

MAP IS NOT TERRITORY

Studies in the History of Religions

BY

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*To my Mother
and
in loving memory of my Father*

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

AFTERWORD

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

I have not been able to obtain the unpublished paper by J. Christopher Crocker, "My Brother, the Parrot," delivered at the American Anthropological Association Symposium on "The Social Use of Metaphor?"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

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

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

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MAP IS NOT TERRITORY*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Christian	888 million
Muslim	430 million
Hindu	332 million

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Death and sexuality are already constitutive of human existence in the very first line of the text with its mention of the emergence of man from clusters of bananas. It is a widely spread Oceanic tale of the origin of death—found as well among the Wemale¹⁷, that human

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁹ Burridge, *Mambu*, pp. 154-176 and *Tangu Traditions* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 113f., 229f., 330, 400-411.

²⁰ For the classic description of the Mejapi, see A. C. Kruijff and N. Adriani, "De Godsdienstig-Politieke Beweging 'Mejapi' op Celebes," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, LXVII (1913), 135-151; for a brief English description, see J. M. van der Kroef, "Messianic Movements in the Celebes, Sumatra, and Borneo," in S. L. Thrupp, ed., *Millennial Dreams in Action* (New York, 1970), especially pp. 80-91.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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For Frances and David Bergstein

who have lived much of what is imagined in these pages

In the Yoruba instance, strikingly similar to the Chinese *I Ching*, it is not so much the text of the poems that constitutes the canon, but rather the mathematically fixed number of possible divination figures. These give access to a possible set of interpretations (the poems) which vary in number according to the skill and training of the tradent. But it is the individual who must decide which one is the most plausible. It is the individual who serves as his own hermeneute.

As one examines the great variety of such canons and divinatory situations, he will be struck by the differences in exegetical techniques and skills, by the variety of presuppositions. But the essential structure of limitation and closure along with exegetical ingenuity remains constant. It is this which provides a suggestive base for a redescription of canon.

Other work remains to be done: an examination of the rules that govern the sharp debates between rival exegetes and exegetical systems in their efforts to manipulate the closed canon. There is need for a careful study of individuals who may be termed tribal theologians; who raise the endeavors of exegetical ingenuity to the level of a comprehensive system. I look forward to the day when courses and monographs will exist in both comparative exegesis and comparative theology, comparing not so much conclusions as strategies through which the exegete seeks to interpret and translate his received tradition to his contemporaries.

I have attempted a redescription of canon from the perspective of an historian of religion. I have argued that canon is best seen as one form of a basic cultural process of limitation and of overcoming that limitation through ingenuity. I have proposed some basic distinctions between list, catalog and canon. I have suggested that for nonliterate peoples, canon is most clearly to be perceived in divinatory situations and have described the range of the roles interpretation and application play in such procedures. By such a redescription, I hope to have suggested how the categories used by historians of religion might be "modulated" by taking seriously structures characteristic of western religious traditions, and vice versa. It is only by such mutual modulation, within the context of comparison, that progress in the study of religion will be possible.

4 The Bare Facts of Ritual

I may be doing wrong, but I'm doing it in the proper and customary manner.

George Bernard Shaw

I

There is one aspect of scholarship that has remained constant from the earliest Near Eastern scribes and omen interpreters to contemporary academicians: the thrill of encountering a coincidence. The discovery that two events, symbols, thoughts, or texts, while so utterly separated by time and space that they could not "really" be connected, seem, nevertheless, to be the same or to be speaking directly to one another raises the possibility of a secret interconnection of things that is the scholar's most cherished article of faith. The thought that the patterns and interrelationships that he has patiently and laboriously teased out of his data might, in fact, exist is the claim he makes when his work is completed as well as the claim that appears to be denied by the fact that he has had to labor so long. The scholar lives in the world that the poet Borges has described. And this is why coincidence is, at one and the same time, so exhilarating and so stunning. It is as if, unbidden and unearned by work and interpretation, a connection simply "chose" to make itself manifest, to display its presence on our conceptual wall with a clear round hand.

I should like to begin this essay with one such coincidence and juxtapose two texts separated in time by some eighteen centuries. The one is from Kafka, the other from Plutarch.

Leopards break into the temple and drink the sacrificial chalices dry; this occurs repeatedly, again and again: finally it can be reckoned on beforehand and becomes a part of the ceremony.¹

At Athens, Lysimache, the priestess of Athene Polias, when asked for a drink by the mule drivers who had transported the sacred vessels, replied, "No, for I fear it will get into the ritual."²

These two texts illustrate the sovereign power of one of the basic building blocks of religion: ritual and its capacity for routinization.

Both fragmentary stories take their starting point in what we would most probably call an accident. Both give eloquent testimony, in quite different ways, to the imperialistic eagerness with which ritual takes advantage of an accident and, by projecting on it both significance and regularity, annihilates its original character as accident.³ But our two texts, while remarkably similar in structure, differ quite sharply in how they see and evaluate this process. They seem to suggest, at least by implication, two differing theories about the origin of religion.

Both texts set the action they describe within a temple. In Kafka, the locale is apparently some jungle shrine; in Plutarch it is a sacred place within the heart of a cosmopolitan city—the dwelling place, north of the Parthenon, of the ancient wooden statue of Athene Polias, “the holiest thing” within all Athens.⁴ This temple setting is more than mere scenery. It serves to frame all that follows.

When one enters a temple, one enters marked-off space in which, at least in principle, nothing is accidental; everything, at least potentially, is of significance. The temple serves as a focusing lens, marking and revealing significance. For example, in Jewish tradition gossip in the temple and in the Land of Israel (which they understood to be an extended temple) is Torah.⁵ If an accident occurred within its precincts, either it must be understood as a miracle, a sign that must be routinized through repetition, or it will be interpreted as impurity, as blasphemy. Thus the lamp in the temple that unexpectedly burned for eight days according to a late rabbinic legend was retrojected as having given rise to the festival of Hannukah, the first feast to enter the Jewish liturgical calendar without scriptural warrant, claiming only human decree rather than divine command, and hence, itself, potentially blasphemy.⁶ In the case of the oil lamp, the interpretation was one of miracle. On the other hand, when the high priest in Jerusalem spilled a basin of sacred water on his feet rather than on the altar the accident was understood as blasphemy and he was pelted by the crowd.⁷

A sacred place is a place of clarification (a focusing lens) where men and gods are held to be transparent to one another. It is a place where, as in all forms of communication, static and noise (i.e., the accidental) are decreased so that the exchange of information can be increased. In communication, the device by which this is accomplished is redundancy; in our examples, through ritual repetition and routinization. In Kafka's story, the leopards were received as a message (a miracle, a sign) and incorporated, through routinization and repetition, into the ritual. In Plutarch's story, this potential was refused by the priestess, who saw the possibility of blasphemy.

There is a vast difference between the actors in the two stories. But we are in danger of dwelling on this difference in such a way as to mislead ourselves badly. There appears to us to be something mysterious, awesome, and awful about the leopards, but there is nothing at all extraordinary about the mule drivers. Therefore the first may appear to us as being inherently religious, the latter, quite commonplace and secular. From the vantage of such an understanding, Kafka would appear to be drawing on romantic theories of religion as the epiphanic. That may well be what he had in mind, but I would opt for a different understanding. For leopards in a jungle seem as commonplace as mule drivers in an ancient city. The leopards in Kafka's story do nothing mysterious; in fact, they do what the mule drivers desire to do. They are thirsty, and they drink. That they drink from a “sacrificial chalice” is what the readers and celebrants know. The leopards presumably do not. They simply see a bowl of liquid, as the pigeons that sometimes make their way into Catholic churches do not know that the stand of holy water at the entrance was not put there for their relief as a bird bath.

Indeed this is necessarily so if we take seriously the notion of a temple, a sacred place, as a focusing lens. The ordinary (which remains, to the observer's eye, wholly ordinary) becomes significant, becomes sacred, simply by *being there*. It becomes sacred by having our attention directed to it in a special way. This is a most important point, one that is only recently gaining acceptance among historians of religion although it was already brilliantly described by A. van Gennep in *Les Rites de passage* (1909) as the “pivoting of the sacred.”⁸ That is, there is nothing that is inherently sacred or profane. These are not substantive categories, but rather situational or relational categories, mobile boundaries which shift according to the map being employed. There is nothing that is sacred in itself, only things sacred in relation.

To digress from Kafka and Plutarch to another set of ancient stories about ritual. In the extensive Egyptian *logos* in book 2 of his *Histories*, Herodotus tells that Amasis, “a mere private person” who was elevated to king but despised because of his “ordinary” origins, had a golden foot pan in which he and his guests used to wash their feet. This was melted down and remolded into the statue of a god which was revered by the people. Amasis called an assembly and drew the parallel as to “how the image had been made of the foot pan, in which they formerly had been used to washing their feet and to deposit all manner of dirt, yet now it was greatly revered. And truly it has gone with me as with the foot pan. If I were formerly a private citizen, I have now come to be your king, and therefore I bid you to do honor and reverence to me.”⁹ This is a sophisticated story which foreshadows the kinds of subtle distinctions later political thought made between the king as divine with respect to

office and human with respect to person. Divine and human, sacred and profane, are maps and labels not substances; they are distinctions, of "office." This is almost always misunderstood by later apologetic writers who used the Amasis story to ridicule idolatry.¹⁰ Likewise the analogous *topos* found independently in both Israelitic¹¹ and Latin¹² tradition of the carpenter who fashions a sacred object or image out of one part of a log and a common household utensil out of the other.¹³ Similar too is the opposite theme to the Amasis story, that a statue of a deity would be melted down and used to fashion a commonplace vessel: "Saturn into a cooking pot; Minerva into a washbasin."¹⁴ The *sacra* are sacred solely because they are used in a sacred place; there is no inherent difference between a sacred vessel and an ordinary one. By being used in a sacred place, they are held to be open to the possibility of significance, to be seen as agents of meaning as well as of utility.

To return to Kafka and Plutarch. Neither the leopards nor the mule drivers can be presumed to know what they do or ask. The determination of meaning, of the potentiality for sacrality in their actions, lies wholly with the cult. The cult in Kafka's story perceives significance in the leopards' intrusion and, therefore, converts it from an accident into a ritual. The leopards no longer appear whenever they "happen" to be thirsty: "It can be reckoned on beforehand and becomes a part of the ceremony." In the Plutarch story, the priestess rebuffs the potential for significance. Whether the mule drivers will ever thirst again, whether or not they wished to drink from the sacred vessels they had just transported or from some "ordinary" cup makes no difference. If done in the temple, with the authority of the priestess, their act is potentially a ritual.

Why does the priestess refuse? What should we understand her answer, "No, for I fear it will get into the ritual," to mean? There is a thin line, as Freud most persuasively argued, between the neurotic act and religious ritual, for both are equally "obsessed" by the potentiality for significance in the commonplace.¹⁵ But this presents a dilemma for the ritualist. If everything signifies, the result will be either insanity or banality. Understood from such a perspective, ritual is an exercise in the strategy of choice. What to include? What to hear as a message? What to see as a sign? What to perceive as having double meaning? What to exclude? What to allow to remain as background noise? What to understand as simply "happening"? The priestess is exercising her sense of the *economy of signification*. To permit something as apparently trivial as a drink of water to occur in the temple runs the risk of blurring the focus, of extending the domain of meaning to an impossible degree. It is to run the risk of other ritual acts being perceived as banal, as signifying nothing. We do not know whether, in this particular instance, she was right. But we can affirm that, as priestess, she has acted responsibly.

II

I invoked, earlier, the name of Jorge Luis Borges as the mythographer of scholarship. I shall take my clue for the latter part of this essay from this gifted Argentinian writer. In his short story, "Death and the Compass," Borges has his police commissioner, Lönnrot, declare to a colleague, "Reality may avoid the obligation to be interesting, but hypotheses may not. . . . In the hypothesis you have postulated [to solve the murder] chance intervenes largely. . . . I should prefer a purely rabbinical explanation."¹⁶ Let me raise a "rabbinical" question. What if the leopards do not return? What if the mule drivers had taken their drink without asking anyone and then were discovered? What then? Here we begin to sense the presence of one of the fundamental building blocks of religion: its capacity for rationalization, especially as it concerns that ideological issue of relating that which we do to that which we say or think we do.

This is not an unimportant matter in relationship to the notion of ritual as a difficult strategy of choice. It requires us to perceive ritual as a human labor, struggling with matters of incongruity. It requires us to question theories which emphasize the "fit" of ritual with some other human system.

For the remainder of this essay, I should like to offer a concrete example which not only will illustrate the problematics and rationalizing capacities of religious ritual and discourse but also allows us to reflect on the dilemmas created for historians of religion by these capacities. I should like to direct attention to a set of bear-hunting rituals as reported, especially, from paleo-Siberian peoples. I have chosen this example because it is well documented in ethnography and has been of great importance in a number of theoretical discussions of ritual.

We need, at the outset, to fix on a traditional cultural dichotomy: agriculturalist and hunter. Within urban, agricultural societies, hunting is a special activity, remote from the ordinary rhythms of life, in which man steps outside of his cultural world and rediscovers the world of nature and the realm of the animal, frequently perceived as a threat. The hunter tests his courage in an extraordinary situation. It is this fortitude in confronting the dangerously "other" that has been celebrated in the novels of authors such as Hemingway, or in the compelling *Meditations on Hunting* by the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset. Within agricultural, urban societies, the religious symbolism of hunting is that of overcoming the beast who frequently represents either chaos or death. The hunt is perceived, depending on the symbolic system, as a battle between creation and chaos, good and evil, life and death, man and nature, the civil and the uncivil. The paradigm of such a symbolic understanding is the royal hunt which persists from ancient Sumer and Egypt to the contemporary queen of England, mythologized in legends of heroic combats with drag-

ons, and partially secularized in the relatively recent ceremony of the Spanish bullfight. The king, as representative of both the ruling god and the people, slays the beast.¹⁷

In contrast, among hunting societies, hunting is perceived as an everyday activity. It is not understood as an act of overcoming but as a participation in the normal course of things. The hunter and the hunted play out their roles according to a predetermined system of relationships. This system is mediated, according to the traditions of many hunting peoples, by a "Master of the Animals," a "Supernatural Owner of the Game," who controls the game or their spirits, in northern traditions most frequently by penning them. He releases a certain number to man each year as food. Only the allotted number may be slain in a manner governed by strict rules. Each corpse must be treated with respect. The meat must be divided, distributed, and eaten according to strict rules of etiquette, and the soul of the animal must be returned to its "Supernatural Owner" by ritual means. If the system is violated, game will be withheld and complex ceremonies, frequently involving the mediation of a shaman, are required to remove the offense and placate the "Master."¹⁸

Beyond this mythology underlying the hunt, it has long been clear that the hunt itself can be described as a ritual having several more or less clearly demarcated parts. In what follows, I am largely dependent on the outlines provided by A. I. Hallowell's classic study, *Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere*, as well as Evelyn Lot-Falck's more recent monograph, *Les Rites de chasse chez les peuples sibériens*, supplementing them, where appropriate, with details from other ethnographies.¹⁹

The first group of rituals may be brought together under the heading "preparation for the hunt."²⁰ One set of rituals Lot-Falck interprets as ceremonies designed to "insure the success of the hunt" under which she includes various forms of "divination" (oracles from bones and flight of arrows predominate) and rites which she terms "magical ceremonies employing sympathetic magic"—a theme to which I shall return. These may be of several types: mimetic dances "prefiguring" the hunt, the stabbing of an "effigy" of the animal, and the like. There are also invocations to the "Master of the Animals" or to the individual hunter's "guardian spirit," or attempts, through ritual, to "capture the game animal's soul." The bulk of the rituals of preparation are concerned with the purification of the hunter, purification by smoke being the most widespread. A variety of avoidances are observed, particularly of women and sexual intercourse and of contact with the dead. Finally, almost universally, there is a ceremonial hunt language.²¹ The animals are believed to understand human speech, and it would be a gross violation of etiquette to announce that one is coming to kill them. A variety of euphemisms and circumlocutions are employed.

The rituals surrounding the second important moment of the hunt, "leaving the camp," appear to express the hunter's consciousness of crossing a boundary from the human social world into a forest realm of animals and spirits.²² Leaving in a rigidly prescribed order, as if to carry human social structures into another's domain, the chief rituals focus on gaining permission from the forest to enter, with the key image being that of guest. Thus the earliest extant Finnish bear rune addresses the forest as "lovely woman—hostess good and bountiful" and requests entrance.²³ I would argue that the complex of host/guest/visitor/gift comprises the articulated understanding of the hunt. The forest serves as a host to the hunter, who must comport himself as a proper guest. The hunter is a host inviting the animal to feast on the gift of its own meat. The animal is host to the hunters as they feed on its flesh. The animal is a gift from the "Master of the Animals," as well as being a visitor from the spirit world. The animal gives itself to the hunter. The hunter, by killing the animal, enables it to return to its "Supernatural Owner" and to its home, from which it has come to earth as a visitor.²⁴

The third moment in the hunt seen as ritual is the "kill," which is likewise governed by strict rules of etiquette.²⁵ Most of the regulations seem designed to insure that the animal is killed in hand-to-hand, face-to-face combat. For example, in some groups, the animal may be killed only while running toward the hunter or (when a bear) only while standing on its hind legs facing the hunter. It may never be killed while sleeping in its den. In addition, it may only be wounded in certain spots (the most frequent interdiction is against wounding it in the eye) and the wound is to be bloodless. The controlling idea is that the animal is not killed by the hunter's initiative, rather the animal freely offers itself to the hunter's weapon. Therefore, the animal is talked to before the kill; it is requested to wake up and come out of its den or to turn around and be killed. To quote one example, from D. Zelenin:

The Yakuts say that if one kills a bear in his hibernation den, without taking care to awake or warn him, other bears will attack the hunter while he sleeps. A Nanay hunter, upon encountering a bear in the open, does not kill him at once, but begins by addressing dithyrambic praise poems to him and then prays that the bear will not claw him. Finally he addresses the bear: "You have come to me, Lord Bear, you wish me to kill you. . . . Come here, come. Your death is at hand, but I will not chase after you."²⁶

Among almost all of these northern hunting groups, there is a disclaimer of responsibility recited over the animal's corpse immediately after it has been killed.²⁷ "Let us clasp paws in handshake. . . . It was not I that threw you down, nor my companion over there. You, yourself, slipped

and burst your belly."²⁸ Even responsibility for the weapons will be disclaimed: "Not by me was the knife fashioned, nor by any of my countrymen. It was made in Estonia from iron bought in Stockholm."²⁹

The conclusion of the hunt proper, the "return to camp," has been described by Lot-Falck as a "strategic retreat."³⁰ The hunters leave the world of the forest and return to that of the human, bearing the corpse of the slain animal. There is continued need for etiquette in the treatment of the corpse, in the reintegration of the hunters into human society, in the eating of the flesh, and in insuring that the animal's soul will return to its "Supernatural Owner." The corpse may be adorned and carried in solemn procession. The hunters continue to disclaim responsibility, reminding the animal that now its soul is free to return to its spiritual domicile and assuring it that its body will be treated with respect. "You died first, rather than us, greatest of all animals. We will respect you and treat you accordingly. No woman shall eat your flesh. No dog shall insult your corpse."³¹ Ceremonies of purification are performed by and for the hunters on their arriving at camp; women play a prominent role in ritually greeting the men, reintegrating them into the domestic world.

The animal's corpse is butchered and divided according to strict rules of rank and prestige so that its body becomes a social map of the camp. Certain parts are set aside, in particular the head and bones. Among northern hunters, bones play an analogous role to that of seeds in agrarian societies. Bones endure; they are the source of rebirth after death. The bones are a reservoir of life; they require only to be refreshed.³² The meal is governed by rules, as the animal is an invited guest at a banquet held in his honor and consisting of his meat. Each piece of meat, as it is consumed, is wedded, in some traditions, to the life of the one who eats. The animal's "generic" life endures in the bones; its "individuality" is preserved by its consumer.³³ The majority of these return elements are joined together in the series of ancient texts which were collected by Elias Lönnrot as the forty-sixth rune of the Finnish *Kalevala*.³⁴

Having followed the standard reports and interpretations to this point, we must, at this time, ask some blunt questions. In particular, can we believe what I have summarized above on good authority? This is a question which cannot be avoided. The historian of religion cannot suspend his critical faculties, his capacity for disbelief, simply because the materials are "primitive" or religious.

First, some general questions. Can we believe that a group which depends on hunting for its food would kill an animal only if it is in a certain posture? Can we believe that any animal, once spotted, would stand still while the hunter recited "dithyrambs" and ceremonial addresses? Or, according to one report, sang it love songs?³⁵ Can we believe that, even if they wanted to, they could kill an animal bloodlessly and would abandon

a corpse if blood was shed or the eye damaged? Can we believe that any group could or would promise that neither dogs nor women would eat the meat, and mean it? Is it humanly plausible that a hunter who has killed by skill and stealth views his act solely as an unfortunate accident and will not boast of his prowess? These, and other such questions, can be answered from the "armchair." They do not depend on fieldwork but upon our sense of incredulity, our estimate of plausibility. Our answers will have serious consequences. For if we answer "yes" to these questions, if we accept all we have been told on good authority, we will have accepted a "cuckoo-land" where our ordinary, commonplace, common-sense understandings of reality no longer apply. We will have declared the hunter or the "primitive" to be some other sort of mind, some other sort of human-being, with the necessary consequence that their interpretation becomes impossible. We will have aligned religion with some cultural "death wish," for surely no society that hunted in the manner described would long survive. And we will be required, if society is held to have any sanity at all, to explain it away.

If our sense of incredulity is aroused, we need, as historians of religion, to get up from the armchair and into the library long enough to check the sources. For example, despite the description of the hunt I have given, most of the groups from which this information was collected do not, in fact, hunt bears face-to-face but make extensive use of traps, pitfalls, self-triggering bows, and snares. In more recent times, the shotgun has been added to their arsenal.³⁶ This precludes most of the elements of ritual etiquette I have described: no hand-to-hand combat, no addressing of the bear, no control over where it is wounded. The Koryak and Chukchi are characteristic of those who actually encounter a bear. When attacking the bear in winter, while it is in its den, they block the entrance to the den with a log, "break in the roof and stab the beast to death or shoot it." When bears are encountered outside their den, in spring or autumn, they set packs of dogs on it to "worry the animal."³⁷ No sign of ritual etiquette here! Of even greater interest is the following. The Nivkhi say that "in order not to excite the bear's posthumous revenge, do not surprise him but rather have a fair stand-up fight," but the same report goes on to describe how they *actually* kill bears: "a spear, the head of which is covered with spikes, is laid on the ground, a cord is attached to it and, as the bear approaches [the ambush] the hunter [by pulling up on the cord] raises the weapon and the animal becomes impaled on it."³⁸ As this last suggests, not only ought we not to believe many of the elements in the description of the hunt as usually presented, but we ought not to believe that the hunters, from whom these descriptions were collected, believe it either.

There appears to be a gap, an incongruity between the hunters' ideological statements of how they *ought* to hunt and their actual behavior while hunting. For me, it is far more important and interesting that they say this is the way they hunt than that they actually do so. For now one is obligated to find out how they resolve this discrepancy rather than to repeat, uncritically, what one has read. It is here, as they face the gap, that any society's genius and creativity, as well as its ordinary and understandable humanity, is to be located. It is its skill at rationalization, accommodation, and adjustment.

I first became aware of this particular set of issues when reading the account of pygmy elephant-hunting in R. P. Trilles's massive study, *Les Pygmées de la forêt équatoriale*. Let there be no misunderstanding. A pygmy who kills an elephant by means other than a deadfall does so by an extraordinary combination of skill and nerve. After shooting it with poisoned arrows, an individual, possessing what Trilles terms an *audace singulière* runs under the elephant—what one of their songs describes as “this huge mass of meat, the meat that walks like a hill”—and stabs upward with a poisoned spear.³⁹ The corpse is then addressed in songs. Combining two of these, one hears an extraordinary set of rationalizations.

1. Our spear has gone astray, O Father Elephant.
We did not wish to kill you.
We did not wish to kill you, O Father Elephant.
 2. It is not the warrior who has taken away your life—
Your hour had come.
Do not return to trample our huts, O Father Elephant.
 3. Do not make us fear your wrath.
Henceforth your life will be better.
You go to the country of the spirits.
-
- We have taken you away, but we have given you back
a different sort of life.
Against your children, Father Elephant, do not be angry.
You begin a better life.

This is immediately followed by the ecstatic cry:

O honor to you, my spear!
My spear of sharpened iron, O honor to you!⁴⁰

The progression is clear. (1) We did not mean to kill you; it was an accident. (2) We did not kill you; you died a natural death. (3) We killed you in your own best interests. You may now return to your ancestral world to begin a better life. The final ejaculation may be paraphrased: “Never mind all of that. Wow! I did it!”

Once we have heard this last prideful cry, and remember the details of the poisoned arrows and spears, we are in danger of dismissing the rest as hypocrisy. The hunter does not hunt as he says he hunts; he does not think about his hunting as he says he thinks. But, unless we are to suppose that, as a “primitive,” he is incapable of thought, we must presume that he is aware of this discrepancy, that he works with it, that he has some means of overcoming this contradiction between word and deed. This work, I believe, is one of the major functions of ritual.

I would suggest that, among other things, *ritual represents the creation of a controlled environment* where the variables (i.e., the accidents) of ordinary life may be displaced *precisely* because they are felt to be so overwhelmingly present and powerful. *Ritual is a means of performing the way things ought to be in conscious tension to the way things are in such a way that this ritualized perfection is recollected in the ordinary, uncontrolled, course of things.* Ritual relies for its power on the fact that it is concerned with quite ordinary activities; that what it describes and displays is, in principle, possible for every occurrence of these acts. But it relies, as well, for its power on the perceived fact that, in actuality, such possibilities cannot be realized.

There is a “gnostic” dimension to ritual. It provides the means for demonstrating that we know what ought to have been done, what ought to have taken place. But, by the fact that it is ritual action rather than everyday action, it demonstrates that we know “what is the case.” Ritual provides an occasion for reflection and rationalization on the fact that what ought to have been done was not done, what ought to have taken place did not occur. From such a perspective, ritual is not best understood as congruent with something else—a magical imitation of desired ends, a translation of emotions, a symbolic acting out of ideas, a dramatization of a text, or the like. *Ritual gains force where incongruity is perceived and thought about.*

Two instances may be provided from the northern hunters by way of illustrating the implications of such an understanding of ritual.

As is well known, a number of these circumpolar peoples have a bear festival in which a bear is ritually slain.⁴¹ To give a brief, highly generalized description. A young, wild bear cub is taken alive, brought to a village, and caged. It is treated as an honored guest, with high courtesy and displays of affection, at times being adopted by a human family. After two or three years, the festival is held. The bear is roped and taken on a farewell walk through the village. It is made to dance and play and to walk on its hind legs. Then it is carefully tied down in a given position and ceremonially addressed. It is slain, usually by being shot in the heart at close range; sometimes, afterward, it is strangled. The body is then divided and eaten with ceremonial etiquette (the same rules that pertain

to the consumption of game). Its soul is enjoined to return to its "Owner" and report how well it has been treated.

Many valuable interpretations of these festivals have been proposed, each illuminating important elements of the ritual. I should like to suggest another aspect: that *the bear festival represents a perfect hunt*.⁴² The etiquette of the hunt—the complex structures of host/guest/visitor/gift—presupposes a reciprocity that cannot be achieved in the actual hunt because, at the very least, one of the parties, the bear, will more than likely *not* play its appointed role. In the actual hunt, the hunter might attempt to play his part; the animal will not reciprocate, nor will it respond in the required manner. And the bear's failure to reciprocate will prevent the hunter from making his attempt if the hunt is to be successful *qua* hunt (i.e., the gaining of meat without injury or loss of life to the hunter). But in the bear festival all of the variables have been controlled. The animal has been compelled to play its part. The bear was treated correctly as a guest. It was constrained to rejoice in its fate, to walk to its death rather than run away, to assume the correct posture for its slaughter, to have the proper words addressed to it (regardless of length) before it is killed, to be slain face-to-face, and to be killed in the proper all-but-bloodless manner.⁴³ It is conceivable that the northern hunter, while hunting, might hold the image of this perfect hunt in his mind.⁴⁴ I would assume that, at some point, he reflects on the difference between his actual modes of killing and the perfection represented by the ceremonial killing.

I would advance a similar proposal for interpretation of what is usually termed "mimetic" or "sympathetic hunting magic."⁴⁵ The basic idea of such magic, according to most scholars, is that of "like producing like," with the notion that when the hunter has made a representation of the animal and then acted out killing it, there is an "expectation that the hunter will be able to inflict a corresponding injury to the real animal . . . [and] what was done to an accurate portrayal of the animal would, sooner or later, happen to the animal itself."⁴⁶ I would insist, on the contrary, that "sympathetic hunting magic" is not based on the principle that "like produces like," but rather on the principle that the *ritual is unlike the hunt*. Such "magic" is, once more, *a perfect hunt with all the variables controlled*. The figure, the representation of the animal, is immobile because it is inanimate. The proper words may be spoken, the animal may be placed in the proper position, it may be wounded in the proper place, and it surely will not bleed! Such a ceremony performed before undertaking an actual hunt demonstrates that the hunter knows full well what ought to transpire if he were in control; the fact that the ceremony is held is eloquent testimony that the hunter knows full well that it will not transpire, that he is not in control.

There is, I believe, an essential truth to the old interpretation of "sympathetic magic" as an "offensive against the objective world"⁴⁷ but that the wrong consequences were deduced. It is not that "magical" rituals compel the world through representation and manipulation; rather they express a realistic assessment of the fact that the world cannot be compelled. The ritual is incongruent with the way things are or are likely to be, for contingency, variability, and accidentality have been factored out. The ritual displays a dimension of the hunt that can be thought about and remembered in the course of things. It provides a focusing lens on the ordinary hunt which allows its full significance to be perceived, a significance which the rules express but are powerless to effectuate. It is in ritual space that the hunter can relate himself properly to animals which are both "good to eat" and "good to think."

7 The Devil in Mr. Jones

I

My starting point in this essay will be three curious titles that are attached by my university to my name: "religion and the human sciences," "religion and the humanities," "history of religions." What might these terms mean? All three set religion within a context. All three suggest limiting perspectives on religion: that it is human and that it is historical (two propositions that I understand to be all but synonymous). All three suggest academic conversation partners for the enterprise of the study of religion: anthropology (in its broadest sense), humanities, and history. These terms locate the *study* of religion. Religion, to the degree that it is usefully conceived as an historical, human endeavor, is to be set within the larger academic frameworks provided by anthropology, the humanities, and history.

All three titles are, as well, highly polemical. Although their daring has been obscured by time, none would have been understood in academic circles a little more than a century ago. Indeed, if understood at all, they would have been thought to embody a contradiction. Although we tend to use the word "humanities" (or the human sciences) as synonymous with liberal learning, with Cicero's *humanitas* and the older Greek *paideia*, and tend to identify its scope primarily with the study of the classical culture of our own past and the more recent works dependent on it, this is not its primary academic sense. When it was revived by the Italian humanists of the fifteenth century, it had a more pointed and argumentative meaning. As first used by Coluccio Salutati, a Florentine chancellor, "humane studies," the "human sciences" were to be contrasted with the "divine sciences"—that is to say, the humanities with theology. Thus, if the study of religion was anything, it was the study of that which was utterly different from the human sciences. The two were perceived to be mutually exclusive.

This was all changed when, on 1 October 1877, the Dutch Universities Act separated the theological faculties at the four state universities (Amsterdam, Groningen, Leiden, and Utrecht) from the Dutch Reformed

Church. For the first time in western academic history, there were established two, parallel possibilities for the study of religion: a humanistic mode within the secular academy and a theological course of study within the denominational seminary. The original draft of the legislation had used a term coined four years earlier, proposing to call the new university department a "Faculty of Religious Sciences," but, after much compromise, the older title, "Faculty of Theology," was retained. Nevertheless, dogmatics and practical theology, the central core of theological education, were removed from the curriculum, to be taught only in the seminaries. Their place in the academy was taken by a new program in history of religions which was assumed to be more "neutral and scientific."

France followed soon after. In 1884 the French Ministry of Education abolished the state Catholic Theological Faculties and a year later replaced them (in the very same building) by the "Fifth Section of Religious Sciences" as part of the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*. Religious study was added alongside the other four "sections": mathematics, physics and chemistry, natural history and physiology, and the historical and philological sciences. The minister of public instruction charged the new faculty: "We do not wish to see the cultivation of polemics, but of critical research. We wish to see the examination of texts, not the discussion of dogmas."

In 1904 the University of Manchester, which was rare among British universities in being nondenominational and in applying no confessional tests to either students or faculty, established its new Theological Faculty which taught theological subjects and comparative religions but excluded courses in systematic theology and the history of Christian doctrine. All theological students were required to take work in comparative religions. What was intended may be gleaned from the fact that James George Frazer was invited to join the faculty and teach comparative religions. As stated at the inauguration of this new program, this was "the first occasion in this country on which theology, unfettered by [denominational] tests, has been accepted as an integral part of the University organization and has been treated like any other subject." Rarely did any other European country until today follow this pattern. In most of Europe, religious studies were part of the divine sciences.

In the United States, until some twenty years ago, when religious studies were recognized, a sequential pattern prevailed. A doctoral degree in religious studies at a university had as its prerequisite a bachelor of divinity degree from a seminary. It was not until the rise of programs in state universities, a development which followed the 1963 U.S. Supreme Court decision on the *School District of Abington v. Schempp*, in which Mr. Justice Goldberg observed, "it seems clear to me . . . that the Court would recognize the propriety of the teaching *about* religion as distin-

guished from the teaching of religion in the public schools," that the parallel course of religious studies in the academy, instituted a century ago in Holland, became possible in this country.

This political and legislative history, as important as it has been, should not be allowed to obscure a more fundamental base. Simply put, *the academic study of religion is a child of the Enlightenment*. This intellectual heritage is revealed in the notion of generic religion as opposed to historical, believing communities. But it is not this element, as significant as it was, on which I wish to dwell. Rather it is the mood, the exemplary Enlightenment attitude toward religion that concerns me.

To put the matter succinctly, religion was domesticated; it was transformed from *pathos* to *ethos*. At no little cost, religion was brought within the realm of common sense, of civil discourse and commerce. Rediscovering the old tag, "Nothing human is foreign to me," the Enlightenment impulse was one of tolerance and, as a necessary concomitant, one which refused to leave any human datum, including religion, beyond the pale of understanding, beyond the realm of reason.

It was this impulse, this domestication, that made possible the entrance of religious studies into the secular academy. But the price of this entry, to reverse the Steppenwolf formula, is the use of our mind. As students of religion, we have become stubbornly committed to making the attempt (even if we fail) at achieving intelligibility. We must accept the burden of the long, hard road of understanding. To do less is to forfeit our license to practice in the academy, to leave the study of religion open to the charge of incivility and intolerance.

Against this background, I have deliberately chosen for my topic an event which is a scandal in the original sense of the word. Such scandals erupt from time to time and perturb the assumptions of civility. For the Enlightenment faith in intelligibility, it was the shock over the utter devastation of the Lisbon earthquake on 1 November 1755—reread Voltaire's *Candide*!² For those of us committed to the academic study of religion, a comparable scandal is that series of events which began at approximately 5:00 P.M., on 18 November 1978 in Jonestown, Guyana. From one point of view, one might claim that Jonestown was the most important single event in the history of religions, for if we continue, as a profession, to leave it ununderstandable, then we will have surrendered our rights to the academy. The daring and difficult experiment in parallel courses of religious study begun in Holland a century ago will have concluded in failure.

One final, preliminary matter. To interpret, to venture to understand; is not necessarily to approve or to advocate. There is a vast difference between what I have described as "tolerance" and what is now known as "relativism." The former does not necessarily lead to the latter. In the

sixteenth century, that great precursor of the Enlightenment, Montaigne, argued in his essay "Of Cannibals":

Everyone terms barbarity, whatever is not of his own customs; in truth it seems that we have no view of what is true and reasonable, except the example and idea of the customs and practices of the country in which we live. We may call them barbarians, then, if we are judging by the rules of reason, but not if we are judging by comparison with ourselves, who surpass them in every sort of barbarity.³

He was stating a principle of toleration, but he was also making a normative claim: we cannot judge another culture by reference to ourselves; we may judge (both another and ourselves), if our criteria are universal "rules of reason." The anthropology of the last century, the study of religions in the academy, has contributed to making more difficult a naive, ethnocentric formulation of the "rules of reason," but this does not require that such "rules" be denied, or suggest that we should slacken in our attempts to formulate them.

It is a far cry from the civility of Montaigne and his Enlightenment heirs to the utter conceptual relativism of D. Z. Phillips when he writes, in *Faith and Philosophical Enquiry*:

If I hear that one of my neighbors has killed another neighbor's child, given that he is sane, my condemnation is immediate. . . . But if I hear that some remote tribe practices child sacrifice, what then? I do not know what sacrifice means for the tribe in question. What would it mean to say I condemned it when the "it" refers to something I know nothing about? I would be condemning murder. But murder is not child sacrifice.⁴

If the *skandalon* of Jonestown requires that we make the effort of understanding, it requires as well that, as members of the academy, we side with Montaigne against Phillips. For fundamental to the latter's conceptual relativism is the claim that, "what counts as true in my language may not even be able to be described in yours. Translation becomes impossible in principle."⁵ But if this be the case, the academy, the enterprise of understanding, the human sciences themselves, become, likewise, impossible in principle since they are fundamentally translation enterprises.

II

The basic facts concerning Jonestown that are matters of public record may be rapidly rehearsed.⁶ James Warren Jones was born 13 May 1931 in the small town of Lynn, Indiana. Like many other towns of the region and of the time, Lynn was a seat of both Christian fundamentalism and Ku Klux Klan activity. (The Klan's national headquarters had been in Indianapolis.) There is considerable evidence that by the late forties Jones

guished from the teaching of religion in the public schools," that the parallel course of religious studies in the academy, instituted a century ago in Holland, became possible in this country.

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To put the matter succinctly, religion was domesticated; it was transformed from *pathos* to *ethos*. At no little cost, religion was brought within the realm of common sense, of civil discourse and commerce. Rediscovering the old tag, "Nothing human is foreign to me," the Enlightenment impulse was one of tolerance and, as a necessary concomitant, one which refused to leave any human datum, including religion, beyond the pale of understanding, beyond the realm of reason.

It was this impulse, this domestication, that made possible the entrance of religious studies into the secular academy. But the price of this entry, to reverse the Steppenwolf formula, is the use of our mind. As students of religion, we have become stubbornly committed to making the attempt (even if we fail) at achieving intelligibility. We must accept the burden of the long, hard road of understanding. To do less is to forfeit our license to practice in the academy, to leave the study of religion open to the charge of incivility and intolerance.

Against this background, I have deliberately chosen for my topic an event which is a scandal in the original sense of the word. Such scandals erupt from time to time and perturb the assumptions of civility. For the Enlightenment faith in intelligibility, it was the shock over the utter devastation of the Lisbon earthquake on 1 November 1755—reread Voltaire's *Candide*!² For those of us committed to the academic study of religion, a comparable scandal is that series of events which began at approximately 5:00 P.M., on 18 November 1978 in Jonestown, Guyana. From one point of view, one might claim that Jonestown was the most important single event in the history of religions, for if we continue, as a profession, to leave it ununderstandable, then we will have surrendered our rights to the academy. The daring and difficult experiment in parallel courses of religious study begun in Holland a century ago will have concluded in failure.

One final, preliminary matter. To interpret, to venture to understand, is not necessarily to approve or to advocate. There is a vast difference between what I have described as "tolerance" and what is now known as "relativism." The former does not necessarily lead to the latter. In the

sixteenth century, that great precursor of the Enlightenment, Montaigne, argued in his essay "Of Cannibals":

Everyone terms barbarity, whatever is not of his own customs; in truth it seems that we have no view of what is true and reasonable, except the example and idea of the customs and practices of the country in which we live. We may call them barbarians, then, if we are judging by the rules of reason, but not if we are judging by comparison with ourselves, who surpass them in every sort of barbarity.³

He was stating a principle of toleration, but he was also making a normative claim: we cannot judge another culture by reference to ourselves; we may judge (both another and ourselves), if our criteria are universal "rules of reason." The anthropology of the last century, the study of religions in the academy, has contributed to making more difficult a naive, ethnocentric formulation of the "rules of reason," but this does not require that such "rules" be denied, or suggest that we should slacken in our attempts to formulate them.

It is a far cry from the civility of Montaigne and his Enlightenment heirs to the utter conceptual relativism of D. Z. Phillips when he writes, in *Faith and Philosophical Enquiry*:

If I hear that one of my neighbors has killed another neighbor's child, given that he is sane, my condemnation is immediate. . . . But if I hear that some remote tribe practices child sacrifice, what then? I do not know what sacrifice means for the tribe in question. What would it mean to say I condemned it when the "it" refers to something I know nothing about? I would be condemning murder. But murder is not child sacrifice.⁴

If the *skandalon* of Jonestown requires that we make the effort of understanding, it requires as well that, as members of the academy, we side with Montaigne against Phillips. For fundamental to the latter's conceptual relativism is the claim that, "what counts as true in my language may not even be able to be described in yours. Translation becomes impossible in principle."⁵ But if this be the case, the academy, the enterprise of understanding, the human sciences themselves, become, likewise, impossible in principle since they are fundamentally translation enterprises.

II

The basic facts concerning Jonestown that are matters of public record may be rapidly rehearsed.⁶ James Warren Jones was born 13 May 1931 in the small town of Lynn, Indiana. Like many other towns of the region and of the time, Lynn was a seat of both Christian fundamentalism and Ku Klux Klan activity. (The Klan's national headquarters had been in Indianapolis.) There is considerable evidence that by the late forties Jones

was deeply committed to the former and had decisively rejected the latter in favor of a vision of racial equality and harmony. In 1950, Jones (now married), moved to Indianapolis and, although not ordained, became a pastor at the Sommerset Southside Church and director of an integrated community center. In difficulty with the Sommerset congregation for his outspoken views on civil rights, he left and, by 1953, had founded his own, interracial Community Unity Church, largely subsidized by his efforts, including the door-to-door peddling of pet monkeys. For a while he also served as associate pastor of the Laurel Street Tabernacle, but, again, his integrationist views forced him out. In 1956, he founded the Peoples Temple, an integrated but predominantly black congregation. He also began the practice of adopting children of various races (he was to adopt a total of seven) and urging his congregants to do so as well. Moving to larger quarters, he began his visits to a variety of evangelists, the most significant being a trip to Philadelphia to talk with Father Divine. By 1960, his efforts in community work had become so well known that he was appointed director of the Indianapolis Human Rights Commission, and articles about him began to appear in the press. In 1961, the Peoples Temple Full Gospel Church became affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and, in 1964, Jones was ordained a minister by that denomination. In this same period, Jones appears to have introduced more discipline into his congregation (e.g., establishing an "interrogation committee") and to have begun to practice increasingly vivid forms of faith healing; he claimed that he had resurrected a number of dead individuals (by 1972, he would claim to have resurrected more than forty) and that he was able to cure cancer. (This latter led to an investigation by the state of Indiana, but the results were inconclusive.)

In 1965, after reading an article on nuclear destruction in *Esquire Magazine*, Jones predicted the end of the world in a nuclear holocaust which would occur on 15 July 1967. Concerned for the society that would emerge after this event, he sought to find sanctuary for a small, interracial remnant. The magazine mentioned ten places as the safest from destruction, including Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and Ukiah, California. Jones visited Brazil, meeting with several of the leaders of messianic cults there as well as stopping off in Guyana on his return. He then moved about 150 members of his congregation from Indianapolis to Ukiah, incorporating the Peoples Temple, Disciples of Christ Church in November 1965. He began a pattern of commuting between his Indianapolis and his California congregations, but increasingly concentrated his activities in Redwood Valley.

By 1967, Jones was an important civic institution in northern California. Several officials had joined his church. He was the chairman of the local Legal Services Society and foreman of the Mendocino Grand Jury.

By 1972, he had expanded his activities, founding churches in San Francisco and Los Angeles. He published a newspaper, *The People's Forum*, which had a press run of 60,000 copies, and had a half-hour radio program, each week, on KFAQ. In 1973, he leased 27,000 acres of undeveloped land from the government of Guyana to serve as an "agricultural mission" and a "promised land."

By 1974, his combined California congregations had grown to such a degree that the *Sacramento Bee* declared, "Peoples Temple ranks as probably the largest Protestant congregation in Northern California," and Jones became an important political force. Still combining his preaching of racial equality with services of healing, Jones began to speak to, and attract, a different audience. While still predominantly a black and working class congregation, he also brought into Peoples Temple a new, white, liberal, educated, middle class membership. In 1975, he was named one of the hundred most outstanding clergymen in the United States by *Religion in Life*. He also worked for the political campaign of San Francisco mayor, George Moscone, and entered into the center of West Coast politics. Visibly active in support of freedom of the press causes, he received, in 1976, the *Los Angeles Herald's* Humanitarian of the Year award. He became active in the presidential campaign of Carter, turning out a huge audience for Rosalynn Carter's appearance; he was later invited by her to the inauguration and corresponded with her in the White House.

Appointed to the San Francisco Housing Authority by Moscone in 1976, he became its chairman in 1977, and received the Martin Luther King Humanitarian of the Year award in San Francisco that year.

Although there had been a few "exposés" of Peoples Temple (most notably a planned eight-part series by Lester Kinsolving in the *San Francisco Examiner* in 1972, which was suppressed after four installments had appeared), it was not until the 1 August 1977 issue of *New West Magazine* with its lurid reports of financial misdealings, beatings, intimidation, brainwashing, and hints of murder that another side of Peoples Temple came into public view. After an unsuccessful attempt to have the story quashed, Jones left for Guyana.

The mission in Guyana had been run, since its establishment, by a skeleton crew. In 1975, there were only 15 members in Jonestown. By 1976, when California's lieutenant governor visited the site, there were some 50 individuals. In May 1977, there were 70 full-time residents. Between late July and December 1977, Jones and some 900 other congregants had moved to Jonestown. A core of about 100 members was left behind to staff the California churches and provide logistical support for the community in Guyana.

Between 1 April and 7 November 1978, there was a flurry of legal actions. Former cult members entered lawsuits against Peoples Temple

charging assault and fraud. There were investigations by the San Francisco district attorney's office and by the United States consul in Guyana. Relatives of citizens of Jonestown began making public statements, charging violations of human rights and mistreatment in Jonestown. In June, a former Temple official filed an affidavit to the effect that Jones had assumed "a tyrannical hold over the lives of Temple members," that he had become paranoid and was planning "mass suicide for the glory of socialism." In the same month, James Cobb filed suit against Jones in San Francisco, charging him with planning "mass murder [that] would result in the death of minor children not old enough to make voluntary and informed decisions about serious matters of any nature, much less insane proposals of collective suicide."

On 14 November 1978, Congressman Leo Ryan, of California, left for Guyana to investigate the situation, accompanied by fourteen relatives of Jonestown citizens and representatives of the press. On the afternoon of 17 November, and the morning of the next day, Ryan visited Jonestown and interviewed a number of the Peoples Temple members. A small number indicated that they wished to leave with him, but, in the main, Ryan was positively impressed.

At 4:00 P.M. on the afternoon of 18 November, after having been threatened with a knife in Jonestown, Ryan and four members of his party were shot to death while waiting to board their chartered plane. Eleven members of his party were wounded. Their assailants were members of the Jonestown community.

About an hour later, Jones began the "White Night," an event that had been previously rehearsed, the suicide of every member of Peoples Temple in Jonestown. When it was over, 914 people had died, most by taking a fruit drink mixed with cyanide and tranquilizers; most apparently died voluntarily. (Four individuals, including Jones, died of gunshot wounds. The bodies of some 70 individuals showed puncture wounds which suggest that they were injected with poison—whether voluntarily or not cannot be determined. Two hundred and sixty infants and small children had been administered poison, most by their parents. Dogs, livestock, and fishponds had been poisoned as well.)

Some one hundred of the inhabitants of Jonestown, the majority of whom had been away from the settlement, and a small number who fled the White Night, survived.

With the exception of one Guyanese, all of the dead were American citizens. Most were family groups. The majority were black. Jonestown was a national movement. The birthplaces of the dead were in 39 states and 4 foreign countries. With the exception of one individual from Philadelphia, the last home of all the dead, before Jonestown, was in California with the largest group from the San Francisco Bay area (229), and almost

equal numbers from the site of the first Temple in Ukiah-Redwood Valley (139) and Los Angeles (137).

Since the events in Jonestown, I have searched through the academic journals for some serious study, but in vain. Neither in them, nor in the hundreds of papers on the program of the American Academy of Religion (which was in session during the event in 1978 and which meets each year about the time of its anniversary) has there been any mention. For the press, the event was all too quickly overshadowed by other new horrors. For the academy, it was as if Jonestown had never happened.

The press, by and large, featured the pornography of Jonestown—the initial focus on the daily revisions of the body count, the details on the condition of the corpses. Then, as more "background" information became available, space was taken over by lurid details of beatings, sexual humiliations, and public acts of perversion. The bulk of these focused on Jones as a "wrathful, lustful giant": his bisexuality, his mistresses, his all-night sermons on the "curse of his big penis," his questionnaires to adolescent members about their sexual fantasies concerning him, his arrest on a morals charge, his sexual demands on his congregants, including a secretary whose job it was to arrange liaisons for him with male and female members of his congregation, beginning with the formula, "Father hates to do this, but he has this tremendous urge." Everything was sensational. Almost no attempt was made to gain any interpretative framework. According to the journalists Maguire and Dunn, it was an event "so bizarre that historians would have to reach back into Biblical times[!] to find a calamity big enough for comparison."

It was not surprising, I suppose, considering the fact that a major metropolitan daily, the *New York Post*, found it impossible to mention the Ayotollah Khomeini's name without prefacing it by "that madman," that it was the language of fraud and insanity that dominated the accounts. There were several options: he began sincere and went mad; he began a fraud and went mad; he was always a fraud; he was always mad—or, sometimes impossibly, a combination of all of these. Thus *Newsweek* could, in one article, call Jones: "self-proclaimed messiah," "a man who played god," "full of hokum . . . and carnival stuff," "one who mesmerized," "fanatical," "a foul paranoid," "one vulnerable to forces in his own mind," "gifted with a strange power," "victim of darker forces," "a wrathful, lustful giant," "nightmarish," "bizarre." This is the usual language of religious polemics: read the Western biographies of Muhammad! There is neither anything new nor perceptive in this all-but-standard list. There is certainly nothing that will aid understanding. A few journalists of modest literary bent played on his name and made reference to "The Emperor Jones," but little light was shed by that.

More troubling, the newspapers gave a substantial amount of space to other religious leaders and their gyrations in distancing themselves from Jonestown. Perhaps the greatest single scandal in this regard occurred in the *New York Times*, one of whose longer analytical pieces on Jones was an article on the "Op-Ed" page entitled, "Billy Graham on 'Satan and Jonestown,'" in which the evangelist fulminated against "false prophets and messiahs," "satanically inspired people," and "the wholesale deception of false messiahs like Jim Jones," concluding:

One may speak of the Jones situation as that of a cult, but it would be a sad mistake to identify it in any way with Christianity. It is true that he came from a religious background but what he did and how he thought can have no relationship to the views and teachings of any legitimate form of historic Christianity. We have witnessed a false messiah who used the cloak of religion to cover a confused mind filled with a mixture of pseudo-religion, political ambition, sensual lust, financial dishonesty and, apparently, even murder. . . . Apparently Mr. Jones was a slave of a diabolical supernatural power from which he refused to be set free.⁷

This is to give way to the forces of unreason. I find Billy Graham's presence on the editorial pages of the *New York Times* a more stunning indication that the faith of the Enlightenment upon which the academy depends is in danger than the events in Jonestown!

The profession of religious studies, when it would talk, privately, within its boundaries, had a different perspective. For many, Jones's declarations that he was a Marxist, a communist, one who rejected the "opiate" of religion, were greeted with relief. He was not, after all, religious. Hence there was no professional obligation to interpret him. Never mind the fact that one of the most important religious phenomena of this century has been the combination of revolutionary Marxism and Roman Catholicism in Latin America, Marxism and Buddhism in southeast Asia, Marxism and Islam in the Middle East.

For others, it was not to be talked about because it revealed what had been concealed from public, academic discussion for a century—that religion has rarely been a positive, liberal force. Religion is not nice; it has been responsible for more death and suffering than any other human activity. Jonestown (and many of the other so-called cults) signaled the shallowness of the amalgamation between religion and liberalism which was, among other things, a major argument for the presence of religious studies in the state and secular universities. Religion was not civil. And so a new term had to be created, that of "cult," to segregate these uncivil phenomena from religion.

But civility is not to be reduced to "nice" behavior. A concomitant of the Enlightenment "domestication" of religion was the refusal to leave any human datum beyond the pale of reason and understanding. If the events of Jonestown are a behavioral *skandalon* to the Enlightenment faith, then the refusal of the academy to interpret Jonestown is, at least, an equivalent *skandalon* to the same faith.

It is remarkable to me that in all the literature on Jonestown that I have read the closest expression of the fundamental mood of the Enlightenment should have come in a sermon preached by a minister to the First United Methodist Church in Reno, Nevada—a minister who lost two daughters and a grandson in the White Night of Jonestown:

Jonestown people were human beings. Except for your caring relationship with us, Jonestown would be names, "cultists," "fanatics," "kooks." Our children are real to you, because you knew [us]. [My wife] and I could describe for you many of the dead. You would think that we were describing people whom you know, members of our church.⁸

This recognition of the ordinary humanness of the participants in Jonestown's White Night must certainly be the starting point of interpretation. For, "nothing human is foreign to me."

Our task is not to reach closure. Indeed, at present this is factually impossible, for we lack the majority of the necessary data. We know the pornography of Jonestown; we do not know its mythology, its ideology, its soteriology, its sociology—we do not know almost everything we would need to know in order to venture a secure argument. We know, for example, that Jones characteristically held all-night meetings at which he spoke for hours. We know almost nothing of what he said. But we do know enough, as a matter of principle, to refuse to accept prematurely the option of declaring that it is unintelligible and, hence, in some profound sense inhuman. In a situation like this, it is not irresponsible to guess, to imagine Jonestown, for the risk of a model, however tentative, will suggest the kinds of data we might require. And, as enough of the participants are still living and accessible, as enough documentation, including "hundreds of reel-to-reel tapes and cassettes," has been gathered by legal agencies that are incompetent to interpret them, we might hope, in time, to have the data that we need.⁹

How, then, shall we begin to think about Jonestown as students of religion, as members of the academy? How might we use the resources available for thinking about human religious activity within the context of the corporate endeavor of the human sciences? A basic strategy, one that is a prerequisite for intelligibility, is to remove from Jonestown the aspect of the unique, of its being utterly exotic. We must be able to declare

that Jonestown on 18 November 1978 was an instance of something known, of something we have seen before. We must perform an act of reduction. We must reduce Jonestown to the category of the known and the knowable.

In a primitive form, this initial move was made in the press which provided lists of suicides for religious and/or political reasons that have occurred in the past. From Masada, a first-century event which has become a foundation myth for the contemporary state of Israel (and which featured the same combination of isolation, homicide, and suicide) to the self-immolation of Buddhist monks and American pacifists during the Viet Nam War, we have seen it and heard about it before. Works such as Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1563)—one of the most popular books in the English language—supplied vivid portraits of those who would rather accept death, whether by their own hand or from another's, than renounce their religion. And works by J. Wisse (1933) and the psychiatrist Gregory Zilboorg (1939) supplied lengthy catalogs of corporate suicide among tribal peoples. Then, too, we have not lacked attempts to make such acts comprehensible, to make them less exotic. In studies by a distinguished series of scholars and writers, the act of self-destruction has been rescued from its legal and moral status as irrational. But none of these lists take us very far. Nor are they designed to. They do not allow us to propose an interpretation of Jonestown in its brute specificity. But they do allow us the beginning of reduction, that first glimpse of familiarity that is the prerequisite of intelligibility.

III

In this essay I would like to suggest two models, one quite old, one relatively new, which may illuminate aspects of the White Night of Jonestown. They are necessarily partial. They are far from being final proposals. But they are a beginning at an enterprise of looking at Jonestown rather than staring or looking away. We will have to continue this enterprise. We may, in the end, be frustrated. But not to have attempted an understanding, to allow the pornography of Jonestown to be all that can be thought, is, in a fundamental sense, to have surrendered the academy. It is to deny the possibility of there being human sciences.

The first model we might attempt is exceedingly old. It has been used in Western discourse about religion for close to 2500 years in order to interpret the uncivility of religion. It is a model for which the figure of Dionysus stands as a sign. Regardless of whether it is an adequate understanding of the complex historical development of the vast variety of Dionysiac cults (it is not), the Dionysiac *pattern*, as classically established by Euripides, elaborated by Livy and other Late Antique writers, rediscovered by Nietzsche and the early Rodhe, and, more recently, redis-

covered again by René Girard in *Violence and the Sacred* (1972), has proven compelling.

The utility of this model reminds us that the prime purpose of academic inquiry, most especially in the humanities, is to provide *exempli gratia*, an arsenal of classic instances which are held to be exemplary, to provide paradigmatic events and expressions as resources from which to reason, from which to extend the possibility of intelligibility to that which first appears novel. To have discussed Euripides' *Bacchae* is, to some degree, already to have discussed Jonestown.

The *Bacchae* is a complex play. More than many others, it resists univocal interpretation. Here, we are not engaged in studying the *Bacchae*. We are using, perhaps even misusing, Euripides' play for our own, quite particular, purpose. We are using this artifact from 407 B.C. in order to become more familiar with Jonestown.

The play immediately attracts our attention because it takes as one of its themes the introduction of a new religion, that of Dionysus. It focuses, as well, on forms of violence. Dionysus, as he is presented to us in the drama, is one who obliterates distinctions. He is "polymorphous," able to assume any form at will: god, man, beast, male, female, old, young. He abolishes, as well, distinctions among his devotees. They are presented to us as a nameless collective band. They represent a motley mixture of ethnic origins: barbarians, Greco-Asiatics, and Hellenes that have been melded together into a religion that strives for universality, one where no one is excluded, a religion for all mankind. The cult group in the play is exclusively women—although they can act as if they were men. Their chief mode of life is, from their viewpoint, "sober ecstasy." Hence the dualities. They are the "eaters of raw flesh," and they are "devoted to peace." They are the wild "dancers," and they are under strict discipline, being agents of "Justice, principle of order, spirit of custom."

The entrance of Dionysus and his band into a city is perceived, from the point of view of the city, as an invasion, as a contagious plague. It produces civil disorder and madness. Hence its official, civil interpretation will be that it is "alien," that it is founded by a "charlatan and a fraud," one who wishes to profit financially and seduce women. The civil response to such a cult, to its "impostures and unruliness," is expulsion or death. There is *no room* for this sort of religion within *civil space*.

Yet the Messengers give us another, quite different, portrait of the Dionysiac band. Within *their own space*, apart from the city, on a mountain, they live in a paradise of their own making. Here they contravene the civic portrait. They are not "drunk with wine or wandering," but "modest and sober"; Pentheus will see to his "surprise how chaste the Bacchae are." On both occasions when they are spied on by representatives of the city, we see the Bacchae inhabiting *utopian space*, living

in gentle, free spontaneity. In each case a Messenger carries this report *back* to the city, a report of the positive aspects of the obliteration of distinctions: not madness, but freedom.

The first Messenger's report is of a sacred and miraculous "peaceable kingdom," where the women tame and suckle wild beasts, where rivers of water, wine, and milk burst forth from the earth, where honey spurts from the wands the women carry. "If you had been there and seen these wonders for yourself, you would have gone down on your knees and prayed to the god you now deny." The second Messenger's report is of domestic peace. "We saw the Maenads sitting, their hands busily moving at their happy tasks."

But the Messengers represent something else. They are not only reporters of Bacchic ethnography, bearing reports on the utopian civil life of the Bacchics within their own space, they are, as well, *invaders* of that space. They are "spies" and intruders. As the Bacchics disorder the city when they "invade," so too the figures from the city disorder paradise when they spy on it and intrude on it. The response in both cases is the same. The Bacchics are instantly transformed into wild figures of violence. The motif of the obliteration of distinctions continues, but now in a way that elicits civil disgust and fear rather than envy and reverence. In the first case, the women tear live, domesticated animals apart with their bare hands. More seriously, they attack civic space. "Like invaders," they swooped down on the border villages, "everything in sight they pillaged and destroyed. They snatched children from their homes"—and they did this with supernatural power, without conventional weapons. When the men of the village fought back, the women routed them with their wands, while the weapons of the men were unable to draw blood. In the second instance, it is a man who is pulled apart by the women's bare hands, a mother who slays her son.¹⁰

Moving several centuries in time, we find a modulation of the Bacchic paradigm. When, in 186 B.C., the Roman Senate suppressed the Bacchic cults, all of the older elements of religious propaganda were reaffirmed. It was an "invasion" and an "epidemic." It was foreign, fraudulent, characterized by violence and sexual excesses. But the speech that Livy puts in the mouth of the consul Postumius reveals another dimension of our theme. There is no longer a dichotomy between civil space and Bacchic utopian space, the cult now dwells within the city. It lives in *subversive space* where "some believe it to be a kind of worship of the gods; others suppose it a permitted sport and relaxation." Civil understanding has domesticated the Dionysiac cult, and this makes it all the more dangerous. The external utopian space of the Bacchae has become internal, subversive space within the city. The Bacchae now live in a *counterpolis*. In his speech from the Rostra, Postumius declaims:

Unless you are on your guard, Citizens of Rome, this present meeting, held in the daylight, legally summoned by a consul, can be paralleled by another meeting held at night. Now, as individuals, they [the Bacchics] are afraid of you, as you stand assembled in a united body; but presently, when you have scattered to your houses in the city or to your homes in the country, *they* will have assembled and will be making plans for their own safety and at the same time for your destruction; and then you as individuals will have to fear them as a united body.¹¹

But, since the Bacchics are within civil space, they may be dealt with by civil means: trials, executions, banishments, and laws for their suppression.

I suggest no simple parallels. There are profound differences between Dionysiac cults and Peoples Temple Christian Church. Yet the spatial considerations that I have advanced from the one, supply some instances of familiarity when we seek to understand the other.

The fundamental fact about Jones is that he sought to overcome distinctions. At times he termed this impulse, Christianity, at times, socialism or communism, but the effort was the same. While one can point to bisexuality and other forms of liberation and libertinism that bear some resemblance to Dionysiac praxis, these parallels are superficial. The major distinction that Jones labored to overcome was a distinctly modern and American one: it was the distinction of race. This was the consistent theme as he moved from established civil and religious space (the Somerset Southside Church, the Laurel Street Tabernacle, the Human Rights Commission, the Housing Authority) to a space of his own making. In one of the earliest official reports on Peoples Temple by the district superintendent of the United Methodist Church for Oakland and the East Bay, it is described as "a caring community of people of all races and classes. They bear the mark of compassion and justice—compassion for the hungry and jobless, lonely and disturbed, and also for the earth and her offspring."¹² In some sense, the predominance of Blacks in Peoples Temple is equivalent to the predominance of women in the Dionysiac religions.

Prior to Jonestown, Peoples Temple might be described as inhabiting subversive space. It participated in civil activities and won major forms of public recognition for these efforts. But, hidden from public view, it was also a parallel mode of government. Internally, it was a counterpolis. It had its own modes of leadership, its own criteria for citizenship, its own mores and laws, its own system of discipline and punishment. When this was revealed to the public, civil world by disaffected members (as was the Dionysian cult in Rome), the reaction could have been predicted from Livy. An exposé of its founder in terms of fraud and of the Temple in terms of a subversive danger to the community brought legal and leg-

islative remedies to bear: official investigations, lawsuits, criminal charges. Seen in this light, the article in *New West Magazine* is parallel to the speech of Postumius.

Jones's reaction was one of exodus to utopian space, to Guyana. As one reads through the various reports on Jonestown prior to November 1978, the equivalents of the speeches of the Messengers in the *Bacchae*, both those from visitors and those produced by Peoples Temple, there is little doubt that one is reading the language and rhetoric of paradise. One such report, from the summer of 1978, begins by quoting Matthew 25:35-40:

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me. . . . Truly I say to you, as you did to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me.

and continues:

What a miracle it is! Over eight hundred acres of jungle have been cleared since 1974, most of it within the last year. . . . What we found at the cooperative was a loving community in the true New Testament sense. . . . Jonestown offers a rare opportunity for deep relationships between men and women, young and old, who come from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.¹³

A pamphlet put out by the Temple to extol Jonestown was entitled, "A Feeling of Freedom," and Jones elaborated:

We enjoy every type of organized sport and recreational games. Musical talents and arts are flourishing. We share every joy and every need. Our lives are secure and rich with variety and growth and expanding knowledge. . . . Now there is peace . . . there is freedom from the loneliness and the agony of racism. . . . We have found security and freedom in collectivism and we can help build a peaceful agricultural nation.¹⁴

There is little doubt that whatever the "reality," this evaluation was shared by the majority of the citizens of Jonestown. It was, to use the title of the Peoples Temple home for retarded children back in Redwood Valley, truly "Happy Acres."

Into this utopian space, figures from the city came to invade and to spy. Congressman Ryan and the press disordered paradise and the result could have been predicted from the *Bacchae*—the rapid shift from peace to terror and the furious murder of the intruders. In the *Bacchae*, the Maenads, after routing the invaders, go on to attack the border villages. At Jonestown, the violence was directed inwards, the White Night, the total destruction of themselves. In part, this was a measure of realism. There

was no possible military solution for Jonestown against those they perceived as the aggressors. The Temple lacked the Maenads' supernatural weapons. But, in part, this was as well a spatial reaction. Utopia had been invaded, and it was time for another exodus.

On 15 March 1979, the *New York Times* published the transcript of a tape recording of Jones, during the White Night, exhorting his followers to suicide. It is a remarkable document.¹⁵ Jones clearly interprets the visit of Ryan as an "invasion": they "came after our children." Following the shooting at the airport, more powerful military invaders will return; they will annihilate the community. There is "no hiding place down here." No further terrestrial exodus will serve, there is no utopia, no "nowhere" where they will not be sought out. The tape reiterates: "It's too late for Russia." "There's no plane." So "Let's get gone. Let's get gone. Let's get gone."

The language for death used by Jones and other voices on the tape is consistently spatial—indeed, it suggests a communal rhetoric. "Step over," "step to that other side," "stepping over to another place," "stepping over to another plane," "you have to step across . . . this world was not our home," "if you knew what's ahead of you, you'd be glad to be stepping over." But this language suggests as well the sort of additional data that we need. What was their view of afterlife? Of the "other" world? On the tape there is only a twice-repeated reference to "the green scene thing." But this reference is sufficient to establish a post mortem paradisiacal context, in a place where they will not be followed, where they would not be further intruded upon.

By reading Jonestown in light of the *Bacchae* and Euripides in light of Jonestown, we can begin to understand its utopian logic. We can begin to find Jonestown familiar. Its failure to secure subversive space was predictable, as was a violent conflict when representatives from civil space invaded utopia. By this interpretation, the most proximate responsibility for the events of White Night was Ryan's.

IV

Let me go on to suggest a second option, a second partial interpretation, a second act of making Jonestown familiar.

As I read the various, early press reports of the White Night, my eye was caught by one detail. Not only 914 human deaths, but also all the animals. In the words of the first reporter on the scene:

I noticed that many of them had died with their arms around each other, men and women, white and black, young and old. Little babies lying on the ground too. Near their mothers and fathers. Dead. Finally, I turned back toward the main pavilion and noticed the dogs that lay dead on the sidewalk. The dogs, I thought. What had they done? Then

I realized that Jones had meant to leave nothing, not even animals, to bear witness to the final horror. There were to be no survivors. Even the dogs and Mr. Muggs, Jonestown's pet chimpanzee, had their place in the long white night into which the Peoples Temple had been ordered by the mad Mr. Jones. The heat and stench were overpowering. There was nothing to drink because Jones had ordered the community water supply contaminated with poison.¹⁶

Leaving aside Krause's lurid prose and his editorializing, the destruction was intended to be total: men, women, children, animals, fish, and water supply—and this destruction alongside a deliberate presentation of utopian harmony—bodies lying together, “arms around each other,” uniting the sexes, age groups, and races.

This, too, has a certain familiarity to the student of religion. Although it is a recent model, rather than an old one that will be called on, the model of the cargo cult. Let me give one specific example from Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides.¹⁷

In 1923, a native prophet, Ronovuro, announced that the ancestral dead would return to the island, after a flood, on a ship bearing rice and other foods. This would be distributed to members of his cult if they were fully paid up. (He charged fees for entrance, ranging from 5 shillings to one pound). A stone storehouse was built to hold the cargo. However, Ronovuro prophesied, the Europeans would attempt to prevent the ship from landing and distributing its gifts. Therefore, the natives must rebel. While, eventually, all Whites must be killed, for now, one European was to be singled out. He would serve as a surrogate for the others. In July 1923, a British planter named Clapcott was murdered by Ronovuro's followers. He was shot, and his body was mutilated. According to some reports, parts of it were eaten. The cult was suppressed by military means. Six of the leaders were condemned to death, others were sentenced to prison terms. In 1937, the cult was revived, but was quickly suppressed by the authorities.

In 1944, a new prophet, Tsek, arose and founded the Ronovuro school. It was likewise a cargo cult, but of a somewhat different form. His message, according to J. G. Miller, was:

Destroy everything which you got from the Whites also all [native made] mats and basket-making tools. Burn your houses and build two large dormitories in each village: one for the men and the other for the women. . . . Stop working for the Whites. Slaughter all domestic animals: pigs, dogs, cats, etc.

New social forms were developed. The members of the cult went nude, they spoke a common language although the villages from which they came had originally belonged to different linguistic groups. Tribal friction

and quarreling were eliminated in favor of cultic solidarity. A road several miles long, the result of enormous collective labor, was built to the sea, terminating at the site of Clapcott's murder, where the cargo ship would land and discharge the goods.

Again the cult was suppressed, although there are indications that it still continues in modulated forms. Ecstatic speech and healings have been added, and there is a secret room with vines stretched between poles that serves as “wireless belong boy,” a place to wait for news of the arrival of the cargo ship.

There are many striking parallels of detail between these cults and Jonestown. But there is so much that is specifically Oceanic in cargo cults that a pursuit of these would be dangerous. Yet there is much, in the general ideology, that is suggestive. In the preceding chapter, I tried to summarize the underlying logic. It need not be rehearsed here. It is sufficient to recall that the central, moral idea was one of achieving exchange reciprocity between the Whites and the natives. A variety of stratagems were employed, the most desperate, such as on Santos, involving a total destruction of everything the natives own as if, by this dramatic gesture, to awaken the White man's sense of obligation to exchange, in order to shame him into a recognition of his responsibilities. “We have now given everything away. What will you give in return?”¹⁸

I am not suggesting simple parallels. Peoples Temple was not a cargo cult although, if we sought to interpret the religion of Peoples Temple rather than its end, we would be helped immeasurably if we understood it in the context of messianic, nativistic, cargo cults. But Ronovuro and Tsek can help us become familiar with Jones at the moment of the White Night. (Perhaps they could help us become even more familiar with him if we knew more about his religious and political ideologies). Indeed, Jones himself draws a parallel between White Night and native crisis cults. On the transcript, someone protests, and Jones answers:

It's never been done before you say. It's been done by every tribe in history. Every tribe facing annihilation. All the Indians of the Amazon are doing it right now. . . . Because they do not want to live in this kind of a world.

Alongside the spatial language for death on the last tape from Jonestown, there is another language, the language of “revolutionary suicide” (a term borrowed from the writings of Huey P. Newton). “We are not committing suicide, it's a revolutionary act.” “What I'm talking about is the dispensation of judgment, this is a revolutionary—a revolutionary suicide council. I'm not talking about self-destruction.” “[Let's] lay down our lives to protest.” “We didn't commit suicide. We committed an act of revolutionary suicide protesting the conditions of an inhumane world.”

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For Jacob Neusner, Hans H. Penner, and Burton L. Mack — three quite different encounters of the closest kind — with affection, respect, and gratitude.

Chapter Eleven

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35. I have drawn some sentences from my article, "What a Difference a Difference Makes," in Neusner-Frerichs, "To See Ourselves As Others See Us," 3–48, esp. pp. 46–48, reprinted in this volume.

CHAPTER TWELVE

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DIFFERENCE MAKES

The discourse of difference is a difficult one.

T. TODOROV, *La conquête de l'Amérique: La question de l'autre*

"TO SEE OURSELVES as Others See Us: The Theory of the Other in the Formative Age of Christianity and Judaism." What a formidable topic to set before an international gathering of scholars as the focus for a summer's weeklong period of papers and reflections! Only the title's points of chronological reference to the first centuries strike me as bearing a measure of self-evidence. Quite rightly, they have supplied the skeletal outline for the proceedings of our conference. Abstaining from the question of the referent for "Christianity" or "Judaism," what is by no means clear is what was intended by the framers of our topic when they employed the portentous phrase "the theory of the other." I take it to be the obligation of one charged to give a "keynote" address to inquire into this most general aspect of our subject.

For this reason, in what follows I shall not dwell at all on the stated chronological period, nor venture to anticipate the welter of historical particularities and exempla concerning Christians and Jews which the full program promises. Rather, I shall direct my inquiries toward that phrase "the theory of the other" and attempt to discern several senses in which the "other" can be framed as a theoretical issue. That is to say, I shall want to ask, from the perspective of intellectual history, what difference does difference make? My point of entry into this difficult matter has been supplied by the poetic apostrophe in our conference's title. ★

I

There is no settling the point of precedency between a louse and a flea.

DR. JOHNSON

I would like to believe it was far from accidental that our conveners chose to introduce our topic with a line from the concluding stanza of a poem by Robert Burns. First published in the historic Kilmarnock edition of 1786, it has, detached from its context, since become a piece of proverbial lore.

O wid some Power the giftie gie us
To see ourselfs as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us
An' ev'n devotion!¹

In quoting Burns's lines, we have already gained an initial purchase on our topic. What language was the poem written in? The language seems not-quite-English, yet, is it different enough to be classified as "other"? To quote one distinguished scholar of Scottish literature on Burns:

Though all of this is still unmistakably Scots, only a small change of spelling is required to make these couplets visually indistinguishable from English . . . [but] they have to be pronounced with a Scottish accent. Thus they fall within the compass of Scottish speech and the language employed in them cannot strictly be called 'English'; perhaps it should rather be termed 'near-English.'²

It may be fairly asked, how "near" is near? How "far" is far? How different does difference have to be to constitute "otherness"? Under what circumstances, and to whom, are such distinctions of interest?

The question of interest reminds us of yet another facet to our theme, one that is contained within the original sense of "interest" as continued in legal and economic usage. Difference is rarely something simply to be noted; it is, most often, something in which one has a stake. Above all, it is a political matter. As the proximate historical setting of Burns suggests, following the Union of the Crowns in 1603 and the Par-

liamentary Union of 1707, and contemporary with the establishment in Edinburgh of a "Select Society for the Promoting of the Reading and Speaking of the English Language," what appears from a linguistic point of view to be "near" appears from a political vantage to be exceedingly "far."³ How far might be measured by comparing Burns's self-consciously vernacular poems with the equally self-conscious classic English prose of his Scottish contemporary, Adam Smith. Difference is seldom a comparison between entities judged to be equivalent. Difference most frequently entails a hierarchy of prestige and the concomitant political ranking of superordinate and subordinate.

Yet, as the Scottish example illustrates, such distinctions are usually drawn most sharply between "near neighbors." For a Scotsman to opt for either Scottish or English (both being Anglo-Saxon dialects) is a more politically striking decision than to have chosen to speak either French or Chinese.⁴ The radically "other" is merely "other"; the proximate "other" is problematic, and hence, of supreme interest. *

But there is more. The choice of our conveners proved to be of even greater prescience. For the poem that contains the line "to see ourselves as others see us" is entitled "To a Louse: On Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church." Perhaps this will seem an unsuitable topic; it has appeared so to many of Burns's deepest admirers. But the louse has provided the subject for a wide variety of poets and painters,⁵ although it has been eclipsed in this regard by the equally parasitic flea⁶ in the works of poets ranging from John Donne to Roland Young, in operatic works by Mussorgsky and Ghedini, and not forgetting its place in the anonymous Victorian pornographic novel, *Autobiography of a Flea, told in a Hop, Skip and Jump, and recounting all experiences of the Human and Superhuman Kind, both Male and Female; with his Curious Connections, Backbitings and Tickling Touches.*⁷ Burns's poem will not repay further study—it's lousy; but its pediculine subject will.

There is, perhaps, no scientific area of scholarship in which more sustained attention has been devoted to the taxonomy and definition of "otherness" than parasitology. Rare for biology, here is a subdiscipline devoted not to a natural class of living things but, rather, to a relationship between two quite different species of plants or animals. It is the character of the difference and the mode of relationship that supplies both the key characteristics for classification and the central topics for disciplinary thought. This is especially apparent in the literature of the last half of the nineteenth century, while parasitology was achieving status as an independent field of inquiry.⁸ Observations about some of the larger parasites on animals and man may be found throughout antiquity.⁹ However,

awareness of parasitism's ubiquity had to await the late seventeenth-century development of the microscope.¹⁰ This resulted in a decisive shift of intellectual interest to the scientific, philosophical, and literary topos of the intricately small.¹¹ Even after this point, despite the enormous increase in data,¹² theoretical issues with respect both to taxonomy¹³ and "spontaneous generation" had to be settled before the discipline of parasitology could emerge.¹⁴

While the majority of biology's historians have focused their attention on the aetiological issues associated with the theory of "spontaneous generation" (*generatio aequivoca* or "abiogenesis"), it was, in fact, the taxonomic implications that were more serious for our theme. Until the stunning monograph by J. J. S. Steenstrup (1842),¹⁵ it was by no means clear that many parasites go through both free-living and parasitic stages of development (at times, with sex changes) that bear no resemblance to each other and often with an invariant sequence of hosts. It is the generation of parasitologists that immediately followed upon this discovery that developed the classificatory systems of most interest to us.¹⁶ It was first thought that one biological class could contain all zoological parasitic forms, and so the older nomenclature of external form which presented the parasite as "wormlike" (whether expressed through the Greek, *helminth*, or the Latin, *vermis*) yielded to a neologism of relative position; the *Entozoa* (animals who live within).¹⁷ This was a major shift in taxonomic strategy, creating a class of animals joined together by their "mode of existence" even though, judged by other criteria, they belonged to different zoological classes.

Regardless of what biological class the individual parasitic species belonged to, they might be classified *qua* parasites by the mode of their relationship to their hosts. From this point of view, parasitology is not the study of parasites, it is the study of the host-parasite relationship. Parasites are classified by their relationship to the "other," by the modes and degrees of "otherness."

The initial move in this complex taxonomic endeavor was to attempt a general definition of "parasitism" within the animal kingdom. (Plant parasitism posed a different set of issues). A "parasite" was defined as an organism of one species that obtained benefits (most usually food) from an organism of another species with whom it was in direct contact and that served as "host." It was understood that this definition was both relative and nonreciprocal. The definition was relative in that the parasite must be smaller than its host (e.g., the leech, which, when it preys on smaller animals, is properly termed a "carnivore," is rightly called a "parasite" when it attaches itself to larger animals). It was nonreciprocal in

that the host must derive no benefit from the parasitic association. Indeed, most usually the association is detrimental to the host. This latter, nonreciprocal criterion is understood to imply that the negative effect must be the direct result of the benefit derived by the parasite (e.g., the destruction of the host's cells by feeding) and not indirect, such as in the case of diseases transmitted to the host by the parasite.¹⁸

Concealed within such late nineteenth-century attempts at a generic definition of "parasitism" were a set of thorny taxonomic distinctions. If attention was focused on the criterion of "benefit," then the attempt was made to distinguish the nonreciprocal benefit to the parasite from closely related phenomena such as "symbiosis" (a term invented in 1879 by A. de Bary) in which both species derived necessary mutual benefits from their association, "mutualism" (a term introduced by Beneden in 1876) in which one species derived benefit without affect on the other, and "commensalism" (likewise created by Beneden) in which one species lives on or in another without apparent benefit or harm to either.¹⁹

Note that such taxonomic distinctions, by virtue of their concern for matters of association, are explicitly political. The definitions are based on hierarchical distinctions of subordination and superordination, on mapping structures of benefits and reciprocity. Such political interests are continued in those taxonomic distinctions made with respect to the nature and character of the direct relationship between host and parasite which constitute a virtual typology of "otherness."

Perhaps the most influential of these was that developed by R. Leuckart in *Die menschlichen Parasiten* (1863–76). His first distinction was between what he termed "ectoparasites" (or "epizoa") and "endoparasites" (or "entozoa"). Ectoparasites "live on" their hosts; endoparasites "live in" their hosts. Both may be further subdivided into two classes on the basis of whether the relationship of parasite to host is "temporary" or "permanent."

In general, ectoparasites are temporary. They seek their hosts in order to obtain food or shelter and leave them when they have been satisfied. They tend to inhabit the surface of their host's body or its immediately accessible orifices. Their bodily form is little modified by their parasitic habit when compared with closely related nonparasitic forms.

In general, endoparasites are more complex. They tend to have both parasitic and nonparasitic life stages, the former being highly modified when compared with the latter. In their parasitic stages, the relation to their host is stationary. They more usually inhabit the internal organs of their host.

With primary reference to endoparasites, Leuckart introduced a further set of classificatory differentia based on "the nature and duration of

their strictly parasitic [stage] of life." (1) Some have "free-living and self-supporting" embryos which become sexually mature only after they have reached their hosts. (2) Others have embryos which are parasitic but "migratory," moving (a) to a "free life," (b) to another part of their host, or (c) to a different host, before becoming sexually mature. (3) Others are parasitic during every stage of their lives, having no migratory embryonic stage and passing their entire lives on a single host.²⁰

In the above, it should be noted that Leuckart's entire classificatory project is based on the differing forms of relationship between parasite and host. It is a relativistic, economic or political system that does not follow the traditional anatomical/morphological criteria for taxonomy.

Before continuing, it may be well to pause and to make explicit what considering this brief history of late nineteenth-century parasitology has contributed to the question of a "theory of the other."

Perhaps the most important point is that reiterated by Leuckart: "no broad line of demarcation can be drawn between parasites and free-living animals."²¹ That is to say, "otherness" is an ambiguous category. This is so because it is necessarily a term of interrelation. "Otherness" is not so much a matter of separation as it is a description of interaction. As the taxonomy of parasitism makes clear, the relation to the "other" is a matter of shifting temporality and relative modes of relationship. There are degrees of difference, even within a single species.

While at one level the taxonomy of parasites (and, hence, of "otherness") appears to be reducible to the ancient legal question, *Cui bono?* at another level the distinctions between "parasitism," "symbiosis," "mutualism," "commensalism," "epiphytism," and the like are distinctions between types of exchange. A "theory of the other" must take the form of a relational theory of reciprocity. "Otherness," whether of Scots or of lice, is a preeminently political category.

It might have been thought that I would go on and attempt to make a further contact with this symposium's theme by cataloging the varied roles parasites have played in western religions²²—not forgetting the Roman deity, Verminus.²³ Indeed, parasites, and most particularly, the louse, have supplied a variety of Christian theological conundrums ranging from the justification for their existence in terms of natural law (a matter still raised by Immanuel Kant)²⁴ to ticklish questions as to whether Adam and Eve had lice in Paradise prior to the Fall (I remind you that what is alleged to be the shortest poem in the English language reads, in full, "Adam Had 'em"),²⁵ whether Eve contained in her body not only the seed of all future human beings but also of all future human parasites,²⁶ and whether lice and other parasites found a place on Noah's Ark.²⁷ Nor

should we ignore Charles Bonnet's triumphant demonstration of the Virgin Birth's scientific credibility when he observed parthenogenesis in plant lice.²⁸ But I have another sort of connection in mind.

It would appear that the term "parasite" came into technical discourse as a generic category only in the last decades of the nineteenth century. A search of lexica, encyclopaedia, and earlier scientific works reveals that it was in common use in botany at the beginning of the century,²⁹ and was taken over only at a later stage by zoologists, replacing, as we have seen, "entozoa," and "helminths."³⁰ This is not the first time the word "parasite" has replaced a previous set of terms. Such a substitution had occurred once before, in ancient Athens during the first half of the fourth century B.C. This earlier shift established "parasite" as bearing a cultural connotation. And this sense persisted through the middle of the nineteenth century as the prime meaning of "parasite," while laying the ground for the later European scientific usage.³¹

As is well known, the figure of the fawning Parasite was a stock character in ancient Greek comedy. The type is archaic, going back at least to the first half of the fifth century and the play *Hope or Riches* by the Sicilian, Epicharmus. But while the character is old, its name, "Parasite," is at least a century younger. It first appeared in Alexis's play by that name (c. 360–50 B.C.) and replaced the older names for this stock figure, the "Flatterer" (*kolax*) and the "Sycophant."

Much ink has been expended on this name change by modern scholarship,³² but the issue was posed centuries earlier in a lengthy (now lost) lexicographical work preserved in excerpted form by the third-century A.D. rhetorician, Athenaeus.³³

The relevant passage, in a manner typical of Athenaeus, is in the form of a quotation within a quotation.

Plutarch said, The name, parasite, was in earlier times a dignified and sacred name. Take, for example, what Polemon³⁴ writes about parasites. . . . Parasite is nowadays a disreputable term, but among the ancients we find it used of something sacred, equivalent to companion [*synthoinos*, "messmate"] at a sacred feast. (6.234d)

Six examples are given to illustrate this archaic, cultic use of the term "parasite" before a series of quotations are marshalled to illustrate its transformation into a comedic term of opprobrium.³⁵ It is the first cultic example that is of greatest interest to us—that of the annual celebration of Herakles at Kynosarges, outside Athens.

The gymnasium at Kynosarges³⁶ was open to membership by Athenian residents lacking the status of full citizens, most particularly, since the law of Pericles in 451–50,³⁷ the children of mixed marriages (*nothoi*) between Athenian males and foreign women.³⁸ According to Polemon, the Herakleion at Kynosarges possessed a stele with a law from Alcibiades:

The priest shall sacrifice the monthly offerings in company with the parasites. These parasites shall be drawn from men of mixed descent [*ek tōn nothōn*] and their children according to ancestral custom.³⁹ And whoever shall decline to serve as parasite, the priest shall charge him before the tribunal. (6. 234e)

In addition to their monthly sacrificial duties, the chief annual cultic activity of the parasites was to eat a meal, during the month, Metageitnion, together with Herakles—hence the derivation of “parasite” from *para* + *sitos*, (to eat) grain beside (another).⁴⁰

With this last piece of information on the most archaic use of the term “parasite,” we may briefly come to rest. The earliest use of the term referred to a rule-governed, legally required relationship of commensality between representatives of a community of not-quite-Athenians (the *nothoi*) and a cult figure (Herakles) who was neither quite hero nor quite god.⁴¹ To think about parasites, whether in the most ancient or most modern sense of the term, is to think about reciprocal relations of relative “otherness.”⁴²

Before attempting a fresh start on the question of a “theory of the other,” it might be well to collect and restate the conclusions that might be drawn from this first set of reflections on the topic which began with an eighteenth-century poem by Robert Burns and ended with an archaic cult law, after rapidly passing through the history of late nineteenth-century parasitology.

In this first stage of our inquiry, even though three quite different sorts of data were explored, the conclusions drawn were symmetrical. “Otherness,” it is suggested, is a matter of relative rather than absolute difference. Difference is not a matter of comparison between entities judged to be equivalent, rather difference most frequently entails a hierarchy of prestige and ranking. Such distinctions are found to be drawn most sharply between “near neighbors,” with respect to what has been termed the “proximate other.” This is the case because “otherness” is a relativistic category inasmuch as it is, necessarily, a term of interaction. A “theory of otherness” is, from this perspective, essentially political and

economic. That is to say, it centers on a relational theory of reciprocity, often one that is rule-governed.

While I shall return to this set of contentions in my conclusion, it seemed useful to inquire as to whether there was a stronger “theory of the other” than the political; that is to say, were there situations that led to a more radical theory of “otherness”? It is to this essentially anthropological question that I turn by way of making a second start on our theme. Such a theory, we shall see, is essentially a project of language.

II

The Sioux have a saying, ‘With all beings and all things we shall be as relatives.’ Our Hillel said, ‘Separate thyself not from the community.’ Mazel Tov to Rabbi Glaser and his excellent programs linking Judaism to brothers and sisters of Indian cultures and for reminding us that we are all members of one tribe.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR, *Reform Judaism* 12.4 (1984): 32.

The social and cultural awareness of the “other” must surely be as old as humankind itself. “Cultures are more than just empirically comparable; they are intrinsically comparative.”⁴³ As Robert Redfield has argued, the world-view of any people consists essentially of two pairs of binary oppositions: MAN/NOT-MAN and WE/THEY.⁴⁴ These two oppositions are often correlated, i.e., WE = MAN; THEY = NOT-MAN. Indeed, the distinction between “us” and “them” is present in our earliest written records.⁴⁵ It is an omnipresent feature of folk taxonomies.⁴⁶ The distinction is most ubiquitous in the complex rule-governed matter of kinship in institutions such as endogamy, exogamy, and the incest taboo.⁴⁷ Likewise, it is universal in the detailed etiquette and laws concerning “the stranger,”⁴⁸ as well as in those devoted to its less-studied opposite, “the friend.”⁴⁹ Social and cultural awareness of the “other” is also the centerpiece of the most persistent ethnographic traditions.⁵⁰ As times, cultural differences appear merely to have been noted (for example, as “curiosities” in travel reports). More frequently, “difference” supplied a justificatory element for a variety of ideological postures, ranging from xenophobia to exoticism, from travel, trade, and exploration to military conquest, slavery, and colonialism. The “other” has appeared as an object of desire as well as an object of repulsion; the “other” has rarely been an object of indifference.

On rare occasions, meditation on cultural difference, on “others,” itself became one of a culture’s dominant features. Such was the case in

fifth-century B.C. Ionia⁵¹ and in the Chinese periods of the T'ang and Southern Sung,⁵² and such may be inferred from the preconquest court of Moctezuma with its remarkable zoological collections of all types of birds and animals and human forms.⁵³ This living museum appears to be quite similar to that all-but-contemporary "human zoo" maintained by Cardinal Ippolito de Medici, which consisted of "a troop of barbarians who talked no fewer than twenty different languages and were all of them perfect specimens of their races."⁵⁴

As this last example hints, the cultural meditation on difference received its most massive institutionalization in the vast modern western enterprise of anthropology: a xenological endeavor which began with the savants of the Renaissance and Enlightenment was fueled by the discoveries of the "Age of Reconnaissance" and continued into the present. Indeed, the most distinctive feature of modern anthropology is its relatively recent requirement that the anthropologist have living experience of the "other." It is fieldwork that makes anthropology a distinctive enterprise among the human sciences.⁵⁵ Because of this, anthropology may be described as the science of the "other." As Claude Lévi-Strauss bluntly states:

Anthropology is the science of culture as seen from the outside. . . . Anthropology, whenever it is practiced by members of the culture it endeavors to study, loses its specific nature [as anthropology] and becomes rather akin to archaeology, history and philology.⁵⁶

That is to say, anthropology holds that there is cognitive power in "otherness," a power that is removed by studying the "same." The issue, as Lévi-Strauss has phrased it in the passage quoted above, is not the sheer distance of the object of study,⁵⁷ but rather the mode of relationship of the scholar to the object. In anthropology, the distance is not to be overcome, but becomes, in itself, the prime focus and instrument of disciplinary meditation.⁵⁸

To be sure, even within contemporary anthropology, "otherness" remains a relative category in at least two important senses. First, unlike parasitism, the "other" is of the same species. Despite wide variation, it is man studying man; it is *Homo sapiens* and not some Martian that is the object of attention. (It may be noted that, since 1970, the American Anthropological Association has sponsored a section at its annual meeting on the issues raised by the possibility of the future study of extraterrestrial beings. However, to date, such matters have been better explored by science fiction writers, for example, the profound work of Michael Bishop).⁵⁹

Matters with respect to this first qualification are, in fact, more complex. Anthropologists have at times explored other cultures (or particular institutions within them) in such a way as to suggest that they might be conceived of as "limiting cases,"⁶⁰ that they represent so extreme a development of something known and familiar that they appear to be radically "other."⁶¹ More usually, they have insisted on just the opposite: in some often unspecified way, the "other" is to be seen as "typical." While the field encounter is most frequently described as an extremely traumatic, disorienting kind of experience, the result, as reported in the monograph, reads as an encounter with "Everyman." Edmund Leach has characterized this quixotic element with precision:

When we read Malinowski we get the impression that he is stating something which is of general importance. Yet how can this be? He is simply writing about Trobriand Islanders. Somehow . . . he is able to make the Trobriands a microcosm of the whole primitive world. And the same is true of his successors; for Firth, Primitive Man is a Tikopian, for Fortes, he is a citizen of Ghana.⁶²

Second, anthropological investigation is, by nature, relational. What an anthropologist reports is almost always solely based on his or her interaction with a particular people. For this reason, anthropology has tended to develop and embrace theories that factor out time and the historical, that eliminate all past before the fieldworker's presence.⁶³ Hence, the evolutionism of the late nineteenth-century "armchair" anthropologists was jettisoned by workers in the field in favor of a functionalism that depended on the observation of a given society at time "t," or, later, in favor of the atemporalism of a variety of structuralist approaches. For this reason, as well, the anthropological report, no matter how great a period of time had elapsed between the field experience and publication, is almost always written in the "ethnographic present," in what Jan Vansina has called the "zero-time fiction."⁶⁴

The effect of these two qualifications (and there are more) has been to relativize "otherness" in anthropological discourse—if not in experience. Anthropology has become largely an enterprise of "decipherment," attempting to "decode" an encrypted message from "another" with the firm prior conviction that, because it is human, it will be intelligible once it is "broken."⁶⁵ That is to say, anthropology is essentially a project of language with respect to an "other," which concedes both the presence of meaning and the possibility of translation at the outset. Indeed, without these two assumptions, "all the activities of anthropologists become

meaningless.⁶⁶ As such, contemporary anthropology is to be seen as part of the Anglo-American philosophical tradition, which has tended to view "otherness" as a problem of communication in contradistinction to the Continental philosophical tradition, which has tended to conceive of the "other" in terms of transcendence and threat.⁶⁷

This contemporary anthropological viewpoint stands in sharp contrast to the classical ethnographic tradition where, from Herodotus on, there is rarely the perception of an opacity to be overcome. Difference is, itself, utterly transparent. The "other" is merely different and calls for no exegetical labor. Within the classical ethnographic sources, differences may be noted; at times, differences may be compared, but they are most frequently set aside. Difference is insignificant—that is to say, difference signifies nothing of importance and therefore requires no decipherment, no hermeneutical projects. In classical ethnography, the "other" does not speak. This topos can be illustrated from traditions as far apart as the notion that the "other" is a "barbarian," that is, one who speaks unintelligibly⁶⁸ (or, in stronger form, one who is mute),⁶⁹ and the conventions of "silent trade."⁷⁰ For the classical ethnographer, the labor of learning an "other's" language would be sheer folly.⁷¹ Classical ethnography manipulated a few basic explanatory models to account for "others." Briefly put, similarity was, above all, to be explained as the result of a temporal process: common descent and genealogy in remote times; contact, borrowing, and diffusion in more recent times. Difference was, above all, to be explained as the consequence of a spatial condition, pre-eminently climate. This would later become known as "environmental determinism."

To be sure, there were perturbations, encounters with "others" that appeared to present cognitive shocks—the Greek experience of Egypt; the thirteenth-century "Mongol Mission"—but these were rapidly assimilated to the prevailing models. However, there was one perturbation that was not so readily assimilable, that of the so-called "discovery" of America. It is here that the anthropological issue of the "other" as pre-eminently a project of language most clearly begins.⁷²

If there was one cosmographical element that could be taken for granted in the west prior to the "voyages of discovery," it was that the inhabitable world, the *oikoumenē*, was divided into three unequal parts.⁷³ It was this tripartition, Ovid's *triplex mundus*, that allowed the classical traditions to be so readily merged with the biblical. For most of western history, Pliny and Genesis 10 contained all that was necessary for both anthropological and geographical theorizing.⁷⁴ If there was one cosmographical element that became increasingly apparent to the west after the

impact of the "voyages of discovery," it was that there were additional inhabitable landmasses, and that neither the classical nor the biblical traditions could be easily harmonized with this new world-view. To Europe, Asia and Libya/Africa must now be added the neologism "America"⁷⁵—the *quarta orbis pars*.⁷⁶ This "fourth part," eventually recognized as what the ancients had theoretically termed an *orbis alterius*,⁷⁷ for the first time in western intellectual history raised the theoretical issue of the "other" as a project of language and interpretation. For this reason, we must pause and examine this cosmographical shift more carefully.

The classical cosmography may be summarized in terms of four elements.

(1) The earth, most usually thought of as spherical, was pictured as a great terraqueous globe, divided into Northern and Southern hemispheres. The earth's most distinctive feature was a large island in the Northern Hemisphere—the *orbis terrarum*.⁷⁸

(2) Of greater significance than the division into hemispheres was the marking off of the terrestrial globe into "zones" (most usually five) in which only the intermediate (temperate) zones were presumed inhabitable.⁷⁹ That is to say, the extreme northern and southern (polar) zones and the middle (equatorial) zone were judged too severe to support human life in any recognizable form.⁸⁰ Habitation was possible only in the northern and southern temperate zones.

(3) The distinction as to habitability became central and was expressed by the term *oikoumenē*.⁸¹ Geographically, the *oikoumenē*, the "inhabitable world," was that portion of the northern earth-island south of the Arctic Circle, north of the Tropic of Cancer, bounded on the east and west by Ocean, that was known to be inhabited. Theoretically, the possibility was entertained that there might be a corresponding "inhabitable land" in the Southern Hemisphere—a possibility most usually advanced for reasons of geometric symmetry.⁸² If so, it would be "another world . . . an other *oikoumenē* . . . not inhabited by ones such as us" but by other species of men.⁸³

(4) The northern *oikoumenē* was divided into three lobes.⁸⁴ Europe, Asia, and Libya/Africa.⁸⁵ These were most frequently distinguished from one another by river boundaries.⁸⁶

In time, these four essential classical cosmographic elements received distinctively Christian interpretations. Combining the speculations of the Greco-Roman geographers and Genesis 10, the three lobes of the world-island became identified with the three sons of Noah who repopulated the *oikoumenē* after the Flood.⁸⁷ In turn, the tripartition became identified allegorically with a range of specifically Christian elements

ranging from the Trinity⁸⁸ and the "Three Wise Men"⁸⁹ to the triple papal tiara (the *triregnum*).⁹⁰

Such a view, with its striking monogenetic implications, made all but impossible Christian belief in the existence of other inhabited worlds apart from the northern, tripartite *oikoumenē*. As Augustine declared of the monstrous races as described by encyclopaedists such as Pliny, so, too, of "other worlds":

Either the written accounts of certain races are completely unfounded; or, if such races do exist, they are not human; or, if they are human, they are descended from Adam.⁹¹

That is to say, either "other worlds" do not exist or, if they exist, they are uninhabited or, if they are inhabited, then they must (somehow) be descended from Adam and have been populated by the sons of Noah. All Christian discussion of "antipodes" and "austral" landmasses took place within the framework of this logic.⁹²

With this brief sketch, the stage for the emergence of our theme has been set: how to make room for an "other world," for an inhabited fourth part of the globe, a "world," an *oikoumenē*, unanticipated by either the Greco-Roman or the biblical traditions?

It is simple, in retrospect, to appreciate the impact of the "discovery" of America, and to sense its challenge to both biblical and classical world-views.⁹³ But this is anachronistic. What was apparent by the middle of the sixteenth century was by no means clear half a century earlier.⁹⁴ It is a distinctly modern voice that we hear in the remark of the sixteenth-century Florentine historian, Francesco Guicciardini, suppressed until the Freiburg edition (1774–76):

Not only has this navigation confounded many affirmations of former writers about terrestrial things, but it has given some anxiety to the interpreters of the Holy Scriptures.⁹⁵

A voice echoed by his contemporary, the Parisian lawyer, Étienne Pasquier:

It is a very striking fact that our classical authors had no knowledge of all this America which we call 'new lands.'⁹⁶

A voice so modern that it has called forth recent reinterpretations of the very words "discovery"⁹⁷ and "conquest"⁹⁸ as they appear in the fifteenth-

and sixteenth-century literature. But the earlier voices are less clear. The anthropological perception of the "other" had yet to occur and to find its voice.

For the cognitive issue of the "otherness" of America to emerge, America first had to be perceived as truly "other." Despite an emerging vocabulary of "otherness" (from Columbus's *otro mundo* to Vespucci's *un altro mondo*, or *mondo nuovo* and Peter Martyr's *nova tellus*, *alter* or *alius orbis*, *novus orbis*, and *de orbe novo*),⁹⁹ the moment at which this perception first emerged in intellectual discourse is far from clear.

It is tempting to place the emergent perception no later than the point at which Balboa first saw the Pacific (September 25, 1513),¹⁰⁰ or the point at which the reports of the survivors of the Magellan trans-Pacific circumnavigation of 1517–21 became available.¹⁰¹ But this is by no means certain. It can be no earlier than the report of the first voyage of Columbus (April, 1493).¹⁰² But this is premature. There can be no doubt that Columbus interpreted all of his sightings and land-falls in terms of the classical, tripartite *oikoumenē*, perhaps expanding, in theory, only the classical limits of inhabitability to all five "zones" of the world-island.¹⁰³ From the first to the last, he was convinced that he had reached the Asian coast, the easternmost boundary of the *orbis terrarum*.

His persistence was remarkable and unrelenting. The day after his first landfall at San Salvador (October 14, 1492), he wrote that "in order not to lose time" he will set off immediately to "see if I can find the island of Cipango [Japan]."¹⁰⁴ In a letter dated July 7, 1503, at the conclusion of his fourth and final voyage, he wrote that he was only nineteen days' journey westward from "the river Ganges."¹⁰⁵

Throughout his writings, what was in fact new and previously unknown was translated endlessly and effortlessly by Columbus into what was old and well-known. For example, on November 26 and again on December 11, 1492, having "understood"¹⁰⁶ the Arawaks to speak of a nearby man-eating tribe which they feared, "the *Cariba*," Columbus misunderstood them to have pronounced the name as *Caniba*—a misunderstanding we perpetuate every time we utter the word "*cannibal*." This misperception was further compounded by being placed within Columbus's preexistent interpretative scheme. *Caniba* sounded to him like the familiar *cane*; "dog." Therefore, Columbus concludes, the *Caniba* must be the cynocephalic monsters of European travel lore, associated especially with India.¹⁰⁷ Alternatively, *Caniba* reminded him of the word *Can* (i.e., Khan), therefore, he declared, "Caniba is nothing else but the great Can who ought now to be very near."¹⁰⁸

At only one juncture does Columbus's confidence appear shaken and the easy verbal translations and associations seem to falter. During his third journey, on August 5, 1498, Columbus became the first European to set foot on the South American mainland, on the Paria Peninsula on the coast of what is now called Venezuela. Although he first believed the peninsula to be another island, by August 15th, he correctly interpreted the physical evidence as requiring the landmass to be "a great mainland, of which nothing has been known until now."¹⁰⁹ Remarkably, Columbus was able to fit even this "discovery" into the tripartite schema in its Christian interpretation. For concealed within the Christian topography was a "wild card"—an option hitherto of merely theoretical status, that, in addition to the tripartite world-island, there was a terrestrial Paradise.¹¹⁰ It is this mythic landmass that Columbus understands himself to have discovered, in the process altering the commonly accepted view of the globe as spherical into something rather more eccentrically bulbous. The letter to the Spanish court of October 14, 1498, is devoted almost entirely to this remarkable proposition.¹¹¹

Columbus begins his Letter with a sort of preamble, summarizing his accomplishments in all three voyages and making plain his conservative intention to place his "enterprise . . . which was foretold in the writings of so many trustworthy and wise historians" (including Isaiah!) within the context of the "sayings and opinions of those [ancients] who have written on the geography of the world."¹¹² Nevertheless, the land of which he will now write is "another world [*otro mundo*] from that which the Romans, and Alexander, and the Greeks made mighty efforts . . . to gain possession of."¹¹³ What does this portentous phrase, "another world," mean?

In the body of the letter, two interpretative options are proposed. The landmass is either "an immense tract of land situated in the south" (i.e., a new austral world-island) or it is "terrestrial paradise." Columbus opts for the latter interpretation. Citing the opinions of patristic authorities, he states, "the more I reason on the subject, the more I become satisfied that the terrestrial paradise is situated on the spot I described."¹¹⁴

From our perspective, it would appear that rather than opting for the "correct" choice—that he had indeed discovered a previously unimagined landmass—Columbus persuades himself of the opposite.¹¹⁵ He does so by arguing for an essential difference between the two hemispheres. The southern is not spherical like the northern,¹¹⁶ for "Ptolemy and the others who have written on the globe had no information respecting this part of the world which was then unexplored, they only established their arguments with respect to their own hemisphere."¹¹⁷ In a bizarre image, Columbus declares:

I have come to another conclusion concerning the world, namely that it is not round as they describe, but is in the form of a pear, which is very round except where the stalk grows, at which point it is most prominent; or like a round ball, upon one part of which is a prominence, like a woman's nipple.¹¹⁸

At the height of this nipple-like protrusion is

the spot of the earthly paradise whither none can go without God's permission, but this land which your Highnesses have now sent me to explore is very extensive, and I think there are many others [countries] in the south [*otras muchas en el austro*] of which the world has never had any knowledge.¹¹⁹

In this manner, Columbus had it both ways. All of the lands previously sighted and explored in his voyages were part of the "Indies"—part of the Asian lobe of the tripartite *orbis terrarum*. This newly discovered *otro mundo* was not contained within the bounds of the tripartite division, but it was not an *orbis alterius*. Rather, it was the only possible exception within Christian topography—terrestrial paradise.¹²⁰ It was an "old" land in terms of biblical tradition; a "new" land in terms of Spanish possession.¹²¹ Peter Martyr's nearly contemporary verdict (1501) will suffice: "*fabulosa mihi videantur*."¹²²

To understand the Columbian "fantasy," it is insufficient to characterize him as possessing a "medieval mind," as many recent commentators have done,¹²³ or to depict him as being deluded through an extreme case of wish fulfillment—an interpretation as old as his early chronicler, Las Casas, who, writing of Columbus's fixation on establishing his proximity to the courts of the Khan, comments: "How marvellous a thing it is how whatever a man strongly desires and has firmly set in his imagination, all that he hears and sees at each step he fancies to be in its favor."¹²⁴ What we must see in Columbus is primarily a failure of language, the inability to recognize the inadequacy of his inherited vocabulary and the consequent inability to project a new. At best, there is a muddle. Things are either "like" or "unlike" Spain, but nothing is "other." In a manner similar to the classical ethnographers', Columbus recognizes nothing that requires "decipherment"; all is sheerly transparent.

We must leave, then, the explorer and turn to the scholar for our purposes, the towering figure of Peter Martyr, whose *De Orbe Novo* represents the first, systematic, historiographical reflection on the Columbian "discoveries" by a nonparticipant.¹²⁵

The most striking element in Peter Martyr's earliest writings on Columbus's "enterprise" between 1493 and 1495 is an absence: he scrupulously avoids the term "Indies" and, hence, the Columbian identification.¹²⁶ This is apparent, already, in his earliest reaction. In May 1493, less than two months after Columbus's return from his first voyage—if the epistolary record is to be credited¹²⁷—he refers to Columbus as having travelled to the "western antipodes."¹²⁸ In September 1493, he augments this description by locating the "western antipodes" in the "new hemisphere of the earth." Here, novelty clearly refers to their previously unknown status; the islands have been "hidden since Creation."¹²⁹

By November, 1493, Martyr reports (in the first book of the first *Decade*) the existence of "recently discovered islands in the western ocean,"¹³⁰ but he remains ambivalent as to their identification. He knows that Columbus understands this "unknown land" to consist of "islands which touch the Indies,"¹³¹ but he is not convinced. He suggests that they are a previously unknown group of westerly Atlantic islands, thoroughly analogous to the long-familiar Canaries.¹³² Furthermore, when reporting on "Hispaniola," he notes that Columbus believes it to be the rediscovered ancient Solomonic site of Ophir (an identification, like terrestrial paradise, which shows forth Columbus's attempt to locate his "enterprise" within the framework of biblical cosmography). Martyr rejects the identification, suggesting instead the legendary western Atlantic islands, the Antilles.¹³³ All three of Martyr's interpretations (the "western antipodes," the analogy with the Canaries, and the Antilles) show Martyr as rejecting Columbus's oriental fantasy. All three place his discoveries in the western Atlantic in terms that recall Greco-Roman geography.

There is, however, a hint in this 1493 account of something more. Columbus claims to have found "indications of a hitherto unknown *alterius terrarum orbis*."¹³⁴ Martyr will later report, in 1501, that Columbus believes it to be "the continent of India"—an identification that Martyr firmly rejects.¹³⁵ But for now, Martyr supplies no identification.

In November 1493, Peter Martyr employs a different terminology, one for which he will become famous. In a letter to Cardinal Sforza, he writes of a *novus orbis* that Columbus has discovered.¹³⁶ Again, we must inquire as to the meaning of this portentous phrase.

Martyr's earliest usage of the term *novus orbis* is closely akin to his even earlier phrase, "the new hemisphere of the earth" (*novo terrarum hemispherio*). It means newly discovered parts of the familiar globe. When Martyr writes of the *novus orbis*, he is not identifying a new geographic entity in the sense we are familiar with when we capitalize the "New World" as the Americas in contradistinction to the "Old World." Martyr's

novus orbis is neither Columbus's *otro mundo* (which he understands, as we have seen, to be terrestrial paradise), nor Vespucci's *mundus novus* (which he understands to be a previously unknown extension of Asia),¹³⁷ but like these terms, it does not challenge the old world-view. This will not occur in explicit fashion until the *Cosmographiae Introductio* of 1508 with its declaration that Vespucci had discovered a previously unsuspected "fourth part of the world."¹³⁸

At any rate, Martyr does not employ the phrase "new world" in his *Decades* until those portions of the work composed after 1514.¹³⁹ Here, it may well carry the connotation of an *orbis alterius*, but only after the period of the initial responses, when the notion of the inadequacy of the tripartite *oikoumenē* had become commonplace in intellectual discourse.

What has been learned thus far from the first explorer and the earliest interpreter of that exploration is the difficulty in conceptualizing "otherness." Something "different" has been sensed but has as yet gained no distinctive voice. Rather, the old language has been stretched to accommodate it. Perhaps this "stretching" is what was meant by the curious phrase the sixteenth-century historian Hernan Pérez de Oliva used to describe the Columbian "enterprise." He speaks of an enterprise in which Columbus "sought to unite the world and give to those strange lands the form of our own."¹⁴⁰ The "other" emerges only as a theoretical issue when it is perceived as challenging a complex and intact world-view. It is only then that the "different" becomes the problematic "alien." The incapacity of imagination exhibited by Columbus and Peter Martyr stands as eloquent testimony to that intactness. Yet, once the question is admitted, once alienation is even fleetingly glimpsed, it cannot be silenced or ignored. It will give rise to thought as expressed in speech. What was inconceivable in the last decade of the fifteenth century became commonplace, for some, by the first decade of the sixteenth. The "Americas" were, as the 1508 *Introductio* named and described them—in an act of language, not of exploration—a "fourth part" of the world. Like us, in that it was inhabited; unlike us, in its geographical form. For the familiar three parts were contiguous landmasses (i.e., continents); the newly discovered "fourth part" was discontinuous, it was understood to be an island surrounded by a vast expanse of water.¹⁴¹ It was the insular nature of the unexpected "discovery" of a "fourth part" of the "world" that gave rise to the more intense debate over "otherness"—that respecting the land's inhabitants: its humans, animals, and plants.

For Columbus, knowing that he was in the "Indies," the presence of human inhabitants, of animals and plants which seemed both familiar and strange, presented no major intellectual problems. True, the naked

men and women did not resemble the high civilization of the “great Khan” that Marco Polo and Toscanelli had led him to expect. But, no matter. As he endlessly repeats, he has heard that the capital of the Khan is just a short journey away. Because he is in what he believes to be both a contiguous and an unfamiliar land, he can recognize differences and impose similarities without giving these matters a second’s thought. Because he cannot speak directly to the natives, except through ambiguous “signs,” he can impose his language on whatever or whomever he encounters without impediment.¹⁴² He “gives to these strange lands the form of our own” precisely because he did not know what Olivia knew decades later; that in some profound fashion, the lands were truly “strange.” The most obvious example of this is also the most enduring: six days after landing, Columbus was able to easily and unquestioningly call the indigenous population “*Indios*.”¹⁴³

Less often noted but, in fact, far more massive a feature of Columbus’s writings is his constant Europeanization of the indigenous flora and fauna.¹⁴⁴ Take, for example, the matter of the nightingales (the common name for a group of small Eurasian thrushes of which no species is to be found in the Americas). Even before making land-fall, Columbus found one night on board ship so agreeable that, according to Las Casas, “the Admiral said that nothing was wanting but to hear the nightingale.”¹⁴⁵ Columbus was not to be disappointed. On at least three occasions after landing in the “Indies” he heard “the singing of the nightingales and other birds of Castile.”¹⁴⁶

For all the unconscious humor that might be found in these and other examples,¹⁴⁷ the point as to “Indians,” “nightingales,” and the like is far more serious. As Terrence Hawkes reminds us, “a colonist acts essentially as a dramatist. He imposes the ‘shape’ of his own culture embodied in his speech on the new world, and makes that world recognizable” and, hence, “habitable” for him.¹⁴⁸ So long as Columbus and the other early explorers were successful in giving “to those strange lands the form of our own,” the lands could not emerge as truly “strange”; they could not be perceived as objects of thought; there could be no language and, hence, no theory of the “other.”

The early records must therefore be searched for moments of heightened self-consciousness, for crises of confidence in the sheer translatability of “here” to “there,” of “old” to “new,” of “familiar” to “strange.” Such moments are difficult to find and to pinpoint with chronological precision. Nevertheless, a set of such essentially linguistic “turns” can be discerned—although a determination of their contemporary influence must remain problematic.¹⁴⁹

The “issue of the Indians,” that is to say, the question of how the “New World” came to be populated¹⁵⁰ was, as best as can be determined, first raised in interrogatory form¹⁵¹ in a play printed circa 1519 and attributed to John Rastell, brother-in-law of Sir Thomas More. Rastell, a minor Tudor poet and major early English printer, had himself attempted a journey to the “New Founde Lands” in 1517.¹⁵²

In the play *A New Interlude and a Mery, of the Nature of the iiii Elementis, declarynge many proper poyntys of philosophy naturall and of dyvers straunge landys*,¹⁵³ the author, in the guise of describing a globe, knows that there is a single mass of “new landes . . . westwarde . . . that we never harde tell of before thus/by wrytng nor other meanys.”¹⁵⁴ It stretches from the “north parte” where “all the clothes/That they were is but bestis skins” to the “south parte of that contrey” where “the people there go nakyd alway/the lande is of so great hete.”¹⁵⁵ The poet immediately goes on to pose the query:

But howe the people furst began
In that contrey or whens they cam,
For clerkes it is a questyon.¹⁵⁶

The first explicit attempt to answer this question,¹⁵⁷ to go beyond narrative and description to the level of explanation, was Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés’s encyclopaedic work,¹⁵⁸ *Historia general y natural de las Indias islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Oceano*, specifically, in those parts published in 1535.¹⁵⁹ Oviedo offers two hypotheses: (1) the land had been populated by the ancient Carthaginians,¹⁶⁰ (2) his more persistent argument, that the lands were ancient Spanish possessions (identified with the Hesperides) associated with the mythical Spanish king Héspero, who was alleged to have reigned circa 1680 B.C.¹⁶¹ Thus for Oviedo, there was no “new discovery” or problematic population; “through the agency of Columbus, God had returned the Indies to their [original and] rightful owner—the Spanish Crown.”¹⁶²

While attempts persisted to deny “otherness” by arguing, in one form or another, that the “new” land was in some sense rediscovered “old” land that was a part of the tripartite *oikoumenē* and a part, as well, of classical geographical lore, these would remain minority positions.¹⁶³ More usually, given the monogenetic interpretations of Genesis 1–10, three kinds of theoretical options were proposed. (1) The new land was not wholly insular. It was connected (most usually by a land bridge) to the tripartite *oikoumenē* and thus, though an “other world” geographically, it was populated by an overland migration of familiar peoples. It should be noted

that this remains, today, the leading explanation. (2) There was a "second Ark"—one not recorded in Scripture, with all that implied. (3) There was some form of miraculous intervention—the *locus classicus* being Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 16.7, which posed the hypothesis that angels transported animals to remote islands after the Flood.

These interpretative options were taken up and systematically reviewed for the first time by Joseph de Acosta in his remarkable, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, a work begun circa 1580.¹⁶⁴ Acosta rejected the hypotheses of the "second Ark" and of angelic intervention,¹⁶⁵ while supporting in a sophisticated manner the hypothesis of a land bridge or a narrow strait separating the "Indies" from the "old world."¹⁶⁶ He rejected all attempts to deny difference: the "Indies" were not Ophir or Atlantis; the "Indians" were not Hebrews.¹⁶⁷ His understanding of the process of population was complex and suggestive. The inhabitants of the "new world" came over from the "old" at different times in the past. They gradually lost their previous cultures and developed their own indigenous ones, becoming first hunters, then agriculturalists.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, there will be cultural similarities between the "new" and the "old," but these similarities are the result of similar development, and may not be used, in themselves, as clues to origin.¹⁶⁹ Finally, note must be taken of the publication in 1607 of the first book wholly devoted to the question of the Indians' origins, Gregorio García's *Origen de los indios de el Nuevo Mundo, e Indias occidentales*. It is a massive, 535-page review of all possible interpretative options.¹⁷⁰

The concomitant issue, the origin of the flora and fauna and their similarities and differences to those of the "old world," was largely addressed by the same sort of theorizing as attended the human. But there was one difference. Given the monogenetic interpretations of Genesis 1–10, the "Indians," if identified as human (and there is little evidence that they were not),¹⁷¹ could never be absolutely "different." Animals and plants could be so perceived. Thus, it is in their naturalistic observations and writings that we find the clearest early statements of "otherness" framed in terms of the linguistic implications of "difference."¹⁷² I shall content myself with citing three telling examples from the rich, sixteenth-century Spanish naturalistic literature. First, perhaps the earliest and most extreme statement of "otherness," from a work by Oviedo published in 1526, which describes what appears to be a jaguar.

In my opinion, these animals are not tigers, nor are they panthers, or any other of the numerous known animals that have

spotted skins, nor some new animal [of the "old world"] that has a spotted skin and has not [yet] been described. The many animals that exist in the Indies that I describe here, or at least most of them, could not have been learned about from the ancients, since they exist in a land which had not been discovered until our own time. There is no mention made of these lands in Ptolemy's *Geography*, nor in any other work, nor were they known until Christopher Columbus showed them to us. . . . But, returning to the subject already begun . . . this animal is called by the Indians, *ochi*.¹⁷³

This last sentence is of crucial importance. Given the stated inadequacy of "old world" taxa, Oviedo self-consciously shifts to native terminology. Our second example is Acosta's protest against the imperialism of names (as in Columbus and the nightingales).

The first Spaniards gave many things found in the Indies Spanish names taken from things which they somewhat resembled . . . when, in fact, they were quite different. Indeed, the difference between them and what are called by these names in Castile are greater than the similarities.¹⁷⁴

Finally, Acosta makes a complex, theoretical statement concerning "difference."

What I say of the *guanacos* and *pacos* I will say of a thousand varieties of birds and fowls and mountain animals that have never been known [previously] by either name or appearance, nor is there any memory of them in the Latins or Greeks, nor in any nations of our [European] world over here. . . . It is well to ask whether these animals differ in kind and essence from all others, or if this difference be accidental. . . . But, to speak bluntly, any one who in this way would focus only on the accidental differences, seeking thereby to explain [away] the propagation of the animals of the Indies and to reduce them [to variants] of the European, will be undertaking a task that he will not be able to fulfill. For, if we are to judge the species of animals [in the Indies] by their [essential] properties, they are so different that to seek to reduce them to species known in Europe will mean having to call an egg a chestnut.¹⁷⁵

The "new world" is not merely "new," not merely "different"—it is "other" *per essentiam*. As such, it calls forth an "other" language.

As this review has suggested, although slow to start, the theoretical issues posed by the "otherness" of "America" were raised in sharp form as a project of language by the end of the sixteenth century. But they could not be solved—not for want of data, but because theory was inadequate. This deficiency at the level of theory persisted for centuries. The nineteenth century finally established the principle of polygenesis—above all, through that major contribution to anthropological theory now discredited, the notion of "race." The nineteenth century also contributed an early understanding of genetic variation's processes and the procedures for polythetic classification. It is only in the last decades, following upon the long and arid debates over independent variation versus diffusion, that we are beginning to develop adequate theories and well-formulated criteria for diffusion.¹⁷⁶

III

"Few questions have exerted so powerful a grip on the thought of this century than that of the 'Other'. . . . It is difficult to think of another topic that so radically separates the thought of the present . . . from its historical roots."

M. THEUNISSEN, *Der Andere*

In the first part of this essay, in relation to the notion of "parasite," attention was focused on what might be termed the political aspects of a "theory of the other." That is to say, we were largely concerned with the figure of the "proximate other," with questions of the relativity of "otherness," of its modes and degrees,¹⁷⁷ often perceived hierarchically. We were led to postulate that "otherness," by its very nature, required a relational theory of reciprocity (in other words, politics), and that a "theory of otherness," in this sense, must be construed as a rule-governed set of reciprocal relations with one socially labeled an "other."

In the second part of this essay, that concerned with the "discovery" of "America," we shifted to what might be termed the linguistic aspects of a "theory of the other."¹⁷⁸ In the same way that, according to one historian of science, "Ptolemy's model of the earth was the weapon by which the real earth was conquered intellectually,"¹⁷⁹ so, too, here. The "conquest of America," for all of its frightful human costs, was primarily a linguistic event.¹⁸⁰ Once recognized (in the face of an intact, linguistically embedded world-view), "otherness" was, on the one hand, a challenge to

"decipherment"; on the other hand, it was an occasion for the "stretching" of language—both for the creation of new linguistic entities ("new world" and the like) and the attempt, through discourse, to "give to these strange worlds the shape of our own."¹⁸¹ "Otherness" is not a descriptive category, an artifact of the perception of difference or commonality. Nor is it the result of the determination of biological descent or affinity.¹⁸² It is a political and linguistic project, a matter of rhetoric and judgment.

It is for this reason that in thinking about the "other," real progress has been made only when the "other" ceases to be an ontological category. That is to say, "otherness" is not some absolute state of being. Something is "other" only with respect to something "else." Whether understood politically or linguistically, "otherness" is a situational category. Despite its apparent taxonomic exclusivity, "otherness" is a transactional matter, an affair of the "in between."¹⁸³

In our historical review, this situational and transactional character loomed large through the notion of the "proximate other." That is to say, absolute "difference" is not a category for thought, but one that denies the possibility of thought. What one historian has stated about the concept, "unique," may be applied as well to the notion of the "wholly other" (with the possible exception of odd statements in even odder Continental theologies):

This word 'unique' is a negative term signifying what is mentally inapprehensible. The absolutely unique is, by definition, indescribable.¹⁸⁴

The "otherness" of the common housefly can be taken for granted, but it is also impenetrable. For this reason, its "otherness" is of no theoretical interest.¹⁸⁵ While the "other" may be perceived as being either LIKE-US or NOT-LIKE-US, he is, in fact, most problematic when he is TOO-MUCH-LIKE-US, or when he claims to BE-US. It is here that the real urgency of a "theory of the other" emerges. This urgency is called forth not by the requirement to place the "other," but rather to situate ourselves. It is here, to invoke the language of a theory of ritual, that we are not so much concerned with the drama of "expulsion," but with the more mundane and persistent processes of "micro-adjustment."¹⁸⁶ This is not a matter of the "far" but, preeminently, of the "near." The problem is not alterity, but similarity—at times, even identity. A "theory of the other" is but another way of phrasing a "theory of the self."

In the examples discussed above, the parasite was the object of intense theoretical interest not merely because it was "there," but because

it invaded intimate human space. The parasite was apart from and yet a part of our personal bodily environment.¹⁸⁷ So too, with the "Indian"—although matters here are necessarily more complex. The aboriginal Amerindian became a figure of high theoretical interest only when he was gradually thought of as being "in between"—neither the well-known though exotic citizen of the fabled "Indies," nor a separate species of man (as in Linnaeus's remarkable proposal to establish the types *Homo americanus*, *Homo monstrosus patagonici*, and *Homo monstrosus plagiocephali* to describe three forms of Amerindians).¹⁸⁸ Rather, especially in the latter half of the eighteenth century, he became a figure of intense and long-lasting speculation precisely to the degree that Amerindian culture was seen as revelatory of the European's own past.¹⁸⁹ "In the beginning," to cite John Locke, "all the world was America."¹⁹⁰

By way of conclusion, this may be pressed in a direction closer to the explicit theme of this conference. Due to the emergent disciplines of anthropology, history of religions and the like, we know of thousands of societies and world views which are "different," but in most cases, their "remoteness" guarantees our indifference. By and large, Christians and Jews qua Christians and Jews have not thought about the "otherness" of the Kwakiutl or, for that matter, of the Taoist. The bulk of Christian theological thinking about "otherness" (starting with Paul) has been directed toward "other Christians" and, more occasionally, towards those groups thought of as being "near-Christians," preeminently Jews and Muslims. Today, as in the past, the history of religious conflicts, of religious perceptions of "otherness" is largely intraspecific: Buddhists to Buddhists, Christians to Christians, Muslims to Muslims, Jews to Jews. The only major exceptions occur in those theoretically unrevealing but historically common moments when "proximity" becomes more a matter of territoriality than of thought.

A "theory of the other" rarely depends on the capacity "to see ourselves as others see us." By and large, "we" remain indifferent to such refractions. Rather, it would appear to imply the reverse. A "theory of the other" requires those complex political and linguistic projects necessary to enable us to think, to situate, and to speak of "others" in relation to the way in which we think, situate, and speak about ourselves.

Notes

1. Robert Burns, *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Kilmarnock, 1786), 192–94, esp. 194.
2. K. Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh, 1958), 201.

3. The social and political settings of Scottish vernacular have been well studied by D. Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People* (London, 1961). I have taken the detail of the "Select Society" from D. Murison, "The Language of Burns," in D. A. Low, ed., *Critical Essays on Robert Burns* (London, 1975), 56.

4. For the ideological issues and their relation to continental theories concerning language, see F. W. Freeman, "The Intellectual Background of the Vernacular Revolt before Burns," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 16 (1981): 160–87.

5. See the study by H. Meige, *Les pouilleux dans l'art* (Paris: 1897). For a catalog of old, scientific illustrations, see G. H. F. Nuttall, "The Systematic Position, Synonymy and Iconography of *Pediculus humanus* and *Phthirus pubis*," *Parasitology* 1, no. 1 (1919): 329–46, esp. 337–39.

6. For a study of the flea in literature, see B. Lehane, *The Compleat Flea* (New York, 1969).

7. Title page, *Autobiography of a Flea* in the edition published by the Erotica Biblion Society (New York, 1901). The first edition, published for the Phlebological Society, London, bears the date 1789. This is false. The *Autobiography* is clearly a work of Victorian England. For a bibliography devoted to the special topic of the flea in erotic literature, see H. Hayn and A. N. Gotendorf, *Floh-Literatur (de pulicibus des In- und Auslandes vom XVI Jahrhundert bis zur Neuzeit)* (Dresden [?], 1913).

8. I know of no good history of parasitology. For the present, W. D. Foster, *A History of Parasitology* (Edinburgh and London, 1965) remains the most serviceable.

9. R. Hoeppli, *Parasites and Parasitic Infections in Early Medicine and Science* (Singapore, 1959) is a rich repertoire of ancient sources (especially valuable for its inclusion of Chinese materials). There are a series of comprehensive notes on the Greco-Roman parasitological literature in F. Adams, *The Seven Books of Paulus Aegineta*, 3 vols. (London, 1844–47), esp. 2: 139–53.

10. See, in general, A. N. Disney et al., *The Origin and Development of the Microscope* (London, 1928); R. S. Clay and T. H. Court, *The History of the Microscope* (London, 1932). The introductory material to the English translation of Leeuwenhoek's writings by C. Dobell, *Antony van Leeuwenhoek and His "Little Animals"* (London, 1932) is invaluable. It will be recalled that an early term for microscope was "louse-lens."

11. Much work remains to be done on the topos, "small is more interesting than large." While such a notion is as old as Pliny (*Historia naturalis* 11.1), it became a dominant motif only after the fashioning of lenses, both for the telescope and, most especially, for the microscope. For the former, one thinks of Galileo's encomium to the "little moons" of Jupiter, which concludes with a defense of and hymn of praise to tiny things (Galileo, letter dated May 21, 1611, in P. Dini, *Epistolario Galilei* [Leghorn, 1872], 1: 121–22). The latter is summarized, at a late stage of its development, in the well-known dictum in Emerson's essay "On Compen-

sation": "The microscope cannot find the animalcule which is less perfect for being little." (R. L. Cook, ed., *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Selected Prose and Poetry* [New York, 1950], 109). The fundamental study of this topos is M. Nicolson, *The Microscope and English Imagination* (Northampton, Mass., 1935), in the series Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, 16.4, which should be read in conjunction with her analogous studies of the telescope, "The Telescope and the Imagination," *Modern Philology* 32 (1935): 233–60; "The New Astronomy and the English Literary Imagination," *Studies in Philology* 32 (1935): 428–62, cf. Nicolson, *The Breaking of the Circle: Studies in the Effect of the "New Science" upon Seventeenth-Century Poetry*, 2d ed. (New York, 1960). For other studies of this topos, see A. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), 236–40; A. Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750–1900* (Pittsburgh, 1973), 16–20.

12. It is the special merit of E. Mayr, *The Growth of Biological Thought* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), 1: 134–40, to place the increase in knowledge about the number of parasitic species within the context of the general eighteenth-century increase in the knowledge of the number and diversity of animal and plant species. The article by P. Geddes, "Parasitism, Animal," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th ed. (1875–89) is an eloquent witness to the perception of parasitism's ubiquity: "we observe not only the enormously wide prevalence of parasitism—the number of parasitic individuals, if not indeed that of species, *probably exceeding that of non-parasitic forms*—but its very considerable variety in degree and detail" (18: 260, emphasis added).

13. For some of the taxonomic implications, see F. B. Churchill, "Sex and the Single Organism: Biological Theories of Sexuality in the Mid-19th Century," *Studies in the History of Biology* 3 (1979): 139–77.

14. For an overview, see J. Farley, *The Spontaneous Generation Controversy from Descartes to Oparin* (Baltimore, 1977), 18–19, 34–38, 58–66 focus on parasites. I have been much helped by the treatment in E. Guyénot, *Les sciences de la vie au XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Paris, 1941), 211–19. With particular reference to parasites, see R. Hoepli and I. H. Ch'iang, "The Doctrine of Spontaneous Generation of Parasites in Old-Style Chinese and Western Medicine," *Peking Natural History Bulletin* 19 (1950–51): 375–415, reprinted with revisions in Hoepli, *Parasites and Parasitic Diseases*, 113–56.

15. J. J. S. Steenstrup, *Über den Generationswechsel; oder, Die Fortpflanzung und Entwicklung durch abwechselnde Generationen, eine eigenthümliche Form der Brutpflege in den niederen Thierklassen* (Copenhagen, 1842). This German translation (by C. H. Lorenzen) is the first publication of Steenstrup's manuscript, *Om Fortplantning og Udvikling gjennem vekslede Generationsrækker*. An English translation was rapidly published by the John Ray Society, *On the Alternation of Generations; or, The Propagation and Development of Animals through Alternate Genera-*

tions (London: 1845). On Steenstrup and his contributions, see E. Lagrange, "Le centenaire d'une découverte: Le cycle évolutif des Cestodes," *Annales de Parasitologie* 27 (1952): 557–70.

16. A. W. Meyer, *The Rise of Embryology* (Stanford: 1939), 43, supports the notion that the decisive generation in parasitology was the period 1840–70. In what follows, I have surveyed the following widely used texts: J. Leidy, *A Flora and Fauna within Living Animals* (Washington, D.C., 1853); F. Küchenmeister, *Die in und an dem Körper des lebenden Menschen vorkommenden Parasiten* 1st ed. (Leipzig, 1855), 1–2; C.-J. Davaine, *Traité des entozoaires et des maladies vermineuses de l'homme et des animaux domestiques* (Paris, 1860); T. S. Cobbold, *Entozoa, An Introduction to the Study of Helminthology* (London, 1869); P.-J. van Beneden, *Les commensaux et les parasites dans la règne animal*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1878); R. Leuckart, *Die menschlichen Parasiten und die von ihnen herrührenden Krankheiten* 1st ed. (Leipzig and Heidelberg, 1863–76), 1–2, Leuckart, *Die Parasiten des Menschen und die von ihnen herrührenden Krankheiten*, ed. G. Brandes, 2d ed. (Leipzig and Heidelberg, 1879–1901), 1–2 (all citations are to the second edition). For contrast to the "newer" parasitology, C. Rudolphi, *Entozoorum sive vermium intestinalium historia naturalis* (Amsterdam, 1808–10), 1–2 was employed.

17. This process of changing nomenclature may be illustrated by the compound titles in the works by Davaine, Cobbold, and Rudolphi in note 16 above.

18. This last distinction creates a new series of definitional issues still unresolved in the literature. From one point of view, every disease produced by a microorganism might be considered a parasitic disease. In practice, parasitic diseases are more narrowly defined, but the criteria remain unclear.

19. To these distinctions were added others chiefly derived from botany, such as "epiphytism," in which one species derives physical support but not nourishment from another species. (For example, mistletoe is a parasite; English ivy is not).

20. I stress that the above is a summary of an influential late-nineteenth-century taxonomy. For the current state of the question: (1) the most significant work on the theory of parasitism has been done by Russian scientists. Their work has been made available in the English translation of V. A. Dogiel, *General Parasitology* (New York, 1966) with rich bibliography. (2) For a review of the complex contemporary state of the question with regard to taxonomy, see the distinguished collection edited by G. D. Schmidt, *Problems in the Systematics of Parasites* (Baltimore, 1969).

21. Leuckart, *Die Parasiten des Menschen*, 1: 3.

22. For a wide-ranging survey, see the chapter, "Parasites and Parasitic Infections in Religion," in Hoepli, *Parasites and Parasitic Infections*, 396–409.

23. Verminis is known from only one Latin inscription, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, 7.1: no. 3732 = H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (Berlin, 1892–1916), 2.1: no. 4019. See E. Buchner, "Verminis," *Real-Encyklopädie der*

classischen Altertumswissenschaft, 2.8: 1552–53; Hoeppli, *Parasites and Parasitic Infections*, 397–98.

24. I. Kant, *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels* (1755) in P. Mesiger, ed., *Kant: Populäre Schriften* (Berlin, 1911), 127.

25. Leuckart, *Die Parasiten des Menschen*, 1: 35; Meyer, *Rise of Embryology*, 67; H. Zinsser, *Rats, Lice and History* (Boston, 1935), 182; Hoeppli, *Parasites and Parasitic Infections*, 401; Guyenot, *Les sciences de la vie*, 218–19. For the poem, Lehane, *Compleat Flea*, 96–97.

26. Meyer, *Rise of Embryology*, 66.

27. D. C. Allen, *The Legend of Noah* (Urbana, 1963), 72, 185; Hoeppli, *Parasites and Parasitic Infections*, 401.

28. B. Glass et al., *Forerunners of Darwin, 1745–1849* (Baltimore, 1959), 51.

29. “Parasite” is standard in English as a botanical term in the early eighteenth century. See, for example, *Chamber’s Encyclopaedia* (Edinburgh, 1727–41), s.v. “parasite.” For its massive use in an influential, early botanical work, see A. P. de Candolle, *Physiologie végétale* (Paris, 1832), vol. 3, *Des parasites phanerogames*.

30. I have been unable to locate the first self-conscious use of the term “parasite” as a zoological term. It gained early currency among the first generation of parasitologists as the result of the comprehensive article by the distinguished biologist, Carl von Siebold, “Parasiten,” in R. Wagner, ed., *Handwörterbuch der Physiologie* (Brunschweig, 1844), 2: 641–92, but there is no explicit reflection on the name. (Siebold’s article was a major influence in the acceptance of Steenstrup’s work, op. cit. 646–47). From a review of the citations in the early works cited above (note 16) and a survey of the titles in J. Ch. Huber, *Bibliographie der klinischen Helminthologie* (Munich, 1895), it would appear that Küchenmeister, *Die in und an dem Körper des lebenden Menschen vorkommenden Parasiten*, was the first comprehensive work to use “parasite” in its title. Again, I can find no explicit meditation on the use of the term. This was strengthened in the title of the English translation of the second edition, *On Animal and Vegetable Parasites of the Human Body* (London, 1857), 1–2. As best as I can determine, the *Zeitschrift für Parasitenkunde* (Jena, 1869–75) was the earliest journal to employ “parasite” in its title.

31. In this regard, the articles on “Parasiten” in J. Ersch and T. Gruber, eds., *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* (Leipzig, 1838), 3.2: 417–23 are revealing. There is a brief, one-paragraph article consisting of two sentences which provides a botanical definition of “parasite” by A. Sprengel (423a). This is preceded by a long article of seven pages (thirteen columns) on the social meaning of parasite by M. H. E. Meier—a brief treatment of its cultic use (417a–418a) and a long essay on the figure of the Parasite in ancient comedy (418b–423a). This proportion has been reversed by the turn of the century. For example, in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1910–11), there is an anonymous one-paragraph article on the cultic and literary sense of “parasite”

(20: 770a–b), followed by a twenty-two-page article on “parasitic diseases” (20: 770b–793b) and a five-page article on botanical and zoological “parasitism” (20: 793b–797b).

32. The fundamental study remains O. Ribbeck, *Kolax: Eine ethologische Studie* (Leipzig, 1883) in the series *Abhandlungen der Königl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-hist. Klasse, 9.1: 1–113. See further, M. H. E. Meier, “Parasiten,” in Ersch-Gruber, *Allgemeine Encyclopädie*, 3.2: 418–23; J. E. B. Mayor, *The Thirteen Satires of Juvenal* (London, 1901), 1: 271–72; A. Giese, *De parasiti persona capita selecta* (Kiel, 1908); F. M. Cornford, *The Origin of Attic Comedy* (London, 1914—I cite the new edition edited by T. H. Gaster [Garden City, 1961]), 143–45; J. O. Loftberg, “The Sycophant-Parasite,” *Classical Philology* 15 (1920): 61–72; cf. Lofberg, “Sycophancy at Athens” (Ph.d. diss., University of Chicago, 1917); M. E. Dilley, “The Parasite: A Study in Comic Development” (Ph.d. diss., University of Chicago, 1924); J. M. G. M. Brinkhoff, “De Parasiet op het romeinsche Toneel,” *Neophilologus* 32 (1948): 127–41; L. Ziehen, E. Wüst and A. Hug, “Parasitoi,” *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 18: 1377–1405; T. B. L. Webster, *Studies in Late Greek Comedy* (Manchester, 1953), 63–5; W. G. Amott, “Studies in Comedy (1): Alexis and the Parasite’s Name,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 9 (1968): 161–68.

33. Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 6. 234d–248c, in the edition and translation by C. B. Gulick in the Loeb Classical Library series (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), 3: 54–119. That Athenaeus was dependent on a lost lexicographical work was argued by V. Rose, *Aristoteles Pseudepigraphus* (Leipzig, 1863); 457–59.

34. On Polemon, fragment 78 (Preller)= Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, 3: 137–38, see L. Preller, *Polemonis periegetae fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1838), 115–23.

35. On the cultic term, *parasitos*, *parasitoi*, in addition to the works cited above in note 32, each of which devote some pages to the subject, see A. von Kampen, *De parasitis apud Graecos sacrorum ministris* (Göttingen, 1867), A. Tresp, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Kultschriftsteller* (Giessen, 1914), 209–11; R. Schlaifer, “The Cult of Athena Pallensis,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 54 (1943): 141–74, esp. 152; L. Ziehen, “Parasitoi (1),” *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 18.3: 1377–81; H. W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1977), 51.

36. On Kynosarges, see J. E. Harrison, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* (London, 1890), 216–19; W. Judeich, *Topographie von Athen*, 2d ed. (Munich, 1931), 422–24.

37. For the Periclean law, see Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, 26.3. See further, the excellent discussion of this law in relation to the *nothoi* in A. Diller, *Race Mixture among the Greeks before Alexander* (Urbana, 1937), 91–100, in the series *Illinois University Studies in Language and Literature*, 20.1–2.

38. For the *nothoi* in Athens—which means a person of mixed descent instead of its more usual meaning, “bastard”—in connection with Kynosarges, see Demosthenes, *Orations*, 23.216. See further, U. E. Paoli, *Studi di diritto attico* (Florence, 1930), 272–76; K. Latte, “Nothoi,” *Real-Encyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 33: 1066–74, esp. 1069–71.

39. The requirement that the *parasitoi* be chosen *ek tōn nothōn* appears to be burlesqued in the fragment from Diodorus of Sinope, *The Heiress*, quoted in Athenaeus, 6.239d–e (= T. Kock, *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta* [Leipzig, 1880–88], 2: 420).

40. The *parasitoi* of Herakles are mentioned in Athenaeus's citations of fragments from Kleidemus (6.235a) and Philocorus (6.235d). Other mentions include Aristophanes, *Daitales* (Kock, *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta*, 1: 438) and Alciphron, *Parasites*, 3.42. For a collection of testimonia concerning the cult of Herakles at Kynosarges, see S. Solders, *Die ausserstädtischen Kulte und die Einigung Attikas* (Lund, 1931), 78–80.

41. There is, thus, an irony in Beneden's attempt to distinguish between *les commensaux* and *les parasites* in his work by that title (see above, note 16). The former is synonymous with the latter.

42. While this would take us far from our theme, see the important monograph by D. Whitehead, *The Ideology of the Athenian Metic* (Cambridge, 1977) for another aspect of “relative otherness” in Athens.

43. J. A. Boon, *Other Tribes, Other Scribes: Symbolic Anthropology in the Comparative Study of Cultures, Histories, Religions, and Texts* (Cambridge, 1982): 230.

44. R. Redfield, “Primitive World View,” *Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 96 (1952): 30–36, reprinted in Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, 1953), 84–110, quotation on 92.

45. See the Sumerian materials in S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago, 1963), 275–88. Cf. R. Labat, *Manuel d'épigraphie akkadienne* (Paris, 1948), nos. 60 and 74, for the terminology. A particularly instructive example is provided by G. Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period* (Naples, 1966), 92–5. Cf. M. Liverani, “Per una considerazione storica del problema amorreo,” *Oriens Antiquus* 9 (1970): 22–26.

46. While the literature on this subject has become vast in the past several years (see H. C. Conklin, *Folk Classification: A Topically Arranged Bibliography* [New Haven, 1972]), the most useful essay, from our perspective, is B. E. Ward, “Varieties of the Conscious Model: The Fishermen of South China,” in M. Banton, ed., *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology* (London, 1965), 113–37.

47. See the important remarks on “true endogamy” in C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston, 1969), 46–47. The close relationship of social sanctions with respect to sexuality and “otherness” is made starkly plain in the title of the published proceedings of the Twelfth Conference of French Jew-

ish Intellectuals (1971), edited by J. Halpérin and G. Lévitte, *L'autre dans la conscience juive: Le sacré et le couple* (Paris, 1973). “Otherness” and “sacrality” are reduced to questions of intermarriage!

48. See the famous “Exkurs über den Fremden” in G. Simmel, *Soziologie*, 3d ed. (Leipzig, 1923), 509–12. This is developed in M. M. Wood, *The Stranger: A Study in Social Relations* (London, 1934). For an excellent collection of thirty-three essays that focus on the legal relations to the “stranger,” see the collective volume, *L'Étranger* (Brussels, 1958), 1–2, which appeared as volume 9 in the series *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*. The definitional article by J. Gilissen (1: 5–57) is of particular merit. There are vast collections of data regarding “strangers” from an anthropological perspective—e.g., J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 3d ed. (London, 1935), 3: 101–16; P. J. Hamilton-Grierson, “Strangers,” in J. Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh, 1921), 11: 883–96. A. van Gennep, spatializing the “stranger,” gained the generative model for *Rites de Passage* (Paris, 1909). There are a set of important theoretical notes in Lévi-Strauss, *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, 60, 402–3. P. Gauthier, *Symbola: Les étrangers et la justice dans les cités grecques* (Nancy, 1972) provides a model monograph for the study of the topic in an ancient society.

49. From an anthropological perspective, this theme has been a consistent object of attention by Africanists. See, among others, M. Wilson, *Good Company* (London, 1951); and D. Jacobson, *Itinerant Tribesmen: Friendship and Social Order in Urban Uganda* (Menlo Park, 1973).

50. M. Duala-M'bedy, *Xenologie: Die Wissenschaft vom Fremden und die Verdrängung der Humanität in der Anthropologie* (Munich, 1977) collects much interesting data in the service of an unsatisfying and confused thesis.

51. The standard monographs remain K. Trüdinger, *Studien zur Geschichte der griechisch-römischen Ethnographie* (Basel, 1918); and L. Pearson, *Early Ionian Historians* (Oxford, 1939).

52. See the various studies by E. H. Schafer, including *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley, 1963), *The Vermilion Bird: T'ang Images of the South* (Berkeley, 1967), *Shore of Pearls: Hainan Island in Early Times* (Berkeley, 1970).

53. Cortés, “2nd Dispatch,” in D. Enrique de Vedia, *Historiadores Primitivos de Indias* (Madrid, 1918), 1: 34b–35a in the series *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, 22. Translation in I. R. Blacker and H. M. Rosen, *Conquest: Dispatches of Cortes from the New World* (New York, 1962), 60–61.

54. J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (New York, 1929), 291–92.

55. For the history of fieldwork, see A. I. Richards, “The Development of Field Work Methods in Social Anthropology,” in F. C. Bartlett, ed., *The Study of Society* (London, 1939), 272–316; P. Kaberry, “Malinowski's Contribution to

Fieldwork Methods and the Writing of Ethnography," in R. Firth, ed., *Man and Culture*, 2d ed. (London, 1960), 71–91, esp. 72–76; G. W. Stocking, Jr., ed., *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork* (Madison, 1983), in the series History of Anthropology, 1. See further, P. C. W. Gutkind and G. Sankoff, "Annotated Bibliography on Anthropological Field Work Methods," in D. G. Jongmans and P. C. W. Gutkind, eds., *Anthropologists in the Field* (New York, 1967), 214–71.

56. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York, 1976), 2: 55.

57. History, to take up Lévi-Strauss's example, treats the temporally remote at least to the same degree as anthropology treats the spatially remote.

58. Such is most explicitly the case in C. Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (Paris, 1955) and J.-P. Dumont, *The Headman and I: Ambiguity and Ambivalence in the Fieldworking Experience* (Austin, 1978).

59. For a collection of papers from the 1974 meeting on "Cultural Futuristics," see M. Maruyama and A. Harkins, eds., *Cultures beyond the Earth: The Role of Anthropology in Outer Space* (New York, 1975). For science fiction novels that make extraterrestrial anthropology their central theme, see, among others, the sophisticated works of Michael Bishop, *Transfigurations* (Berkeley, 1979), and Chad Oliver, *Unearthly Neighbors* (New York, 1960). See further, Smith, "Close Encounters of Diverse Kinds," reprinted in this volume.

60. For the notion of "limiting case," see L. Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, 2d ed. (Chicago, 1979), 24–27.

61. Colin Turnbull's novelistic study of the Ik would be an extreme example, *The Mountain People* (New York, 1972).

62. E. R. Leach, *Rethinking Anthropology* (London, 1961), 1.

63. For a profound meditation on this theme, see J. Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, 1983).

64. J. Vansina, "Cultures through Time," in R. Naroll and R. Cohen, eds., *A Handbook of Method in Cultural Anthropology* (Garden City, N.Y., 1970), 165. See further, Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 80–97, and the shrewd characterization of the "functionalist monograph" in J. Boon, *Other Tribes, Other Scribes*, 13–14.

65. For a profound meditation on "decipherment," see M. V. David, *Le débat sur les écritures et l'hiéroglyphe aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, et l'application de la notion de déchiffrement aux écritures mortes* (Paris, 1965).

66. E. R. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma*, 2d ed. (Boston, 1965), 15.

67. This distinction between the Anglo-American tradition of the "other" and the Continental deserves further study. For the present, D. Locke, *Myself and Others: A Study in Our Knowledge of Minds* (Oxford, 1968) may be taken as an exemplary review of the Anglo-American tradition; M. Theunissen, *Der Andere: Studien zur Sozialontologie der Gegenwart*, 2d ed. (Berlin, 1977) may be taken as an exemplary review of the Continental.

68. One need do no more than appeal to the onomatopoeic derivation of bar-

baros from "ba! ba! ba!" that is, unintelligible, stammering, animal- or child-like speech (already in the *Iliad* 2.867). See, among others, the semasiological study by A. Eichhorn, *Barbaros quid significaverit* (Leipzig, 1904). The same notion is found in the sparse Israelitic ethnographic tradition (e.g., Ezekiel 3: 5–6; Isaiah 33: 4–19; Psalm 114:1), and underlies narratives such as Judges 12:5–6. Compare the Mesoamerican analogue. "The Indians of this New Spain derive, according to what is generally reported in their histories, from two diverse peoples; they give to the first the name, Nahuatlaca, which means 'People who explain themselves and speak clearly,' to be differentiated from the second people, at the time very wild and uncivilized, concerned only with hunting, to whom they give the name, Chichimecs, which means, 'People who go hunting.'" Juan de Tovar, *Historia de los indios mexicanos*, in the edition and French translation by J. La Faye, *Manuscrit Tovar: Origines et croyances des Indiens du Mexique* (Graz, 1972), 9, emphasis added.

69. See the collection of examples in T. Todorov, *The Conquest of America* (New York, 1984), 76. A variant of this is to treat the "other" as a "parrot" with no native language, but imitating European speech. See, for example, the report by Bernardino de Minaya cited in L. Hanke, "Pope Paul III and the American Indians," *Harvard Theological Review* 30 (1937): 84.

70. L. Olschki, *Marco Polo's Precursors* (Baltimore, 1943), 4–5 and note 9 citing the earlier literature. See further, H. Hart, *The Sea Road to the Indies* (New York, 1951), 211.; and P. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500* (Kuala Lumpur, 1961), 130–31.

71. The observations of A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge, 1975), 7–8, 91–93, et passim may be generalized. Note further the observation that, even with an interpreter, the barbarian may prove unintelligible, as in Hanno, *Periplus*, 11, in the English translation by R. Harris (Cambridge, 1928), 26.

72. Of the many formulations, that by W. Franklin, *Discoverers, Explorers, Settlers: The Diligent Writers of Early America* (Chicago, 1979), 7, is most useful for our theme. "More than anything else, the West became an epistemological problem for Europe. . . . It was simply the fact of 'another' world which most thoroughly deranged the received order of European life. The issue was not merely an informational one. It involved so many far-reaching consequences that the very structure of Old World knowledge—assumptions about the nature of learning and the role of traditional wisdom in it—was cast into disarray. . . . Faced with a flood of puzzling facts and often startling details, the East was almost literally at a loss for words. Having discovered America, it now needed to make a place for the New World within its intellectual and verbal universe."

73. For a brief overview of the classical conception of the *triplex mundus*, see F. Gisinger, "Geographie," *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, suppl. vol. 4: 521–685, esp. 552–56. See further, the standard histories: E. H. Bun-

bury, *A History of Ancient Geography* (London, 1879), 1: 145–6; E. H. Berger, *Geschichte der wissenschaftlichen Erdkunde der Griechen*, 2d ed. (Leipzig, 1903), 82–90; H. F. Tozer, *A History of Ancient Geography*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, 1935), 67–70.

74. For Pliny's centrality, see E. W. Gudger, "Pliny's 'Historia naturalis': The Most Popular Natural History Ever Published," *Isis* 6 (1924): 269–81, which provides a census of printed editions from 1469 to 1799. Of direct relevance to our topic, see Columbus's copy of Pliny with his annotations in C. de Lollis, *Scritti di Cristoforo Colombo* (Rome, 1894), 2: 471–72 in the series *Raccolta di Documenti e Studi Pubblicati dalla R. Commissione Columbiana*, 1.2. In the early "New World" scientific and historical literature, Pliny serves as the standard of classical knowledge, e.g., E. Alvarez López, "Plinio y Fernández de Oviedo," *Annales de Ciencias naturales del Instituto J. de Acosta* (Madrid, 1940), 1: 46–61 and 2: 13–35.

On Genesis 10, see the commentary and full bibliography in the magisterial work of C. Westermann, *Genesis* (Göttingen, 1966–), 662–706. From our perspective, the most useful work is G. Hölscher, *Drei Erdkarten: Ein Beitrag zur Erdkenntnis des hebräischen Altertums* (Heidelberg, 1949), esp. 45–56.

75. The origin and derivation of the name "America" remains a matter of some controversy. J. A. Aboal Amaro, *Amérigho Vespucci: Ensayo de bibliografía crítica* (Madrid, 1962) provides a representative summary of the various proposals. See pp. 15, 18, 20, 31, 53, 55, 56, 60, 61, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 79, 89, 90–94, 123, 124–25, 127–28, 129, 131, 134–35, 136, 144–45, 147–48, 148, 149. See further the important study by C. Sanz, *El Nombre América: Libros y mapas quo lo impulsieron* (Madrid, 1959) and the review of scholarship by J. Vidago, "América: Orígenes e evolução deste nome," *Revista Ocidente* 67 (1964): 93–110.

The figure of "America" as a "fourth" entity was developed through a process of experimentation. This is seen most clearly in the development of "America's" iconography. See, among others, J. H. Hyde, "L'iconographie des quatre parties du monde dans les tapisseries," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 66 (1924): 253–72; C. Le Corbeiller, "Miss America and Her Sisters: Personifications of the Four Parts of the World," *Metropolitan Museum Bulletin*, n.s. 19–20 (1960): 209–23. On the general theme, see E. Köllmann, et al., "Erdteile," *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte* (Munich, 1967), 5: 1107–1202.

76. The first occurrence of this phrase is in M. Waldseemüller[?], *Cosmographie Introductio* (St. Dié, 1507), a. iii. See the facsimile edition by J. Fischer and F. von Wieser (reprint, New York, 1969), xxv.

77. The theme of the *orbis alterius* was first developed at length in Pomponius Mela, *De situ orbis*, 1.4, 3.7 (in the edition of G. Parthey [Berlin, 1867]). See, in general, A. Rainaud, *Le continent austral: Hypothèses et découvertes* (Paris, 1893).

78. As is well known, there was a conceptual debate as to whether water or land was primary—the former (and most widely held view) gave rise to the picture of land as insular; the latter reduced the oceans to landlocked lakes. See A.

Norlind, *Das Problem des gegenseitigen Verhältnisses von Land und Wasser und seine Behandlung im Mittelalter* (Lund and Leipzig, 1918) in the series *Lunds Universitets Årsskrift*, n.s. 1.14.2.

79. The "zonal" division is attributed either to Parmenides (Strabo, 2.2.2) or Pythagoras (Aetius, *De placitis philosophorum*, 3.14.1). Both attributions have been the subject of debate. See, among others, W. A. Heidel, *The Frame of the Ancient Greek Maps* (New York, 1937), 76, 80, 91, in the series *American Geographical Society Research Series*, 20; W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972); 305–6. The division by *zonai* must not be confused with the division into *klimata* (which were later correlated with the Ptolemaic parallels). See E. Honigsmann, *Die sieben Klimata und die Poleis Episemioi* (Heidelberg, 1929), 4–9, 25–30.

80. Posidonius, fragment 28 (Jacoby) in Strabo, 2.2.3.

81. See, in general, F. Gisinger, "Oikoumenē," *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 17.2: 2123–74. From our perspective, the most useful study is J. Partsch, *Die Grenzen der Menschheit* (1): *Die antike Oikoumene* (Leipzig, 1916) in the series *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Kl.* 68 (1916), 1–62.

82. For an influential form of this argument, see Macrobius, *Commentarius in Ciceronis Somnium Scipionis*, 2.5.9–36 in the translation by W. H. Stahl, *Macrobius: Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (New York, 1952); 200–6. Note that the view that the southern temperate zone "is also inhabited is inferred solely from reason" (2.5.17, emphasis added). This symmetrical argument goes back to the speculation of Krates that the northern *oikoumenē* is but one of four inhabited landmasses. See H. J. Mette, *Sphairopoia: Untersuchungen zur Kosmologie des Krates von Pergamon* (Munich, 1936), 76–77.

83. Strabo, 2.5.13. Cf. 2.5.34, 2.5.43. Strabo here denies that such "other worlds" are part of the study of geography, confining geography to "our *oikoumenē*." For an important discussion of this limitation, see C. van Paassen, *The Classical Tradition of Geography* (Groningen, 1957), 4–31. This limitation persisted on the part of some geographers even after the "discovery" of America, e.g., the preface by Johannes Cochlaeus to the 1512 edition of Pomponius Mela, *De situ orbis*: "In our lifetime, Amerigo Vespucci is said to have discovered that new world . . . [that] is quite distinct from [Africa] and bigger than our Europe. Whether this is true or a lie, it has nothing . . . to do with Cosmography or History. For the peoples and places of that continent are unknown and unnamed to us. . . . Therefore, it is of no interest to geographers at all" (emphasis added). The passage has been quoted in E. P. Goldschmidt, "Not in Harris," in *Festschrift Lawrence C. Wroth* (Portland, 1951), 133–34 and J. H. Elliott, "Renaissance Europe and America: A Blunted Impact," in F. Chiappelli, ed., *First Images of America* (Berkeley, 1976), 1: 14. Both Goldschmidt and Elliott have drawn negative conclusions

from the passage rather than setting it within the context of the Strabonian limitations on "geography."

84. It is important to avoid the anachronism of imposing our insular notion of "continent" on this tripartition. I have not been able to locate a history of the term, but it would appear that it referred to a contiguous (*continens*) landmass, e.g., W. Cunningham, *The Cosmographical Glasse* (London, 1559), 113, "Continens [margin: continent] is a portion of the earth which is not parted by the seas asunder." Thus Waldseemüller, in 1508, distinguished between the traditional three contiguous landmasses, which made up the northern earth-island, and the newly discovered "island" of "America": *et sunt tres prime partes continentes, quarta est insula* (Fischer and Wieser facsimile edition, xxx). The application of the term "continent" to all of the major landmasses occurs only in the late sixteenth century. F. Gagnon, "Le thème médiéval de l'homme sauvage dans les premières représentations des Indiens d'Amérique," in G. H. Allard, ed., *Aspects de la marginalité au Moyen Age* (Quebec, 1975), 96, attempts to discern an evaluative opposition in the early iconography of the "Indies"—"la terre ferme européenne est opposée à l'île primitive."

85. While the division of the world-island into three landmasses is already presumed by Herodotus (e.g., 2.16), it was, perhaps, implied by the arrangement of Hecateus's *Periodos* into two books (Europe and Asia) with Libya as an appendix. See F. Gisinger, *Die Erdbeschreibung des Eudoxos von Knidos*, 2d ed. (Amsterdam, 1967), 14–18, 35–36.

86. See R. von Scheliha, *Die Wassergrenze im Altertum* (Breslau, 1931), esp. 34–42, in the series *Historische Untersuchungen*, 8.

87. This is graphically depicted in the Noachic "T-O" maps. The study by M. Destombes, *Mappemondes, A.D. 1200–1500* (Amsterdam: 1964) in the series *Monumenta Cartographica Vetustioris Aevi*, 1, supercedes all previous publications.

88. E.g., Hrabanus Maurus, *De Universo*, 2.1 (Migne, *Patrologia cursus completus, series Latina*, 111: 54), 12.2 (111: 353–54). See also the expanded edition of the *Glossa ordinaria* ad Mt 2.11 (Venice, 1603), 5:62. This identification is not found in the *Glossa* as printed in Migne, PL 114:75.

89. The identification depends on first identifying the unnumbered magi of Mt 2 as "three kings" (Leo, *Sermon* 33 [Migne, PL 54: 235] is an early example) and then identifying the three kings with the three continents. See [pseudo] Jerome, *Expositio Quatuor Evangeliorum* ad Mt. 2.1 (Migne, PL 30: 537); Hrabanus Maurus, *Commentariorum in Matthaeum* ad Mt. 2.1 (Migne, PL 107: 760); [pseudo] Bede, *In Matthaei Evangelium exposito* ad Mt. 2.1 (Migne, PL 92: 113); Michael Scot, *Liber introductorius* (MS. Bodleian 266), f. 3 (as cited in L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* [New York, 1923], 2: 318). J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Jesus' Trimorphism and the Differentiation of the Magi," in E. J. Sharpe and J. R. Hinnells, eds., *Man and His Salvation* (Manches-

ter, 1973), 97, asserts, in passing, that the identification is as old as Augustine, but I have not located a reference. On the identification, see in general, H. Kehrer, *Die "Heiligen Drei Könige" in der Legende und in der deutschen bildenden Kunst* (Strasbourg, 1904), 23; and H. Baudet, *Paradise on Earth: Some Thoughts on European Images of Non-European Man* (New Haven, 1965), 17–8.

90. The triple tiara appears to be a fourteenth-century innovation, most usually explained as symbolizing the pope's authority over heaven, earth, and hell (see J. Braun, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Tiara," 11th ed., 26: 911–12). However, Pedro Simón, *Primera parte de las noticias historiales de las conquistas de Tierra-Firme en las Indias Occidentales* (Cuenca, 1627), 1: 9, suggests that a fourth crown be added to symbolize the pope's authority over "America"—the other three crowns being associated with the traditional tripartition. As this latter suggests, the numerical symbolism can be dazzling, e.g., Gregory Horn, *Arca Noe* (Leiden and Rotterdam, 1666), 35, 183, *passim*, who attempts to correlate the three sons of Noah, the four "world empires," and the five "continents."

91. Augustine, *Civitate Dei*, 16.8 (in the Loeb Library edition and translation). Being "human" means, above all, having reason—as in Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 7.4.7. (*Corpus Christianorum*, 50: 255).

92. In addition to Rainaud, *Le continent austral*, see W. Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades* (New York, 1925), 157–65 and P. Delhaye, "Le théorie des antipodes et ses incidences théologiques," which appeared as note "S" in his edition, *Godfrey de Saint-Victor: Microcosmus* (Lille and Gembloux, 1951), 282–86. The arguments against the inhabitability of the austral island or the antipodes are elegantly summarized in Pierre d'Ailly, *Imago Mundi*, 7 (in the edition of E. Buron [Paris, 1930] and the English translation by E. F. Keever [Wilmington, N.C., 1948]).

From our perspective, the most interesting argument (in terms of the Augustinian options) is that while the *orbis alterius* is real, its inhabitants are not. This is already implied by the influential encyclopaedia of Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, 14.5.7 (Migne, PL 82: 512); cf. 9.2.133 (82: 341). For Isidore's view, see G. Boffito, "La leggenda degli antipodi," *Festschrift A. Graf* (Bergamo, 1903), esp. 592 and n. 4. Isidore's view of the antipodes found graphic representation in the "Beatus" maps—see K. Miller, *Mappae Mundi* (Stuttgart, 1895–98), 1: 58; T. Simar, *Le géographie de l'Afrique centrale dans l'antiquité au moyen age* (Brussels, 1912), 150–58; and J. Marquis Casanovas et al., *Sancti Beati a Liebana in Apocalypsin Codex Gerundensis* (Olten and Lausanne, 1962), ff. 54v–55r. Note, however, that in the later figures, which are attached to Isidore's discussion of the "zones" in *De natura rerum* 1.10 (Migne, PL 83: 978–79 with figs.), two inhabitable "zones" are shown. (See the discussion of this in E. Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages: Isidore of Seville* [New York, 1912], 50–54). Furthermore, the outline of Isidore's geographical section in the *Etymologiae*, appending a section on

islands after sections on the tripartite *oikoumenē*, suggests yet a third pattern (see Wright, *Geographical Lore*, 259, 460, n. 12).

93. The issue of the geographic impact has been often studied since the pioneering work of K. Kretschmer, *Die Entdeckung Amerika's in ihrer Bedeutung für die Geschichte des Weltbildes* (Leipzig, 1892).

94. This issue has been the special burden of the important and controversial works by Edmundo O'Gorman, which have been fundamental to my construction of this section. See especially, *La idea del descubrimiento de América: Historia de esa interpretación y crítica de sus fundamentos* (Mexico City, 1951) and the similarly titled, though quite different work, *The Invention of America: An Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of Its History* (Bloomington, 1961).

95. F. Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia* (1561) in the edition of C. Panigara (Bari, 1929), 2: 130–31 as cited in H. Honour, *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time* (New York, 1975), 84.

96. É. Pasquier, *Les oeuvres* (Amsterdam: 1723), 2: 55, as cited in J. H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge, 1970), 8.

97. W. E. Washburn, "The Meaning of 'Discovery' in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," *American Historical Review* 68 (1962–3): 1–21. Note that this article is conceived as a fundamental attack on O'Gorman's work (note 94 above).

98. C. Gibson, "Conquest and the So-Called Conquest in Spain and Spanish America," *Terrae Incognitae* 12 (1980): 1–18.

99. See the useful collection of such terms in Kretschmer, *Die Entdeckung Amerika's*, 360–69.

100. There are no primary sources. See J. Toribio Medina, *El descubrimiento del Oceano Pácifico* (Santiago, 1914) for a thorough review of the early historians who mention Balboa's discovery, none of whom appear to emphasize its cosmographic implications.

101. The best reviews of the complex Magellan literature are M. Torodash, "Magellan Historiography," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 51 (1971): 313–35, esp. 313–26, and F. Leite de Faria, "As primeiras relações impressas sobre a viagem de Fernão de Magalhães," in A. Teixeira de Moto, ed., *A Viagem de Fernão de Magalhães e a questão de Molucas* (Lisbon, 1975), 473–518, in the series *Estudos de cartografia antiga*, 16. Surprisingly, while the older sources relate the drama and novelty of the circumnavigation, none of them draw cosmographical implications. (1) Fugger Newsletter: *Eine schöne Neue zeytung so Kayserlich Mayestet ausgetz nemlich zukommen sind* (Augsburg, 1522), 8 (in C. Sanz, *Últimas Adiciones to H. Harrisse, Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima* [Madrid, 1960], 2: 909–12). (2) Maximilian of Transylvania, *De Moluccis Insulis* (Cologne, 1523), on which see Faria, "As primeiras relações," 479–500. See esp., in the English translation by J. Baynes printed in Ch. E. Nowell, *Magellan's Voyage around the World: Three Con-*

temporary Accounts (Evanston, 1962), 274, 275–76, 277, 279–80, 291–92, 309. (3) Antonio Pigafetta, *Primo viaggio intorno al mondo*, written c. 1523. On the complex history of this text, see Faria, "As primeiras relações," 506–16. The earliest printed version, in French (Paris, 1525), is now available in a facsimile edition and translation by P. S. Paige, *The Voyage of Magellan* (Ann Arbor, 1969), esp. 20. See also the Ambrosian manuscript in Nowell, *Magellan's Voyage*, 64. (4) *Roteiro* of the anonymous "Genoese Pilot," in H. E. J. Stanley, *The First Voyage Round the World by Magellan* (London, 1874), 9.

The earliest work that I can find that appreciates the cosmographic implications of the circumnavigation is Richard Eden's paraphrastic translation of Peter Martyr's *Decadas* — *The Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India* (London, 1555), facsimile edition (New York, 1966), 214r–215r, who sets the reports of Maximilian, Pigafetta, and Peter Martyr in the context of the classical tripartition ("the hole globe or compase of the earth was dyvyded by the auncient wryters into three partes") and concludes with a clear statement of novelty ("the antiquitie had never such knowledge of the worlde . . . as we have at this presente by th'industrye of men of this oure age").

102. Columbus's first report, *Epistola de Insulis Nuper Inventis* (dated February 15, 1493) was first printed prior to Columbus's arrival at Barcelona (between April 15–20, 1493). There were eleven printed editions by 1497. See C. Sanz, *La Carta de Colón* (Madrid, 1958) for facsimiles of the first seventeen printed editions. Cf. Sanz, *Bibliografía general de la Carta de Colón* (Madrid, 1958). See further, the useful tabulation in R. Hirsch, "Printed Reports on the Early Discoveries and Their Reception," in F. Chiappelli, ed., *First Images of America*, 2: 537–52 and appendices 1–3 (unpaginated).

103. It is reported by his son that Columbus wrote a *Memoria anotacion para probar que las cinco zonas son habitables*, c. 1490. If so, it is now lost. Ferdinand Columbus, *Vida del Almirante Don Cristóbal Colón*, chap. 4, in the English translation by B. Keen (New Brunswick, N.J., 1959), 11.

104. The *Journal* written by Columbus during his first voyage has had a complex history. The document itself has been lost. It was massively excerpted in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, book 1, chaps. 35–75, a work composed between 1527 and 1560 but not published in full until the Madrid edition of 1875–76. (There are excerpts as well in Ferdinand Columbus, *Vida*, which permit some cross-checking). The *Columbus Journal* was first printed separately by M. Fernández de Navarrete, *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles desde fines del siglo XV* (Madrid, 1825–37), 1: i–166. C. Sanz, *Diario de Colón* (Madrid, 1962), 1–2, has published a facsimile edition of the Las Casas manuscript (Madrid MS.V.6, n. 7). For the distinction between Columbus and Las Casas, see A. Vázquez, "Las Casas' Opinions in Columbus' Diary," *Topic* 11 (1971): 45–56. I cite the convenient edition by G. Marañón, *Diario de Colón*

(Madrid, 1968), and the English translation by C. R. Markham, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* (London, 1893). Quotations are from Marañón, *Diario*, 29 and Markham, *Journal*, 40.

105. The so-called *Lettera rarissima*, addressed by Columbus to the king and queen, July 7, 1503. Text and translation in R. H. Major, *Christopher Columbus: Four Voyages to the New World. Letters and Selected Documents* (London, 1847; reprint, New York: 1961), 169–203. I have combined two separate figures: Ciguane is “nine days’ journey westward” (Major, 175), the “river Garíges” is “ten days” from Ciguane (Major, 176).

106. It must be recalled that Columbus could not “speak” with the natives, despite his frequent (and, sometimes lengthy), translations of what they said. He communicated with them in “signs.”

107. Marañón, *Diario*, 81; Markham, *Journal*, 87. For the appearance of man-eating cynocephali in the Orient in a book owned by Columbus, see H. Yule and H. Cordier, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, 3d ed. (London, 1921), 2: 309. The argument by D. B. Quinn, “New Geographical Horizons: Literature,” in F. Chiappelli, *First Images of America*, 2: 637, that Columbus elicited the information concerning the cynocephali by showing “pictures to his Arawak informants” from illustrated editions of Marco Polo and Mandeville is without evidence.

108. Marañón, *Diario*, 103; Markham, *Journal*, 106.

109. Excerpt by B. Las Casas from the Columbus *Journal* of the third voyage in *Raccolta di documenti e studi pubblicata dalla R. Comisione Columbiana* (Rome, 1892–96), 1.2: 22.

110. While most frequently placed in the East, there was a speculative tradition that Paradise lay beyond the earth-island, inaccessible to man. See J. K. Wright, *Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades*, esp. 262.

111. *Raccolta*, 1.2: 26–40; text and translation in R. H. Major, *Christopher Columbus*, 104–46.

112. Major, *Christopher Columbus*, 105–6.

113. Major, *Christopher Columbus*, 109, cf. 143.

114. Major, *Christopher Columbus*, 142.

115. The most remarkable instance of this “persuasion” is the oft-cited *Información y testimonio acerca de la exploración de Cuba* printed in Navarrete, *Colección*, 2: no. 76.

116. Major, *Christopher Columbus*, 129–30, 133.

117. Major, *Christopher Columbus*, 131.

118. Major, *Christopher Columbus*, 130. The image is repeated twice, Major, 131 and 137.

119. Major, *Christopher Columbus*, 137 (in revised translation); cf. 135, 136, 142, 145.

120. This distinction between two types of land—the “Indies” and the “Paradisical”—is maintained in two other documents associated with the third voyage: the *Letter* to Dona Juana de la Torres (1500) in Navarrete, *Colección*, 1, esp. 267–68; and the so-called *Papal Letter* (February, 1502) in *Raccolta*, 1.2: 64–66.

121. See Major, *Christopher Columbus*, 143. The Spanish Crown appears to have taken up Columbus’s rejected option. As they had doubted his earlier identification of the newly discovered islands with the “Indies” (see the texts cited in O’Gorman, *Invention*, 81–82, 157, n. 18), settling on the ambiguous phrase, “islands and firm land . . . in the western part of the Ocean sea, toward the Indies [*versus India*],” (papal bull, *Inter caetera* [May 3, 1493] in Navarrete, *Colección*, 2: no. 17), so, now, they inferred the existence of a large southern landmass and dispatched no less than six expeditions during the period 1499–1502 to make territorial claims (O’Gorman, *Invention*, 104).

122. Peter Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, 1.6. *Opera*, 64; MacNutt, 1: 139 (see note 125, below for bibliographical references).

123. E.g., C. O. Sauer, “Terra firma: Orbis novus,” in A. Leidlmair, ed., *Festschrift Hermann von Wissmann* (Tübingen, 1962), 258, 260, 263; T. Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, 12–3, et passim.

124. Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, 1.44. I cite the edition published in Madrid, 1927(?), 1: 224.

125. The major work of Peter Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, has had a complex history that affects its interpretation. The first *Decade* devoted to Columbus and Martin Alonso Pinzón was completed (with the exception of book 10) between 1493 and 1501. An Italian version, which survives in only two copies, was published (most probably without Martyr’s consent) by P. Trevesan under the title *Libretto de tutta la navigatione de Re des Spagna de le isole et terreni nuovamente trovati* (Venice, 1504)—now available in a facsimile edited by L. C. Wroth (Providence, 1930). It is uncertain whether this text is an abridgement of Martyr’s first *Decade* as eventually published or an accurate copy of Martyr’s first version which he later expanded. The *Libretto* received wide circulation when it was incorporated as book 4 of Francanzano Montalboddo’s collection, *Paesi Novamente Retrouati* (Venice, 1507), which rapidly went through fifteen editions. (See D. B. Quinn, “Exploration and Expansion of Europe,” in the *Rapports* of the twelfth International Congress of Historical Sciences [Vienna, 1965], 1: 45–59.)

The first *Decade*, in Martyr’s final version, was first published in a collection of his works, *P. Martyris Angli Mediolanensis Opera: Legatio babylonica, Oceani Decas, Poemata, Epigrammata* (Seville, 1511), d–f. The first three *Decades* were published under the title *De Orbe Novo Decades* (Alcala: 1516). The fourth *Decade* was published under the title *De Insulis nuper repertis simultaque incolarum moribus* (Basel: 1521). All eight *Decades* were published posthumously, *De Orbe Novo Petri*

Martyris (Alcala, 1530)—now available in a facsimile edition by the Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, *Petrus Martyr de Angleria: Opera* (Graz, 1966), 35–32, 73. Until this facsimile (which I cite), the full text of *De Orbe Novo* was most readily available in the edition by Richard Hakluyt (Paris, 1587).

An English translation of the first four *Decades* was made by Richard Eden, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde or West Indies* (London, 1555)—facsimile edition (New York, 1966), 25–161. An English translation of the entire work was first made by M. Lok, *De Orbe Novo; or, The Historie of the West Indies* (London, 1612). The standard English translation (which I cite with minor revisions) is that by F. A. MacNutt, *De Orbe Novo* (New York, 1912; reprint, New York, 1970), 1–2.

A more difficult question is the correlative use of the extensive correspondence, first published as *Opus Epistolarum Petri Martyris* (Alcala, 1530)—facsimile edition, *Opera* (Ganz, 1966), 275–707, which are available in the important Spanish translation by J. López de Toro, *Epistolario de Pedro Mártir de Angleria* (Madrid, 1953–57), 1–4, in the series Documentos inéditos para la historia de España, 9–12. A selection of the *Letters* which relate to the “new world” were published in French translation by P. Gafferal and l’Abbé Louvot, *Lettres de Pierre Martyr Anghiera relatives aux découvertes maritimes des espagnols et des portugais* (Paris, 1885).

The evidence of the *Letters* must be used with extreme caution. While their authenticity has been challenged, this seems unlikely. It is certain that their chronology is unreliable; many appear to have been backdated. See, among others, J. Bernays, *Petrus Martyr Anglerius und sein Opus Epistolarum* (Strasbourg, 1891).

For the relative chronology of the individual books of the various *Decades*—a matter crucial for their interpretation—I have followed that given by E. O’Gorman, *Cuatro historiadores de Indias* (Mexico City, 1972), 43–44.

126. This is, quite rightly, insisted upon by C. O. Sauer, “Terra Firma: Orbis Novus,” 260–61; 262, n. 7.

127. On the problems attendant on using the *Epistles*, see above, note 125.

128. *Epistle*, 130. *Opera*, 360; *Epistolario*, 1: 236. The term *antipodes* recurs in *Epistles* 134 (September, 1493); 140 (January, 1494); 144 (October, 1494).

129. *Epistle*, 134. *Opera*, 361; *Epistolario*, 1: 244.

130. *De Orbe Novo*, 1.1. *Opera*, 39; MacNutt, *De Orbe Novo*, 1: 57.

131. *De Orbe Novo*, 1.1. *Opera*, 41 and 39; MacNutt, *De Orbe Novo*, 1: 65 and 57.

132. *De Orbe Novo*, 1.1. *Opera*, 39; MacNutt, *De Orbe Novo*, 1: 58.

133. *De Orbe Novo*, 1.1. *Opera*, 40; MacNutt, *De Orbe Novo*, 1: 61, cf. 1: 87, 114 et passim. For this claim, see Columbus’s *Papal Letter* (February, 1502) in *Raccolta*, 1.2: 472, and Columbus, *Libro de las Profecías* (1501–52), in *Raccolta* 1.2: esp. 150–56. The identification persists through the early literature. See the important study by G. Gliozzi, *Adamo e il nuovo mondo* (Florence, 1976), 147–74.

134. *De Orbe Novo*, 1.1. *Opera*: 41. MacNutt’s translation (1: 65) is inadequate at this point.

135. *De Orbe Novo*, 1.4. *Opera*: 54; MacNutt, *De Orbe Novo*, 1: 105, cf. 1: 92, 139–40, 178, 330 et passim. Compare further, *Epistles*, 135 and 142.

136. *Epistle*, 138. *Opera*: 360; *Epistolario*, 1: 250. The phrase recurs in *Epistles* 142 (October 20, 1494) and 154 (February 2, 1494).

137. For the Asian extension, see Vespucci, *First Letter* (July 18, 1500) in R. Levillier, ed., *El Nuevo Mondo: Cartas relativas a sus viajes y descubrimientos* (Buenos Aires, 1951), 277, cf. 299.

The term “new world” occurs only five times in Vespucci’s writings, only in the letter now entitled, *Mundus Novus* (n.p., n.d. [c. 1502–4]). See the summary bibliography in J. A. Aboal Amaro, *Amérigho Vespucci*, 99–111. Its most important occurrence is in the first paragraph: “On a former occasion I wrote to you at some length concerning my return from those *new regions* which we found and explored with the fleet. . . . And these we may rightly call a *new world*. Because our ancestors had no knowledge of them, and it will be a matter *wholly new* to all those who hear of them.” (English translation by G. T. Northup, *Mundus Novus* [Princeton, 1916], 1, [emphasis added], in the series Vespucci Reprints, Texts and Studies, 5). The phrase “*quasque novum mundum appellare licet*” may be taken as indicating the author’s self-consciousness at coining a term, but what does it mean? The context makes plain that *novus* refers to the fact that the lands were unknown and unexpected, i.e., (a) that they could not be harmonized readily with any of the lands described by the ancient authorities, and (b) that they occurred in the Southern Hemisphere which, according to the ancients, was entirely ocean. *Mundus* refers to the fact that the lands were inhabited, i.e., that they constituted a “world” in the sense of *oikoumenē*. The question of whether they were a previously unknown extension of the familiar tripartite *oikoumenē* or constitute a “new” geographical entity was not raised in the *Mundus Novus*.

However, extreme caution must be used in evaluating this text. “Vespucci’s writings have had a strange and complicated history. They have suffered at the hands of translators, copyists, printers. . . . The texts on which we base our judgments are *vastly different* from those which left the author’s hand.” (G. T. Northup, *Amerigo Vespucci: Letter to Pietro Soderini* [Princeton, 1916], 1, in the series Vespucci Reprints, Texts and Studies, 4 [emphasis added]). While it may be too extreme to label the *Mundus Novus* and the *Soderini Letter* “forgeries” as has been done by F. J. Pohl, *Amerigo Vespucci: Pilot Major* (New York, 1944), esp. 144–67, C. O. Sauer, “Terra Firma: Orbis Novus,” 268, n. 19 and 269; R. Iglesia, *Columbus, Cortés, and Other Essays* (Berkeley, 1969), 253, among others, they are most certainly not, in their printed form, by Vespucci. They represent Latin versions by anonymous translators that probably ill accord with Vespucci’s original. See A. Magnaghi, *Americo Vespucci: Studio critico* (Rome, 1924), 1–2; the careful tex-

tual and philological study of the *Soderini Letter* by Northup (op. cit.), and the review of the current state of the question in R. Levillier, *Américo Vespucci* (Madrid, 1966), 339–62.

Regardless of authorship (or the original meaning), the phrase took on independent power and was widely disseminated, shifting, in time, from a preeminently geographical to a social-political context. See, on this, C. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (Baltimore, 1980), 81–86.

In letters subsequent to *Mundus Novus* attributed to Vespucci, the term does not recur. The phrase is dropped in favor of the less suggestive “new lands” in the conventional sense of lands of which there was previously no knowledge. See Levillier, *El nuevo mundo*, 201, 203, 204–5, 233, 251, 259, et passim.

138. Martin Waldseemüller, *Cosmographiae Introductio* (St. Dié, 1507), a iii—facsimile edition by J. Fischer and F. von Weiser (reprint, New York, 1969), xxv. I am aware in giving the traditional attribution, that many authorities consider the *Introductio* to be the work of Matthias Ringmann. See the excellent review of the state of the question by F. Laubenberger, “Ringmann oder Waldseemüller?” *Erdkunde* 13 (1959): 163–79.

139. The first use of the term is in *De Orbe Novo*, 3.1. *Opera*: 105; MacNutt, *De Orbe Novo*, 1: 281, written in 1514. Here, as elsewhere, the term occurs in the dedication. The term appears as the title for the first three books in the *Alcala* edition of 1516.

140. H. Pérez de Oliva, *Historia de la Invención de las Yndias*, in the edition of J. Juan Arrom (Bogotá: 1965), 53–54 as quoted in J. H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New*, 15.

141. *Cosmographiae Introductio*, facsimile edition: xxx, “et sunt tres prime partes continentes, quarta est insula.” See above, note 84.

142. In his marginal notations to Columbus’s *Journal* of his first voyage, Las Casas frequently comments on Columbus’s linguistic limitations. See Vázquez, “Las Casas’ Opinions,” esp. 53–54.

143. Marañón, *Diario*, 37; Markham, *Journal*, 48.

144. Rarely, Columbus recorded native names for useful or edible species, e.g., *aje*, *aji*, *caxave*, although some of these may be interpolations by Las Casas (Vázquez, “Las Casas’ Opinions,” 51–52). At times, Columbus does recognize difference, but in a somewhat casual manner. For example: “The trees are as unlike ours as night from day, as are the fruits, the stones, and everything. It is true that some of the trees bore some resemblance to those in Castile, but most of them are very different, and some were so unlike that no one could compare them to anything in Castile.” Marañón, *Diario*, 38; Markham, *Journal*, 49. See in general L. Hughes, *L’opera scientifica di Cristoforo Colombo* (Turin, 1892).

145. Marañón, *Diario*, 16; Markham, *Journal*, 30.

146. Marañón, *Diario*, 100, cf. 62, 106; Markham, *Journal*, 103, cf. 71, 109. On the significance of this see Menéndez Pidal, “La lengua de Cristóbal Colón,” *Bulletin hispanique* 42 (1940): 27 and n.1, criticizing the important essay by L. Olschki, “Il lusignuolo di Colombo,” in Olschki, *Storia letteraria delle scoperte geografiche* (Florence, 1937), 11–21. See further, Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World*, 161, n. 12 and index, s.v. “nightingales.”

147. Compare the incident of the nutmegs and cinnamon, Marañón, *Diario*, 58–59; Markham, *Journal*, 67.

148. T. Hawkes, *Shakespeare’s Talking Animals* (London, 1973), 211. Barry Holstun Lopez, in his short story, “Restoration,” makes effective use of this motif. Lopez, *Winter Count* (New York, 1982), 1–14, esp. 8–12.

149. See the wise comments on the difficulty of establishing criteria for “impact” and “influence” in J. H. Elliott, “Renaissance Europe and America: A Blunted Impact?” in Chiappelli, ed., *First Images of America*, 1: 11–24.

150. This question was made infinitely more complex by the encounter with the “high” civilizations of Mesoamerica. See, for an overview, the important monograph by B. Keen, *The Aztec Image in Western Thought* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1971).

151. See L. E. Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts, 1492–1729* (Austin, 1967), 8, 110, in the series University of Texas, Latin American Monographs, 11. Huddleston’s survey of the topic is the finest to date.

152. For biographical information on Rastell, see A. W. Reed, *Early Tudor Drama* (London, 1926), 1–28, 187–233. For the attempted 1517 voyage, see the summary account in D. B. Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America* (London, 1974), 162–69.

153. The text survives in only a single, imperfect printed copy in the British Museum. It lacks a title page and other introductory material, hence neither its author, date, or place of publication are beyond dispute. The play was first attributed to Rastell in 1557. The attribution has been accepted by all scholars. The date is more controversial. Estimates range from 1517 to 1530, with the majority of scholars suggesting 1519–20.

I have not seen the facsimile edition in the series Tudor Facsimile Texts (London, 1908). I have used the recent edition by R. Axton, *Three Rastell Plays* (Totowa, N.J., 1979), 29–68, esp. 48–52. The more familiar edition is that by J. O. Halliwell, “*The Interlude of the Four Elements*”: *An Early Moral Play* (London, 1848), esp. 27–33, in the series Percy Society: Early English Poetry, Ballads and Popular Literature in the Middle Ages, 22. It is accessible, as well, in E. Arber, ed., *The First Three English Books on America* (Westminster, 1895), xx–xxi. (In 1971, a modernized and abridged form of the play was performed at Cambridge Univer-

sity. See R. E. Coleman, ed., *"The Four Elements" as Performed at the University Printing House* [Cambridge, 1971]; B. Critchley, ed., *Siberch Celebrations, 1521-1971* [Cambridge, 1971], 83-131, esp. 106-11.)

There has been considerable scholarship devoted to the cosmographical elements in the play. See G. P. Park, "The Geography of *The Interlude of the Four Elements*," *Philological Quarterly* 17 (1938): 251-62; M. Borish, "Source and Intention of *The Four Elements*," *Studies in Philology* 35 (1938): 149-63; E. M. Nugent, "The Sources of John Rastell's *The Nature of the Four Elements*," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 57 (1942): 78-88; G. P. Park, "Rastell and the Waldseemüller Map," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 58 (1943): 572-74; J. Parr, "More Sources of Rastell's *Interlude of the Four Elements*," *ibid.* 60 (1945): 48-58; H. C. Porter, *The Inconstant Savage: England and the North American Indian, 1500-1660* (London, 1979), 34-37.

154. Axton, *Rastell*, 49 (lines 737-38).

155. Axton, *Rastell*, 51 (lines 811-15). Emphasis added.

156. Axton, *Rastell*, 51 (lines 817-19).

157. Huddleston, *Origins*, 15-16.

158. On the encyclopaedic nature of this work, see Enrique Álvarez López, "Plinio y Fernández de Oviedo," *Annales de Ciencias naturales del Instituto J. de Acosta* (Madrid, 1940), 1: 46-61; 2: 13-35; D. Turner, "Oviedo's *Historia* . . . The First American Encyclopedia," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 5 (1960): 267-74.

159. Oviedo, *Historia general y natural de las Indias islas y Tierra-Firme del Mar Oceano*, 1st ed. (Seville, 1535) containing the prologue, books 1-19 and book 50.1-10. The bulk of the *Historia* remained in manuscript until the edition of José Amador de los Ríos (Madrid, 1851-55), 1-4. See the careful account of the publication history in D. Turner, *Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés: An Annotated Bibliography* (Chapel Hill, 1966), 7-13. I cite the edition by J. Pérez de Tudela, *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (Madrid, 1959), 1-5, in the series Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 117-21, which reproduces the 1851-55 text.

160. *Historia*, 2.3; Pérez de Tudela, 1: 17. See Gliozzi, *Adamo e il nuovo mondo*, 247-58. The Carthaginian tradition is based on an altered version of Aristotle, *Mirabiles auscultationes*, 84 (see A. Giannini, *Paradoxographorum Graecorum* [Milan, 1965], 258-9).

161. *Historia*, 2.3; Pérez de Tudela, 1: 17-20. See Gliozzi, *Adamo e il nuovo mondo*, 28-30. This identification is based on the pseudo-Berossus forgeries of Annius of Viterbo, *Commentaria super opera diversorum auctorum de antiquitatibus* (Rome, 1498), on which see D. C. Allen, *The Legend of Noah*, 114-15. Ferdinand Columbus, *Historie*, 10 (Keen: 28-34) responds with heat to both of Oviedo's contentions.

162. Huddleston: 16. Cf. O'Gorman, *La idea del descubrimiento*, 80-3.

163. The most popular version of this thesis identified the new lands with Atlantis. See I. Rodríguez Prampolini, *La Atlantida de Platón en los cronistas del siglo XVI* (Mexico City, 1947); Gliozzi, *Adamo e il nuovo mondo*, 177-246.

164. The first two books of Acosta's *Historia*, those most relevant to our interests, were begun c. 1580 and published in Latin as *De natura novi orbis libri duo* (Salamanca, 1589). Acosta translated these two books into Spanish, added five others, making up the whole, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, 1st ed. (Seville, 1590), 2d ed. (Barcelona, 1591), 3d ed. (Madrid: 1608). The *Historia* was translated into Italian, French, Dutch, German, and Latin by 1602. An English version was prepared by E. G. [= Edward Grimston], *The Naturall and Morall Historie of the East and West Indies* (London, 1604). I cite the critical edition by E. O'Gorman, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Mexico City, 1940); and C. R. Markham's reedition of Grimston's translation, *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (London, 1880), 1-2.

165. *Historia*, 1.16; O'Gorman, *Historia*, 61; Markham, *History*, 1:45.

166. *Historia*, 1.20-21; O'Gorman, *Historia*, 75-81; Markham, *History*, 1: 57-64.

167. *Historia*, 1.22-23; O'Gorman, *Historia*, 83-88; Markham, *History*, 1: 64-69.

168. *Historia*, 1.24; O'Gorman, *Historia*, 89-90; Markham, *History*, 1: 69-70.

169. In addition to the valuable preface in O'Gorman's edition (reprinted in O'Gorman, *Cuatro historiadores*, 165-248), see Th. Hornberger, "Acosta's *Historia* . . . A Guide to the Source and Growth of the American Scientific Tradition," *University of Texas Studies in English* 19 (1939): 139-62; Gliozzi, *Adamo e il nuovo mondo*, esp. 371-81; Huddleston, *Origins*, 48-59.

170. García, *Origen de los indios de el Neuvo Mundo, e Indias occidentales* (Valencia, 1607). This first edition is exceedingly scarce. The second edition (Madrid, 1729) is most commonly cited. It contains extensive notes by its editor, Andrés González de Barcia Carballido y Zuñiga. Unfortunately, these have not always been distinguished from García's words in subsequent scholarship. A facsimile of the second edition has been edited by F. Pease (Mexico City, 1981), in the series Biblioteca Americana. Pease's introduction is of great value. Huddleston, *Origins*, 60-76, gives an overview.

Huddleston's overall conclusion deserves notice. "Two clearly distinguished traditions [as to the origin of the Indians in the period 1492-1729] have emerged from my investigations: the Acostan and the Garcian. The first, marked by a skepticism with regard to cultural comparisons, considerable restraint in constructing theories, and a great reliance on geographical and faunal considerations, is named for Joseph de Acosta, who gave it its earliest clear expression. . . . The Garcian tradition, named for the author of the *Origen de los Indios* . . . is charac-

terized by a strong adherence to ethnological comparisons, a tendency to accept trans-Atlantic migrations, and an acceptance of possible origins as probable ones." Huddleston, *Origins*, 13.

171. The various writings by Lewis U. Hanke have been crucial in gaining perspective on this matter. See, among others, "Pope Paul II and the American Indians," *Harvard Theological Review* 30 (1937), 65-102; *Aristotle and the American Indians* (Chicago, 1959); *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America* (Boston, 1965).

172. To insist on the importance of the naturalistic materials has been the special contribution of A. Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World* (Pittsburgh, 1973); and *La natura delle Indie nove: Da Cristoforo Colombo a Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo* (Milan, 1975). I have also profited from observations in C. E. Chardon, *Los naturalistas en la américa latina: Los siglos XVI-XVIII* (Cuidad Trujillo, 1949), 1.

173. Oviedo, *De la natural hystoria de las Indias*, 1st ed. (Toledo: 1526), 11—facsimile edition (Chapel Hill, 1969), 37-39; English translation by S. A. Stoudemere, *Natural History of the West Indies* (Chapel Hill, 1959), 47-48. This work, frequently called the *Sumario*, must not be confused with Oviedo's larger and later, *Historia general de las Indias* (see above, note 159). A parallel passage does occur in the *Historia*, 1.12.10, Pérez de Tudela, 2: 39-42, esp. 40.

174. Acosta, *Historia*, 4.19; O'Gorman, *Historia*, 275. The Grimston translation is not useful at this point.

175. Acosta, *Historia*, 4.36; O'Gorman, *Historia*, 325-26. The Grimston translation is not useful at this point.

176. For an important overview of the present state of the question, see the monograph by A. Laming-Emperaire, *Le problème des origines américaines* (Lille, 1980), in the series *Cahiers d'archéologie et d'ethnologie d'Amérique du Sud*.

177. For an interesting attempt to describe "relative otherness" with more precision, see E. S. Bogardus, "A Social Distance Scale," *Sociology and Social Research* 17 (1933): 265-71. J. C. Mitchell, *The Kalela Dance* (Manchester, 1956), 22-28, in the series *Papers of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute*, 27, has adapted the scale for a tribal context with interesting results for our theme.

178. By emphasizing in separate sections the political and linguistic aspects of a "theory of the other," I do not mean to imply their separation. As is well known, especially in matters of colonialism, the two go hand in hand. This is well illustrated in an incident that has become emblematic for historians of the period. "In 1492, in the introduction to his *Gramática [de la lengua castellana]*, the first grammar of a modern European language, Antonio de Nebrija writes that language has always been the partner [*compañera*] of empire. And in the ceremonial presentation of the volume to Queen Isabella, the bishop of Avila, speaking on the scholar's behalf, claimed a still more central role for language. When the Queen asked flatly, 'What is it [good] for?' the Bishop replied, 'Your Majesty, lan-

guage is the perfect instrument of empire.'" (S. J. Greenblatt, "Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century," in Chiappelli, *First Images of America*, 2: 562). The story is told in a variety of historical works including: J. B. Trend, *The Civilization of Spain* (London: 1944), 88; Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indian*, 8 and 127, n. 31; Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago, 1977), 2.3: 504; Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, 123.

179. J. Leighly, "Error in Geography," in J. Jastrow, ed., *The Story of Human Error* (New York, 1938), 92-93.

180. It is in this sense that O'Gorman is quite right to insist on *la invención de América* (see above, note 94). Cf. H. B. Johnson, "New Geographical Horizons: Concepts," in Chiappelli, ed., *First Images of America*, 2: 623, "[in early German reports] the fourth part of the world was always *erfunden* not *entdeckt*."

181. For an important attempt to describe the "grammar" of such discourse, see B. Bucher, *Icon and Conquest: A Structural Analysis of the Illustrations of de Bry's Great Voyages* (Chicago, 1981), 24-45.

182. See, from a quite different perspective, the arguments by F. Barth, introduction, in Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Boston, 1969), esp. 9-15. Barth's theoretical work is of crucial importance for our topic.

183. While I place no confidence in the probative force of etymological arguments, it is, perhaps, of interest to note that **an*, the hypothetical root of the Germanic-English, "other," contains the notion of duality: the second or other member of a pair, e.g., Anglo-Saxon, *ōder* (J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* [Bern-Munich, 1959-69], 1: 37-38). **Al*, the hypothetical root of the Greco-Roman *alien* and the Germanic-English, "else," contains the notion in extended form, the other of more than two (1: 24-26).

184. A. J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (Oxford, 1961), 12: 11. Cf. the delicious comment in H. W. Turner's *Commentary on Otto's Idea of the Holy* (Aberdeen, 1974), 19, "when Otto describes this experience of the Numen as 'Wholly Other,' he cannot mean *wholly* 'Wholly Other.'"

185. See, however, the stunning exception in the work of the biologist Johannes von Uexküll. In his work (published with the collaboration of the artist G. Krizat), *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen: Ein Bilderbuch* (Berlin, 1934), he begins with a "tick's eye view of the world" (pp. 1-2, 8-9) and proceeds to present several pictures as they would appear *für die Menschen* and *für die Fliege* (fig. 11c [p. 24], fig. 15 [p. 29], fig. 31 [p. 58], fig. 32 [p. 62]).

186. I owe the phrase "micro-adjustment," to C. Lévi-Strauss's formulation of ritual as processes of *micro-péréquation* in *La pensée sauvage* (Paris, 1962), 17.

187. This intimacy is well symbolized by two closely related folk beliefs, that of the "heartworm" carried in each individual's heart from birth; and the worm which serves as "life index," when it dies, its human host dies as well. See, H. Pa-

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genstecher, *Vermes* (Leipzig, 1878–93), 1: 38; R. Hoeppli, *Parasites and Parasitic Infections*, 64, 160.

188. C. Linnaeus, *Systema natura*, 10th ed. (Holmiae: 1758) as cited in T. Bendyshe, “On the Anthropology of Linnaeus,” *Memoirs of the Anthropological Society of London* 1 (1863–64): 424–25.

189. This has been the special burden of the important monograph by R. L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge, 1976).

190. This quotation, from the second of John Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. P. Laslett (New York, 1965), 343, appears as a major theme in Meek, *Social Science*.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF DIVERSE KINDS

Noah sail’d round the Mediterranean in Ten Years, and divided the World into Asia, Afric and Europe, Portions for his three Sons. America then, it seems, was left to be his that could catch it.

JOHN LOCKE, *Two Treatises of Government* (1698)

I

To signal at the outset, as Steven Spielberg has done, the indebtedness of my title, I remind you of the labors of the late Chicago-area professor, J. Allen Hynek, to put the study of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) on a scientific basis.¹ In Hynek’s typology, “close encounters of the first kind” are where alien ships are sighted; in the “second kind,” the UFOs leave some physical mark of their presence; “close encounters of the third kind” are where contacts with the occupants of a UFO are made.² It will be with a variant of the third “kind” with which we shall initially be concerned, considered, recently, by some to be a distinctive new type; “close encounters of the fourth kind.”³

Since the fall of 1957, when a Brazilian farmer, Antonio Villas Boas, reported that a spaceship had landed on his farm, the occupants taking him aboard and performing a variety of physical acts on him,⁴ a specific mode of American UFO tale has emerged, and found a secure, iconic place in popular culture: the Abduction Report.⁵

The first North American version was that of Betty and Barney Hill in the White Mountains of New Hampshire on the evening of September 19, 1961; it was widely disseminated through the television movie, *The UFO Incident*, and more recently reconfigured in a characteristically ingenious fashion in the late, lamented TV series, *Dark Skies*.⁶ The Travis

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

A TWICE-TOLD TALE

THE HISTORY OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS' HISTORY

IN SHAKESPEARE'S curiously neglected play, *King John* (III.4, line 108), in William Broome's eighteenth-century translation of the *Odyssey* (XII.538), as well as in the title of Nathaniel Hawthorne's first published collection of short stories, the phrase, "twice-told tale," signifies tedium. By contrast, for those of us who study religion, twice-told or twice-performed is understood to be a minimal criterion for those basic building blocks of religion: myth and ritual. For us, repetition guarantees significance. Indeed, we demand more. In Jane Harrison's suggestive characterization, ritual (or myth) is "representation repeated," thus doubling the twice-told, twice-performed quality.

Harrison's formulation reminds us as well of the nature of our enterprise. As is characteristic of the human sciences in general, the little prefix *re-* is perhaps the most important signal we can deploy. It guarantees that we understand both the second-order nature of our enterprise as well as the relentlessly social character of the objects of our study. We represent those re-peated re-presentations embedded in the cultures and cultural formations that comprise our subject matter.

I labor this point at the outset to make plain one presupposition that will guide my remarks. The history of the history of religions is not best conceived as a liberation from the hegemony of theology—our pallid version of that tattered legend of the origins of science, whether placed in fifth-century Athens or sixteenth-century Europe, that depicts science

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progressively unshackling itself from a once regnant religious world-view. Our variant of this twice-told tale needs to be set aside, not because such a claimed liberation has been, in so many moments of our history, an illusion, but rather because this way of retelling the tale occludes a more fundamental issue that yet divides us. In shorthand form, this is the debate between an understanding of religion based on *presence* and one based on *representation*. But, I get ahead of myself . . .

As in any historiographic enterprise, the history of the history of religions may be imagined in a variety of ways. Each is appropriate to the interests of their fashioner. While the mappings remain curiously consistent, there have been, in fact, two major opposing stratagems: the exceptionalist and the assimilationist. Each, in its own way, seeks legitimation, seeks a place for the study of religion on the map of recognized academic disciplines. The exceptionalist insists on the distinctive (or, unique) nature of the subject matter of the study of religion; the assimilationist argues for the equivalence (or, parity) of the methods of the study of religion with those of other human sciences. In either case, the mode of representation is genealogical, a narrative of founders and schools that often takes the form of an inverted tree diagram. While this mode was common in both the biological sciences and the linguistic sciences—abstaining from the debates as to which one influenced the other—it has now been subjected to strong critique in both fields in favor of a more diffuse, tangled, multicausal, and interactive representation. For example, the evolutionary biologist W. Ford Doolittle has written in an article entitled, "Uprooting the Tree of Life," that the schematization of the origins of life "look more like a forkful of spaghetti than a tree." Similarly, one might cite the strictures of Colin Renfrew and Bruce Lincoln with respect to the Indo-European tree diagram, building, in part, on Schuchardt's and Schmidt's wave theory.² For this reason, while in what follows I shall employ conventional periodization, I would stress that each of these has exceptionally fluid boundaries and are properly thought of as pluriform phenomena. Thus, one should, for example, talk of Renaissances, and take pain to specify which Enlightenment one is speaking of.

While this is a historiographical discussion well worth pursuing, it is also somewhat misleading. It assumes that the study of religion is best mapped by being attentive, at the outset, to the occasional instances of reflexive, metadiscourse in the field, to its defining moments, rather than the "normal science" of its quotidian praxis. If we start, so to speak, on the ground, a different constellation of characteristics emerges, which gives rise to a different sort of narrative as well as to a different sense of urgency with respect to matters of second-order discourse.

If some alien, unfamiliar with the fierce eighteenth- and nineteenth-century taxonomic controversies concerning the classification of the academic disciplines, were to observe scholars of religion in action, it would have no difficulty identifying the class to which they belong. With respect to practice, the history of religions is, by and large, a philological endeavor chiefly concerned with editing, translating and interpreting texts, the majority of which are perceived as participating in the dialectic of 'near' and 'far.' If this is the case, then our field may be redescribed as a child of the Renaissance.³

While there are surely precursors (the historian's always present temptation toward infinite regress), it is the various projects associated with the equally various Renaissances that set the agenda of our field. First, the sheer mastery of others' languages—a characteristic that still marks our field within the contemporary academy—whether their otherness be expressed in terms of temporal or spatial distance. Second, the etymological conviction, still regnant, that there is something of surpassing value hidden 'beneath' the words, a something that is essential, as opposed to the verbally accidental, and that may be uncovered only by decipherment; or, the comparable rhetorical conviction that values the givenness of the 'real' concealed 'behind' the words. Third, building on this etymological conviction, the tension between perceptions of unity and diversity in cultural formations was often settled by the postulation of an essential similarity in the face of accidental difference, which was to be explained by either environmental differences or the diffusing effects of historical processes. These issues became urgent because of the unanticipated increase of data for variegation, each the product of specific, European, historical causes. To list only three.

(1) The movement north and west of Greek and Hebrew manuscripts following the capture of Constantinople and the expulsion of Jews from Spain, both of these not unrelated to an expansive Islam, presented Renaissance scholars with an internal other, an ancestral past profoundly distant and different from the then European present. A past that was now only accessible through acts of imagination.

(2) The European colonial and mission adventures in the Americas as well as in Africa and Asia gave rise to a number of unanticipated consequences. The unexpected presence of the Americas shattered the classical biblical and Greco-Roman imagination of the inhabited geosphere as a tripartite world-island, thus giving rise to the first new intellectual confrontation with the problem of human and biological difference as possibly signalling otherness.⁴ Were the Americas created separately? Were their inhabitants not descendants from Eden? In the case of both

the Americas and Africa, there was, as well, the production of ethnographic texts in which European words replaced and represented those of the native.⁵ In the case of Asia, a different result was the collection and translation of significant texts in hitherto unknown languages.⁶ Then too, there were, also, in Asia, contacts with kinds of Christianities, not experienced since the thirteenth century, whose difference from familiar European forms was often perceived as more problematic and therefore more threatening than native religions.

(3) This latter perception resonated with a European one in which the schismatic impulses of emergent Protestantisms raised a host of questions as to religious credibility and truth. These rival claims to authority made implausible older heresiological explanations for internal diversities.⁷

In each of these cases, languages and religions became the privileged cultural formations in which the controversies of unity and difference were framed. Indeed, as already suggested, it was most often the then regnant linguistic model of essence/accidence that governed these controversies when applied to religion. It is, therefore, here, as well, that the debate over what would become the question of 'religion' and 'the religions' first took on imperative force. Awareness of the plural 'religions' (both Christian and non-Christian) forced interest in the imagination of a singular, generic 'religion.' As a late example, I take as emblematic of these Renaissance concerns Edward Brerewood's *Enquiries Touching the Diversity of Languages and Religions through the Chiefe Parts of the World* (published, posthumously, in 1614),⁸ the second work, as far as I am aware, in the English language to employ the plural 'religions' in its title. There is, as well, a second sense in which Brerewood, now the individual, may be taken as emblematic. Like so many other nonclerical writers on religion prior to the mid-nineteenth century, Brerewood was an *amateur*, publishing not only on languages and religions, but also on antiquities (especially numismatics), mathematics, and logic. One may well argue that the subsequent professionalization of religious studies, in concert with other fields undergoing professionalization, gave rise to new disciplinary horizons carrying their own methodological and theoretical interests that were, in the main, by no means peculiar to the study of religion. In particular, I think of the claimed *sui generis* nature of a field's object of research, a claim, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially associated with the newly emergent social sciences.

The Renaissance pattern was modified through Enlightenment, counter-Enlightenment, and Romantic theories of language and religion, which brings us to the threshold of the modern enterprise of the study of religion—although I will signal, here, only one trajectory of new

elements in linguistic theory which was taken over into thinking about religion.

Enlightenment interest in language is a by-product of its preeminent concern for thought and thoughtfulness, an emphasis that must be reaffirmed by any scholar of religion, while prescinding from some of its formulations of this concern. For example, unity and uniformity were revalued as universalism; difference was stigmatized as irrational. Their sometimes vision of an abstract, universal humanity required the imagination of the possibility of an equally abstract, universal language in which all would be transparent, in which decipherment would be superfluous.⁹ Language was thus conceived as a secondary tool for the expression of thought, with the development of the former the result of the progressive refinement of the latter. To quote one eighteenth-century authority, language "being entirely the invention of man, must have been exceedingly rude and imperfect at first, and must have arrived by slow degrees at greater and greater perfection, as the reasoning faculties acquired vigour and acuteness."¹⁰ The only question was whether the perfecting of language was best achieved by controlling the denotation of signs or the regularization of grammar.

The counter-Enlightenment takes the issue of thoughtfulness in a new direction, one as yet insufficiently appropriated by scholars of religion.¹¹ Language, it was argued, is not a secondary naming or memorializing; it is not a translation of thought, it is not posterior to experience, rather, it is the very way in which we think and experience. The human sciences become conceptually possible largely through the acceptance of the counter-Enlightenment argument that their objects of study are holistic linguistic and language-like systems, and that, therefore, they are the study of "eminently social" human projects. This gives rise to what was already alluded to at the beginning of my presentation: an insistence that the central debates within the study of religion revolve around the relations of language and experience. Questions as to whether experience can ever be immediate or is always mediated? Whether we can experience a world independently of the conventional ways in which it is socially represented? Whether the *re-* of re-presentation remains always at the level of re-presentation? Such questions constitute the serious theoretical matters that sharply divide us in ways that cut across conventional, essentially political, divisions such as historians of religions and theologians.

For a certain sort of grand theorist in the study of religion, two aspects of Romantic theories of language proved most compelling. First, the reassertion, against the Enlightenment, of the supreme value of uniqueness,

singularity, or individuality in the name of the creative, free expression of will. Second, and of greater import, the identification of poetic language, in opposition to the prosaic, as intransitive, as a nonpragmatic, autonomous totality, a thing-in-itself. In such a view, there is no gap between signifier and signified. The counter-Enlightenment's insistence on the nonsecondary character of language has now been transformed into the transparency of self-disclosure. From poetry to myth is but a small step; Schelling, most famously, made the translation:

Each figure in mythology is to be taken for what it is, for it is precisely in this way that it will be taken for what it signifies. The signifying here is at the same time the being itself, it has passed into the object, being one with it. No sooner do we allow these beings to signify something than they are no longer anything themselves . . . Indeed, their greatest attraction lies in the fact that, whereas they only are, without any relation, absolute in themselves, they still allow signification to shine through.

Mythology is not allegorical; it is tautegorical. For mythology, the gods are beings that really exist; instead of being one thing and signifying another, they signify only what they are.

Allegory, one of the prime modes of interpreting myth for more than a millennium, is here dethroned; the hermeneutics of 'speaking-otherwise' has given way to the direct apprehension of the other's speech.¹² Romanticism laid the groundwork for one of the hallmarks of influential twentieth-century theories of religion in which a still essentially philological discipline all but ignores modern linguistics and is often prepared to impeach the status of language in an effort to preserve ontology from anthropology and to maintain the privilege of unmediated, direct experience.

With this much by way of a brief background, let me turn to some implications of locating the history of religions within philology, and of resituating it within Renaissance and Romantic linguistic thought for both practice and theory.

We may recall Mircea Eliade's double critique of dominant modes of scholarship on religion, made in the course of a set of reflections on the past and future of the field. As is well known, for those outside of the history of religions, chiefly in the human sciences, his name for all that he abjured in their work was 'reductionism.' Less famously, Eliade named as his opponents within the field, the 'philologists.' I shall take up these two names from Eliade's execration text in reverse order.

From Eliade's totalizing perspective, the philologically based histori-

ans of religions persistently take parts for wholes, thereby giving priority to the local rather than to the general and typical. His fear was that the preponderance of language-based specialists within the field would result in a situation where "the History of Religions will be endlessly fragmented and the fragments reabsorbed in the different philologies."¹³ To a degree, this has occurred, and has brought with it a new ethos of particularism that challenges the global ambitions that from time to time, have animated the field. But, more can be said.

There is the sheer effort involved in gaining proficiency, to the best of one's ability, in difficult languages, often first encountered in the course of graduate studies. While such language studies, taken together, constitute one of our major achievements over the past two centuries, their result has been that language instruction consumes a disproportionate amount of time in the training of the historian of religions. As certification in language ability has increasingly come to be the criterion for achieving professional status, other matters, preeminently those associated with mastering the second-order discourse of the field, get pushed to the side. Philology is the vocation; generalization and theory, the avocation. This has led to the wholesale adoption of a sort of common-sense descriptive discourse as a major rhetoric for the work of the field.

It is possible to point to a variety of practices symptomatic of this sort of discourse in which everything is treated as a self-evident instance of ostension. Texts are pointed to, paraphrased, or summarized as if their citation is, by itself, sufficient to guarantee significance. When translation is undertaken, it is without an explicit theory of translation; rather, reproduction and verbal congruence are assumed to be values in their own right. Comparisons are limited to those grounded in common genealogy or spatial contiguity.

The ostensive nature of these practices serve a protective role. In each of these, the unity, the integrity of the subject for study is preserved. Like the Mosaic altar, such practices guarantee that the scholar's work will be built of "whole stones," that the injunction, "thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them," (Deuteronomy 27:5-6) has been piously observed; that like the Temple of Solomon, "there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building" (1 Kings 6:7). By means of such practices, the handicraft of the scholar is disguised so as to give the appearance of achieving "a house not made with hands" (Acts 7:48). Such an attitude, as Bakhtin pointed out, has as one of its causes philology's focus on "dead languages, languages that were by that very fact 'unities.'"¹⁴ But it comes as well from a deeply held ethos that Karl Mannheim characterized, in his seminal essay on the so-

ciology of knowledge, as a "conservative" ideology, a "right wing methodology," which tends to use "morphological categories which do not break up the concrete totality of the data of experience but seek rather to preserve it in all of its uniqueness." Opposed to this, Mannheim wrote, is "the analytical approach characteristic of parties of the left [which] broke down every concrete totality in order to arrive at smaller, more general units which may then be recombined."¹⁵ Here, the scholar's "tools" have indeed been busy with the altar. The result can no longer be thought of as 'natural' but rather stands forth, marked as a construction. Whether this fabrication be judged as informative or as a lie depends not on presumptions of congruence but on the exercise of a critical intelligence that assesses the cognitive gain or loss made possible by the constructive difference and distance from what Mannheim termed "the concrete totality." The fabrication is, necessarily, a representation rather than a claimed presence.

I would note as well Mannheim's description of the analytical approach as seeking "smaller, more general units." Scholars of religion have made insufficient use of the notion of 'generalization,' a neo-Latin coinage, growing out of the Aristotelian taxonomic distinction between genus and species, the latter giving rise to 'specialization' as the proper antonym to 'generalization.' In handbooks of logic, the 'general' is placed in opposition to the 'universal' by its admission to significant exceptions. Generalization is understood to be a mental, comparative, taxonomic activity that directs attention to cooccurrences of selected stipulated characteristics while ignoring others. Both of these qualifications, not universal and highly selective, are central to generalization. Indeed, they are frequently exaggerated, leading to the pejorative sense of 'generality' as exhibiting vagueness or indeterminacy. Employed correctly, these same characteristics insure that generalities are always corrigible.¹⁶ By this understanding, our object of interest would then be 'religion' as the general name of a generic anthropological category, a nominal, intellectual construction, surely not to be taken as a 'reality.' After all, there are no existent genera.

It is here that we begin to get an assist from modern linguistic theories. The scholarly imagination of 'religion' as an intellectual category establishes a disciplinary horizon that should play the same sort of role as 'language' in linguistics or 'culture' in anthropology. In each case, the generic category supplies the field with a theoretical object of study, different from, but complimentary to, their particular subject matters. Taking up only the analogy to language, Hans Penner has persistently reminded us of the relevance of the Saussurean project,¹⁷ which was

undertaken to “show the linguist what he is doing,” in conscious opposition to what Saussure termed the “philologies” and languages’ “ethnographic aspect[s].”¹⁸ As described by one scholar of language:

Saussure was doubtless one of the first to render explicit, for linguistics, the necessity of accomplishing what Kant terms the Copernican revolution. [Saussure] distinguished the *subject matter* of linguistics, the linguist’s field of investigation—which includes the whole set of phenomena closely or distantly related to language use—from its *object* . . . The role of general linguistics . . . is to define certain concepts that allow us to discern in the particular investigation of any particular language, the object within the subject matter.¹⁹

It is important to recall that Saussure’s distinction between ‘language’ and ‘speech’ is maintained, methodologically, by most forms of contemporary linguistics, although there is sharp disagreement as to their definitions as well as over the appropriate criteria for distinguishing the empirical subject matter from the theoretical object of research. That is to say, the formulation is both arguable and corrigible. It is this very process of argumentation concerning this object that has resulted in some of the most significant theoretical advances in linguistics.

To come at the same point from a different angle. The field of religious studies has been more persistent than many of its academic neighbors in continuing to maintain one strand of nineteenth-century neo-Kantian thought, which argued that the distinction between the natural sciences and the human sciences was a matter of explanation as opposed to interpretation: The former, in one of its earlier formulations, being understood as privileging the general (through subsumption to law-like statements); the latter, as privileging the individual, or more strongly, the unique. Each was thought to have its own sort of data, its own appropriate subject matter. Far more fruitful is the alternative proposal, from another strand of contemporaneous neo-Kantian thought, that holds these two approaches to be alternative ways of construing the same datum, the same subject matter.²⁰ In either proposal, the term ‘reduction’ has come to stand, nowhere more so than in the study of religion, as the ambivalent cipher for this difference, perceived as being highly valued by the natural sciences and abjured by the majority of the human sciences. Such a view—at times raised to the level of an ethical proscription—is, and has been for some time, utterly inadequate.

Both explanations and interpretations are occasioned by surprise. It

is the particular subject matter that provides the scholar with an occasion for surprise. Surprise, whether in the natural or the human sciences, is always reduced by bringing the unknown into relations to the known. The process by which this is accomplished, in both the natural and the human sciences, is translation: the proposal that the second-order conceptual language appropriate to one domain (the known/the familiar) may translate the second-order conceptual language appropriate to another domain (the unknown/the unfamiliar). Perhaps the strongest example of this procedure in the study of religion is Durkheim’s translation of the language appropriate to religion (for him, the unknown) into the language appropriate for society (the known). The point at which one may differ from Durkheim’s project is with respect to his acceptance of the goal of explanatory simplicity. Better, here, is Lévi-Strauss’s formulation: “scientific explanation consists not in a movement from the complex to the simple but in the substitution of a more intelligible complexity for another which is less.”²¹

While the adequacy of any translation proposal may be debated, an argument made more difficult by the lack of elaborated theories of translation by scholars of religion, the only grounds for rejecting such a procedure is to attack the possibility of translation itself, most often attempted through appeals to incommensurability. Such appeals, if accepted, must entail the conclusion that the enterprise of the human sciences is, strictly speaking, impossible.²²

I would note only two implications of translation. First, translation, as an affair of language, is a relentlessly social activity, a matter of public meaning rather than of individual significance. Here, for the study of religion, the public is, first of all, the academic community, and therefore, a central issue becomes one of specifying the relations between the study of ‘religion’ and other disciplinary endeavors, a matter of locating oneself with respect to one’s conversation partners, those with whom one will work out appropriate translation languages. Second, whether of a conceptual or natural language, whether intercultural or intracultural, translation is never fully adequate. To pick up again Schelling’s term (borrowed from Coleridge), translation can never be “tautegorical.” There is always discrepancy. (To repeat the old tag: “To translate is to traduce.”) Central to any proposal of translation are questions as to appropriateness and ‘fit,’ questions that must be addressed through the double methodological requirement of comparison and criticism.

Indeed, the cognitive power of any translation, model, map, generalization or redescription—as, for example, in the imagination of ‘religion’—is, by this understanding, a result of its *difference* from the subject

matter in question, and not its congruence. This conclusion has, by and large, been resisted throughout the history of the history of religions. But this resistance has carried a price. Too much work by scholars of religion takes the form of a paraphrase, our style of ritual repetition, which is a particularly weak mode of translation, insufficiently different from its subject matter for purposes of thought. To summarize: a theory, a model, a conceptual category, a generalization cannot be simply the data writ large.

The alternative would be to persist in a view that would make our "twice-told tale" truly tedious, to persist in denying that a science depends on the construction of its theoretical object of study, insisting rather that it is founded on the discovery of a unique reality that eludes any translation other than paraphrase. It is to accede to the odd sort of "tautological" claim that last appeared in the 1960–61 description of the History of Religions field at the University of Chicago: "It is the contention of the discipline of History of Religions that a valid case can be made for the interpretation of transcendence as transcendence."²³ This expression, with its implied acceptance of incommensurability, denies the legitimacy of translation, and the cognitive value of difference. It condemns the field to live in the world of Borges's Pierre Menard, in which a tale must always be identically "twice-told," where a word can only be translated by itself.²⁴

Notes

1. J. Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1918), 42.

2. The tree or inverted tree diagram has had a long history in biological and linguistic representations. For an important collective volume on the image with rich bibliographies, see, H. M. Hoenigswald and L. F. Wiener, eds., *Biological Metaphor and Cladistic Classification: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Philadelphia, 1987). I have taken the quotation by W. Ford Doolittle, "Uprooting the Tree of Life," *Scientific American* (February, 2000) from *The New York Times*, June 13, 2000, D2. For the strictures on the tree diagram in Indo-European linguistics, see C. Renfrew, *Archaeology and Language: The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins* (Cambridge, 1987); and B. Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology and Scholarship* (Chicago, 1999), esp. 211–16. The theoretical basis of the rival "wave theory" was revisited in E. Pulgram's classic article, "Family Tree, Wave Theory, and Dialectology," *Orbis* 2 (1953): 67–72. The theory ultimately depends on the works of H. Schuchardt, *Der Vokalismus des Vulgärlateins* (Leipzig, 1868), vol. 3; and J. Schmidt, *Die Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse der indogermanischen Sprachen* (Weimar, 1872).

3. In this brief sketch of Renaissance linguistics, I have relied, above all, on

M.-L. Demonet, *Les voix du signe: Nature du langage à la Renaissance, 1480–1580* (Paris and Geneva, 1992).

4. On the issues engendered by the novelty of the Americas, see J. Z. Smith, "What a Difference a Difference Makes," in J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs, eds., *To See Ourselves As Others See Us: Christians, Jews. "Others" in Late Antiquity* (Chico, 1985), 3–48; and Smith, "Close Encounters of Diverse Kinds," in S. Mizruchi, ed., *Religion and Cultural Studies* (Princeton, 2001), both reprinted in this volume.

5. On the production of ethnographic texts focusing on indigenous American and African religions, Ramón Pané, *Relación acerca de las antigüedades de los indios* (ca. 1495) seems to be the earliest for the American. See, among others, E. G. Bourne, "Columbus, Ramon Pane and the Beginnings of American Anthropology" (Worcester, Mass., 1906: offprint, *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*); Fray Ramón Pané, *Relación . . .*, ed. J. J. Arrom (Mexico City, 1988). H. Louis Gates has given an oral report of the Mellon-Harvard-Timbucto project which recovered a 1453 Arabic manuscript produced at the University of Timbucto on African indigenous religions which would represent an early example from a different expansionist movement.

6. While scattered throughout the work, the most convenient guide to Asian language materials and translations in Europe remains D. Lach's multivolume study, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago, 1965–93).

7. On the issue of external and internal diversities, see J. Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in M. C. Taylor, ed., *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (Chicago, 1998), esp. pp. 270–76, reprinted in this volume.

8. E. Brerewood, *Enquiries Touching the Diversity of Languages and Religions through the Chief Parts of the World* (London, 1614). Samuel Purchas, *His Pilgrimage, or, Relations of the World and the Religions observed in all Ages and all Places discovered* (London, 1613) appears to be the earliest English work to employ the plural, 'religions,' in its title.

9. While a number of complex linguistic issues recur in Enlightenment thought—compare, for example, H. Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History* (Minneapolis, 1982) and Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England, 1780–1860* (Minneapolis, 1983) with L. Formigari, *L'esperienza e il segno: La filosofia del linguaggio tra Illuminismo e Restaurazione* (Rome, 1990)—I focus, here, on the issue of universality, on which see U. Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language* (Oxford, 1997).

10. "Language," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1st ed. (Edinburgh, 1771), 3: 863.

11. I have taken the term 'counter-Enlightenment' from I. Berlin. For the linguistic theories here summarized, see esp. Berlin, *The Magus of the North: J. G. Hamann and the Origins of Modern Irrationalism* (New York, 1994).

12. For Romantic language theories, I have relied primarily on T. Todorov,

Theories of the Symbol (Ithaca, 1982), esp. 147–221. The two passages from Schelling are translated in Todorov, 210 and 163–64. Note that the indebtedness of Schelling to Coleridge's use of the term "tautegorical" (S. T. Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* [reprint, London, 1913], 136) is acknowledged in a footnote to the latter passage (Schelling, *Introduction à la Philosophie de la mythologie*, trans. V. Jankélévitch [Paris, 1946], 1: 238, n 1).

13. M. Eliade, "Crisis and Renewal in History of Religions," *History of Religions* 5 (1965): 17.

14. M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin, ed. M. Holquist (Austin, 1981), 271.

15. K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, 1936), 274.

16. See, for example, J. S. Mill, *A System of Logic*, 10th ed. (London, 1879), 2: 127–41, 360–80. A good sense of the semantic range of the term can be gained from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "general," "generality," "generalization," "generalize."

17. H. H. Penner, *Impasse and Resolution: A Critique of the Study of Religion* (New York, 1989), esp. pp. 130–34.

18. F. de Saussure, letter to A. Meillet, dated January 4, 1894, as quoted in E. Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics* (Coral Gables, 1971), 33–34.

19. O. Ducrot and T. Todorov, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Sciences of Language* (Baltimore, 1979), 118.

20. On this issue, see the references in J. Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago, 1987), 33–34 and 138–39, notes 48–51.

21. C. Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée sauvage* (Paris, 1962), 328. Compare the different translation of this sentence in Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago, 1966), 248.

22. For a preliminary account, see R. Feleppa, *Convention, Translation and Understanding: Philosophical Problems in the Comparative Study of Culture* (Albany, 1988). Once again, Hans Penner, reflecting the work of Donald Davidson, persistently urges confidence in the possibility of translation. "To interpret means to translate. The notion then that someone speaks an uninterpretable language is incomprehensible—language entails translatability." H. H. Penner, "Interpretation," in W. Braun and R. T. McCutcheon, eds., *Guide to the Study of Religion* (London and New York), 69. See further, Penner, "Holistic Analysis: Conjectures and Refutations," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62 (1994): 977–96 and Penner, "Why Does Semantics Matter to the Study of Religion?" *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 7 (1995): 221–49.

23. University of Chicago, the Divinity School, *Announcements for Sessions of 1960–1961* (Chicago, 1960), 3.

24. J. L. Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*," in Borges, *Collected Fictions* (New York, 1998), 88–95.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

GOD SAVE THIS HONOURABLE COURT

RELIGION AND CIVIC DISCOURSE

MY FRIEND AND sometimes colleague, Professor William Scott Green, at the University of Rochester, has established, with epigrammatic precision the contours of this essay when he observed that the study of religion is the only humanistic field in the American academy whose subject matter is explicitly governed by the United States Constitution. On another occasion, articulating one aspect of the common-sense sort of distinction between religion and the study of religion, Green noted, with no small bitterness, that in preparation for Easter news reporters always contact the local bishop to inquire about the significance of the holiday, while they call the local college's department of religion to find out why there are Easter bunnies and Easter eggs. The first observation suggests the gravity of the enterprise; the second, its simultaneous marginalization. What ever religion 'is,' its definition seems to be thought to lie with others—with courts and practitioners—and not with the academic field charged with its study. This odd displacement is only encouraged when scholars of religion at times assume the stance that their subject matter is by nature undefinable. But this latter is not the issue of this essay.¹ Rather, I wish to look at the consequences of some legal understandings of religion from the point of view of a student of religion.

Let me begin with some items many of us will have encountered on the instructions for filing Internal Revenue Service schedule SE, the form you use to figure your Social Security tax if you are self-employed. Nearly