the symbolic continuum. Ironically, the present spotily applied educational system is bringing in historical information on the Inca Empire, a central and proud element in modern Peruvian

national identity, which appears to corroborate the historical basis of the Shipibo-Conibo's own legendary Inca tales. Thus the stage is set for the continuing interaction of myth and history in the form of nascent millenarian movements.

Conclusion

We have come a long way from Thunder, Black (Evil) Jaguars, Anacondas and Caimans, swamp-dwelling and cave-inhabiting anthropomorphic spirits, to Inca gods, Aquatic Seducers, Forest Ogres, and millenarian saviors. To appreciate how the Shipibo have intellectually "digested" White Men/Black Men as recent historical intrusives, we must also understand how they dealt with earlier pre- and protohistoric "Inca" arrivals. Fundamental to this uneasy process of social adjustment is the profound ambivalence that the quasi humans elicit and the Shipibo myths reflect. On the one hand, the Caucasians are the historical "winners," triumphant in their superior technology and social organization. Thus they and their mestizo progeny are the inheritors of the indigene's wealth from a golden age. But they do not want to share. Their inhuman (greedy, cannibalistic) character aligns them with ogres and the "untamed" forested, mountainous, or watery sacred periphery. They are anticultural figures, doomed to be obliterated by a mythic topological looping, a deformation of mythic time-space. The present periphery becomes the remote precultural past; the White Men are assimilated with Monkeys, Dwarfs, and Giants, the Failed Proto-Humans of the first worlds.

Curiously enough, the present domination by Westerners offers hope for a perfectable future. Through an Indian messiah (male or female), who will emerge from the earth while mayhem rains from the heavens, the currently rampant aliens will be smitten. Thunder will seal the White Men's doom, just as Thunder assimilated their initial harquebus/machine-gun victories. Indians, who once disdained the flashing weapon, will now embrace it and drive the *Viracochas*, whom they once welcomed, into the waters from whence they came.

While it might appear that the Forest Ogre, the Evil Inca, and the White Men all obey Roland Barthes's (1984) "obsessional play of symbolic substitutions," one taking the place of the other in an endless gyre, as they "continue to function as algorithms to be used by mythic thought for the carrying out of the same operations" (Lévi-Strauss 1981:537), all is not just ahistorical structure. The dynamic dualism of the Shipibo system is also responsive to the exigencies of history. Perhaps,

however, in their case, we find a happy congruence between history and the paradigmatics of oral tradition. The long and curiously "binary" pattern of historical contact between the worldly and widely traveled "canoe-Indian" Shipibo and the Westerners led them to differentiate these aliens into dualistic beings like their native supernaturals, at first benign and now malignant. This may have replicated an earlier period of contact with the expanding Inca Empire and perhaps an even earlier, but equally expansive, lowland Quechua-speaking "elite."

It is not just a matter of ahistorical structure, or of unstructured history, but of a "structural history" that orders dyadic historical episodes into dualistic figures and then mythically projects these figures upon the "mirror world" of the future to hasten the millenarian return of the remote past. The Shipibo, like their backwoods Panoan kin, endured periods of contact with whites and their associates that bifurcated into initial halcyon encounters and subsequent exploitative confrontations. No wonder they transmuted the aliens into polar figures just as they earlier transformed the "Incas" into binary beings.

The Shipibo, Conibo, Pisquibo, Cashinahua, Sharanahua, Cashibo, and Amahuaca have all responded to the new arrivals' greed by interpreting it via an underlying reversible dualism, as the actions of the Culture Custodial-Withholding Dragon and his Failed Proto-Humans, like the Šhetebo. This dualism was manipulated by an equally basal "culinary metaphor" such that Gold succeeded Meat even as the "raw" Forest Ogres and Aquatic Seducers and the "rare" Failed Proto-Humans became first the Evil Inca and then the Stingy White Men and thieving Mestizo. Just as we are beginning to see the history that lies behind myth (Lathrap, Gebhart-Sayer, and Mester 1985) and transmutes it into legend in the lowlands, and the myth that underlies "history" in the highlands (Zuidema 1982), so we can now begin to interpret the mythic structures that fold time and encode it into space in both of these vast culture/geographic areas.

NOTES

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village of Santa Rosa on the upper Aquaitía River. Additional thanks are due the University of Delaware Research Grants program for making possible another two months of fieldwork in the lower Ucayali basin during 1984 in the village of Tsoaya, near Contamana. Write-up time was provided by the Centro de Investigaciones Indígenas de Puerto Rico, of which I am curator. Thanks also to fellow specialists in South Amerindian studies with whom I have had productive discussions about some of the ideas presented herein: Catherine Allen, William Crocker, Angelika Gebhart-Sayer, Bruno Illius, Dominique Irvine, Daniel Levy, and George Mentore. Special thanks are due Robert Carneiro for generously sharing with me all his field notes on the Amahuaca relating to mythology, which he collected with Gertrude Dole during their 1960-61 fieldwork among the backwoods Panoans. Of course, none of these scholars are responsible for any of this study's shortcomings.

1. While I did not formulate my conception of "dynamic dualism" (Roe 1982a) with reference to either W. Crocker's (1983) definition of "triadic dualism," as he deduced it from the symbolic oppositions of Ramkokamekra Canela thought, or Isbell's (1978) cognate "reversible dualism" of highland Quechua conceptions, it is compatible with both and argues for profound cognitive similarities between South Amerindian groups of even differing ecological and sociological settings. A summary of this concept is provided in Hugh-Jones's review (1985).

2. I am here using T. Turner's (n.d.) concept of medial fire, which he independently devised for his discussion of the gift of fire of the Jaguar in Northern Kayapó mythology. I have already discussed why, being a Jaguar, it freely gave fire to humankind, while similarly structured tales in other groups like the Shipibo, but involving a stingy reptilian Dragon (usually a giant Black Caiman), make the humans steal fire from him (Roe 1982a:201).

3. Here the *-ronqui* suffix was used to mark this story as a myth. Yet later it intergraded seamlessly into a "corroborative" personal reminiscence. At that point in the text the *-ronqui* suffix was deleted. Sehuaya or Tsoaya Ihan is an oxbow lake near the mouth of the Pisqui River. It is located across from Contamana, downriver from Pucallpa. Plagued by hordes of mosquitos, this area is little frequented save for a small Shipibo settlement there. Because of its isolation, this lake is rich in fish, supernatural events, and beings like the *Chaiconi*. Unlike the muddy Ucayali, this still lake has relatively clear water, at least until it is obscured by microscopic plant growth (hence the "mirror" symbolism).

4. The Šhetebo are an extinct (or assimilated) subgroup of riverine Panoans who, historically, were located on the lower Ucayali river. They followed the fate of the Cocama (Myers 1974:147) and were wiped out early by their contact with European diseases while the Shipibo were just emerging from their sheltered position on the lower tributaries (DeBoer 1981:33-34). The Shipibo then moved out into the main river and pre-empted Šhetebo territory. The Šhetebo therefore function like Failed Proto-Humans in Shipibo mythology. Their misfortune has

been transmuted into greed and envy and their death through disease into death by drowning in the World Flood. This fate was punishment for their burial of the *baquē mēraya* (child, highest class of shaman) son of the Inca god. Today a few Shetebo remain near Tsoaya but are acculturated into the dominant Shipibo ethnic group.

5. Bardales (1979:9, 36) records a Conibo text that affirms the existence of three, not two, Incas. My Shipibo informants insisted that there were only two principal ones, Yoáshico (Stingy Inca), who was also called Šhanö Inca, and the Good Inca. There are several explanations for Bardales's version. First, it could simply reflect subcultural variation. Second, his texts were produced for the S.I.L. (a.k.a. the Wycliffe Bible Translators) and therefore might have trinitarian biases, since he is an acculturated and indoctrinated informant (we know that the S.I.L. texts are aberrant in other details—principally their total paucity of sex, which makes them highly suspect among the otherwise “earthy” Shipibo-Conibo narratives). The third reason may be a simple literate bias on Bardales's part to create symmetrical Incas for all three riverine Panoan subtribes: the Shipibo, Shetebo, and Conibo.

6. The reverse can also happen, as when Yoáshico changes his *rayos* (son-in-law) into a *Manšhanteo* when he sees him standing in the water, poisoning fish as he had requested him to do amid a group of the Stingy Inca's “soldiers.” Yoáshico fulfills his animalistic function by turning the son-in-law into the Jabiru and the soldiers into Abo, the *Manchaco* Heron (see Bardales 1979:19, 41 on the Conibo). Many of these aquatic birds have sinister connotations in Shipibo cosmology: they are associated with the water, a low-lying, anticultural realm; they often eat dead or stranded fish and thus act like a carrion-feeding Vulture; and like a Vulture, some of the forms, especially the *Manšhanteo* and the *Abo*, have naked heads or necks (*těcho*), “without plumes, naked, corrugated.” Thus they are tabooed as food and can *copia*, or bewitch, causing analogous skin afflictions in the children of men who contravene the taboo. This is why one of the *Manšhanbo* (the Heron group), the *Josho Manšhan* or White Heron (*Casm. alba*) has a putrid-smelling (*pisi*), bloodlike (*bia*) “wind” or “essence,” *nihuē* (see Illius 1982:6 on the Conibo). The negative associations of this “liminal” bird group (which overlap between watery and airy realms), their disgusting feeding habits, and their disease-inflicting nature, go a long way toward explaining why the *Manšhan*, or *garza* (Spanish), group can become, in songs, “the [frozen] metaphor for *mestizo*[s]” (Levy, personal communication, April 14, 1986).

7. Her cult center was in Painaco, on the lower Ucayali. Wasemēa never married, being joined like a nun to the spirits. Apparently she did not use *nishi* either but relied exclusively upon strong native tobacco, *romē*, as a hallucinogen. While postmenopausal women are “honorary males” since they are no longer involved in the naturalistic feminine “wet” cycle of menstruation, lactation, and parturition and can “study” *nishi* and thus become shamanesses, I got the strong impression from talking with several male informants that the real objection to Wasemēa was her sex. She was a pretender to the wrong role, that of

the mighty masculine *mēraya*, and thus is remembered as a kind of witch. This male view is not shared by women, judging by the pride that Casamira and other women artists I interviewed took in being the stylistic successors of Wasemēa's revolutionary curvilinear (*mayaquēñēya*, “curved [line] design, with”) design style.

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