I. Of Mind Games and Models

1. I use metaphor as one aspect of synthesis, the tendency to unite disparate parts into a structural whole by subordinating certain elements to others that are deemed more important or central and that can be formulated as laws (Piaget 1970:7). One cannot build a structure based on the essentially historicist assumption that all bits of data are equivalent. Analytical, on the other hand, refers to the breaking down of some preexistent structure into its constituent parts for the purpose either of destroying or of confirming it. Synthesis unites; analysis dissolves. Both are essential for any inquiry.

2. I use “style cycle” in the Kroeberian (1957) and Wöllflinian (1932) sense that visual styles evolve from the rudimentary and undifferentiated to the sophisticated and complex until a point of diminishing returns is reached (“pattern exhaustion”) and solutions become too busy or extravagant. Then newer, simpler, and therefore stronger solutions take their place, and a new style cycle begins. These cycles can best be conceptualized as spirals rather than circles inasmuch as each new style that draws on the same cultural base builds on the debris of the old (Stent 1972) and forms new configurations even as it recapitulates the same developmental patterns.

3. Materialists, of course, can be as Cartesian in their thinking as idealists are, as Maquet (1971:5) shows in his strict dichotomy between object and subject. Hence his belief in the Possibility of “objective” rather than merely “intersubjective” analysis. Moreover in the materialists’ view, the external world that the scientist, even the social scientist, dispassionately describes and analyzes, as if it were a sprig of coral, is naturally discontinuous: “The subject also has a direct experience of the world as discontinuous, made up of discrete entities” (1971:5).
4. I do not assert that structuralism is reducible to idealism, for as Stent (1972:92) points out, it actually synthesizes both materialism and idealism in important ways. The commitment to empirical reality does differ, however, in various brands of structuralism. Lévi-Strauss’s structuralism has been criticized for its loose adherence to ethnographic facts (Thomas, Konenfeld, and Konenfeld 1976:148), whereas his students have generally paid more attention to the careful gathering of such facts (Dumont 1976:1). Yet the abstracted structures built out of the empirical data, being models, cannot be directly experienced. The only thing that can be experienced or observed is the output in the form of behavior, either in speech or action. It is at that point that discrepancies between the ideal and the real become relevant (Harris 1974).

5. See Kracke (1978a:4) for a sophisticated analogue of the biogenetic approach in the analysis of the social and psychological correlates of leadership in Tupi-Kagwahiv society.

6. Two examples from the literature:
Social relationships, as they are felt, appear shallow and without any sense of permanence. (Weiss 1975:239, writing the River Campa)
The attachment between individuals is not strong; there is almost no emotional involvement among Akuriyo, whatever the relationship. (Kloos 1977:121)

7. This is not to say that many insights, particularly those of Eliade, such as the necessity and disjunctive characteristics of a central place, a “center of the world” (1959:24, 37), or even his specific decodings of general symbols (such as the Dragon, a “paradigmatic figure of the marine monster, of the primordial snake, symbol of the cosmic waters, of darkness, night, and death,” 1959:48, or the World Tree, “the mode of being of the cosmos, and first of all in its capacity for endless regeneration,” 1959:148, cannot be directly applied to the South American Indian lowland figures, for they can, and with surprisingly little modifications. Following Lévi-Strauss, Leach (1966), and other anthropological writers, my sparing use of Eliade stems rather from a distrust of the generality of his statements based on highly selected data. His students, particularly Luckert (1976), are more useful because they have a narrower focus. Only a closer and more sustained investigation of the construction and use of symbols in specific worldwide ethnographic contexts can rebuild what Eliade has attempted to the same elevated plane with which his analysis starts.

8. By stressing the importance of the figures of speech based on analogy, like simile and metaphor, I do not mean to imply that other rhetorical devices are absent. Indeed as Weiss (1977:179) shows for the River Campa, many additional devices are used, albeit sparingly, in South Amerindian discourse. Conceptually, however, the most significant of these figures are those based on analogy because these construct, rather
than merely embellish the mythical characters. But, as I indicated in my outline of devices, simile and metaphor are not enough; there is also kenning, although only the most sophisticated and specialized verbal traditions will regularly use kenning in speech. The master orators of the Warao have elevated this most indirect form of reference into a veritable secret language. Thus, for example, a narrative command to “imitate the undulating movements of snakes” can only be decoded by the cognoscenti. They know that it refers to the “snaking,” or wriggling of a fishing line just below the surface of the water, and hence that it is a command to go on a fishing expedition (Wilbert 1975b:12).

9. “Jaguar : fire : : toad : water” is standard structuralist notation for “jaguar is to fire as toad is to water.” Subsequent equations make use of the symbols $\rightarrow$, meaning “transformed into” and $/$, meaning “opposed to.”

10. There are tales of human origin from a human body among South American tribal Indians, like the Campa-Nomatsiguenga myth of the origin of the various tribes of the region from the body of the demiurge Manchacori. From the head came the Spanish priests; from the backbone, the white man; from the hands, the Campa Ashaninca (River Campa). From the fleshy parts came the tribes that inhabit the lower river, like the Shipibo, and from the most central and vital spot, the intestines, came the Campa-Nomatsiguenga themselves (Shaver 1975:51). Yet this tale is still not a complete example of the cosmologic body concept, for it only organizes the dimension of human populations, not the rest of the environment including the natural and supernatural geography.

11. Although my use of the jungle as metaphor may seem a bit artificial, South Amerindians are also capable of viewing it as a condensed symbol of great extensivity as in the Barasana case (Hugh-Jones 1974:118), where succeeding generations are thought of as piling on top of one another and compressing themselves just like the leaves that fall to the forest floor.

12. Indeed there has been a historical development starting with a reliance on pure myth and folktale as represented by Propp’s reliance on texts, to Lévi-Strauss’s extension of that preoccupation with the received word to the word and action of ritual and custom, all as “explicit mythology.” Lately there is an investigation going on of the deeply embedded “implicit mythology” inherent in the more prosaic matters of subsistence and residence patterns (Dumont 1976:2). The former tends to be verbalized, the latter not.

II. Myth, Cosmos, and Ceremony among the Shipibo

1. I have worked among the Shipibo-Conibo since 1969, making seven expeditions to them of from two to three months’ duration each. I
have done both archaeological and ethnographic research with the principal focuses of investigation being art style, folklore, and material culture.

2. Weiss’s (1975) success in eliciting Campa myths may be because he worked among the River Campa, who have comparatively greater contact with Western civilization than the Pajonal Campa from whom we have rather meager mythical materials. He was helped by a bilingual acculturated individual, Savaroháni (1975:226), who could intercede with more recalcitrant informants and helped to procure texts.

3. The maëcahuá, Shipibo bird of evil omen, is the squirrel cuckoo (Piaya cayana). See Weiss for a nearly identical belief found among the River Campa, who believe this bird to be “a teacher of witchcraft” (1975:292).

4. This ubiquitous, gregarious fruit feeder is the crested oropendola (Psaroclusis decumanus). The River Campa, southern neighbors of the Conibo, have a similar back ornament consisting of pauca (which they call generically “tsóri”) feathers (Weiss 1975:297).

5. This episode cannot literally be true, for the Shipibo ceramic decorating brush is only some 7 cm. in length and formed of several human hairs wrapped onto a splint of bamboo. Obviously what the narrator means is that the girl was chastised by a female implement associated with the work she was supposed to be doing but was not.

6. Notice how long it takes to cook the tapir’s stubbornly “raw” (i.e., excessively natural) flesh. An identical motif is found in the Siona story of the anaconda-seducer’s similarly uncookable meat (E.J. Langdon 1978). The reason for this linkage is the identification of the tapir as the terrestrial form of the anaconda.

7. One of my informants asserted that this is a Campa word, the Shipibo generally admiring the Campa knowledge of the spirits.

8. This and the following myth refer to the complex of associated constellations in the southern heavens: the Hyades, the Pleiades, and Orion’s Belt. These constellations are associated with one of the mythical brother’s losing a leg, as Hugh-Jones has pointed out:

The Pleiades and Orion are diachronically related since the Pleiades rise within a few days of Orion and announce the coming of the latter...[Lévi-Strauss] has further shown that in South American myth, Orion is frequently associated with either a man whose leg has been cut off or with the cut-off leg itself. (1974:124; see also Weiss 1975:488)

Witness the following Guianan Carib myth Roth recites:

The twin sons of the Sun are hunting a female tapir. Pia [apparently the elder brother] now told Makunaima [the younger brother] to wheel round in front and drive the creature back to him, and as she passed, let fly a harpoon-arrow into her: the rope, however, got in the way of Makunaima as he was passing in front, and cut his leg off. On
a clear night you can still see them up among the clouds; there is Maipuri [the tapir = the Hyades], there Makunaima [Pleiades], and below is his severed leg [Orion’s Belt]. (1915:111)

The tapir is also the analogue of the cayman, the latter being one component of an anaconda-cayman-piranha Dragon.

9. In this myth we again see the equation of the tapir with the anaconda or the cayman, which is constantly swallowing heroes who therefore have to be cut free from its belly. Here, however, the tapir is a kind of inverted anaconda-cayman inasmuch as, instead of orally swallowing the hero as those creatures do, the hero enters the tapir anally. The connecting link between these inversions is the common lowland myth wherein the tapir is an ogre and “swallows” people by sucking them up its anus!

10. See Weiss (1975:482) for a discussion of the distribution of the chain-of-arrows motif as well as an illustration of the analogous Campa sky rope theme.

11. As a demonstration of the widespread appearance of this tropical forest myth, consider this virtually identical version from the Canelos Quichua Indians of the Ecuadorian montaña to the north:

An older and a younger brother were trying to cross a great lagoon on top of a high hill. The older brother cried out, “Apamama, Apamama, carry us across,” and a giant cayman came. The older brother told the younger brother to go first, but as usual he refused, so the older went across, with eyes closed. Then the cayman made the return voyage from the younger. But just before landing on the shore the younger brother opened his eyes, saw the great cayman instead of a canoe, and shouted to be let off. The cayman turned; crunch! she snapped off his right leg. (This was terrible because a person’s soul is in his right shinbone!) The brother was now without a leg, so he could not walk, and without a soul, which had been stolen by the cayman. The older brother fought back; he got five white termites and threw them into the lagoon, where they proceeded to drink up the water. Caymans appeared from all over and the Runa [people] killed them. Finally, in fear of losing their entire population, one giant cayman pointed to the guilty cayman, with the younger brother’s leg-soul, and the Runa killed it. The younger brother put his leg back on, and off they went again. (Whitten 1976:53)

12. A *meraya* is current jungle Spanish argot for a medium, a kind of shaman who prognosticates rather than cures.

13. This pit viper is probably the fer-de-lance (*Bothrops jararaca*).

14. This large, chicken-sized black bird is prized as a game bird because of its great quantity of meat. The Shipibo call it *jasin*, the helmeted currasow (*Pauxi pauxi* or *Pauxi unicornis* or *mitu mitu*).
15. Note here that the excavation of the lizard, a small green monitor and an active burrower (Cyclura macleavi), is unsuccessful in capturing the Dragon. How could it be inasmuch as I have identified the lizard as a minor terrestrial aspect of the Dragon? A successful effort on the part of the lizard would require the Dragon to capture himself! As the model specifies, however, the Dragon is then successfully captured, and later killed, by the digging of an anomalous bird, anomalous because it is a bird that flies in the air yet also digs in the earth, something birds are not expected to do. Birds are enemies of the Dragon.

16. Although difficult to identify, this beautiful bird is probably the green jay (Cyanocorax yncas). As I show later, poison, particularly fish poison, is stolen from the liver of Poison Anaconda, a major form of the Dragon. Inasmuch as marks--disfiguring blotches like those put on the face of the adulterous moon, another Dragon manifestation--are thought of as filth, the filth (menstrual blood) with which the moon is associated, the fact that the bird victor is here marked by the poison of the Dragon is perfectly expectable.

17. As in myth 2, ogres like people made desirable by their elegant face paint. The sexual connotations of the “devouring” that goes on in this myth are therefore apparent.

18. This Shipibo cannibal eagle is a clear analogue of the Piro cannibal hawk (Matteson 1951:37) and of the Campa one, as is illustrated by Weiss’s account:

The imposing cliff on the right side of the Ene river where the river cuts through a mountain ridge was at one time the residence of a large hawk, Pakítsa. This creature preyed on Campas passing by, carrying them off to its home and there devouring them. Beneath Pakítsa’s house is a cave, said to be the passage through which Pakítsa’s wife, whose form was human, went to draw water. Pakítsa was finally disposed of in the following manner: a number of Campas heaped up earth in the form of a canoe. Pakítsa swooped down and tried to lift what it took to be a canoe, but could not, and in the struggle the Campas broke its legs with their paddles. Pakítsa was then carried downriver a short distance and cremated on a large rock situated on the right side of the river. (1975:409)

Here a clay canoe is substituted for the clay person in the Shipibo myth. This was clearly an informant’s oversight, for why would the sharp-eyed hawk be interested in an empty canoe? Another version directly replicates the Shipibo tale by having the Campas make an effigy of clay “dressed...like a Campa, and sent it downriver on a raft. The hawk swooped down and seized it, only to be beaten to death by the Campas with paddles” (Weiss 1975:411). The Campa tale contrasts with the Shipibo version by having the flying ogre cremated, a more appropriate fate for a celestial figure than the aquatic end of the Shipibo bird. Yet the
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contrast between the fates of these two demons may be less than it appears since the River Campa use both disposal by cremation and water to put the soul of a demon-attacked person to rest lest that person also become a demon (Weiss 1975:435).

19. For example, Farabee says, “Wives are always very kindly treated; even when unfaithful they are not punished or driven away” (1922:101)—an indirect allusion to the relative impunity with which Shipibo women conduct their affairs; and Karsten says, “The women in general have much to say in important matters” (1964:185).

20. Indeed, Farabee reports that according to his Shipibo informants “they successfully repelled invasions attempted by the Inca in ancient times, but they were greatly impressed by their civilization and warfare. They think that the Inca will yet return to power in the Andes” (1922:96). While this expedition of the Inca seems mythical, it does show that Ucayali tribes have an awareness of the major power that once existed in the west.

21. At Shahuaya, for example, the more worldly Conibo scoffed at the gullible piety of the Pajonal Campa settled at the same village, whom the missionaries kept singing hymns nearly night and day. This gullibility is not universal; Weiss (1975:493) has pointed out that the more sophisticated River Campa tend to make fun of missionary beliefs. An expedition I made in rough karst limestone topography illustrates the ecologically circumscribed abilities of these populations. I took with me a mestizo, a Campa guide, and my Shipibo field assistant. The mestizo and I were naturally at a loss in the rugged terrain; the Shipibo, a superb boatman, was as clumsy as ourselves on the land. The Campa, who as Weiss (1975:239) points out, might well have drowned had he approached the Ucayali (the Shipibo’s native territory), bounded ahead of us in the most extraordinary fashion, having to wait, completely composed, often for a half hour while the sweating, cursing, stumbling three of us caught up with him. Never have I had the specialized adaptations of different human cultures to nonoverlapping niches so forcefully pointed out.

22. Such marriages are rare nowadays because of apparently increasing Shipibo endogamic practices, but they are known to have happened even if most such unions were extremely brittle.

23. The Campa are famous for their skill at dodging arrows or catching them and shooting them back at their senders, an art they practice as a war game from childhood (Weiss 1975:240).

24. Curaka, although not a Shipibo word, is the common rural Peruvian Quechua-derived term for a chief. Chiefs had little power among Shipibo in the late 19th and early 20th century, so this refers just to an unusually charismatic leader of one village or group of compounds who used kinship ties to muster a force of about 30 warriors.

25. Cashibo lived in single communal huts that usually contained one extended family of less than 20 persons. These huts were placed far from the major tributaries as protection against Shipibo raids. The
Cashibo hut was one of the completely enclosed house types, thatched all the way to the ground, with but one door cut in the thatch and with a smoky interior to keep out the mosquitos (Wistrand-Robinson 1977: fig. 3). Thus the Shipibo warrior was able to enter the Cashibo hut directly, crashing through the dried and brittle thatch, its leaves exploding and crackling to add to the din produced by his cries to frighten the inhabitants inside.

26. This was indeed the Shipibo plan, for Cashibo war arrows are fearsome devices with multiple prongs, some facing backward. They are carved out of hard chonta palm, making them sharp and virtually unremovable. In one tale a wounded Shipibo warrior who can go no further demands that his helpers remove the arrow, knowing full well that he will die when it is yanked out. Reluctantly his friends comply and he expires on the spot. If a Shipibo attack failed to achieve complete surprise, it could easily turn into a rout because surviving Cashibo warriors were superior as fighters to the more modernly armed Shipibo (Galt 1870-1872). The Shipibo response to such an unpleasant situation was to scatter and try and find their way back to the landing individually, with the surviving Cashibo in hot pursuit. In contrast to the simplicity, indeed the aesthetic inferiority, of backwoods Panoan material culture compared to that of the mainstream Shipibo, Cashibo war arrows are much more complex and highly embellished than their equivalent Shipibo form. They are in fact the most elaborate domain of Cashibo material culture.

27. Outside of the Shipibo skirt, or chitonte, the racote was a major component of a traditional Shipibo woman’s dress. It is still woven and worn by old women. A strip of cotton plain weave with typical geometric designs painted on it, the racote functioned as a shawl and, as in this instance, could also function as a baby carrier. The captured Cashibo children would be cried slung over the shoulders of a few of the “fiercer” Shipibo women who had voluntarily accompanied their husbands on the raid to help select the child captives and care for them on the journey back.

28. This story of one of the last Shipibo raids on the Cashibo was told to me in Shipibo by Eduardo in 1977. He is now about 70 years old. Older Shipibo do not calculate their age precisely, but by identifying the years of known events in his later life, it was possible to estimate his age. He heard of this raid when he was about 15; therefore the raid occurred around 1923. Another old man of near 75, who died in 1963, participated in a Cashibo raid when he was 19, so that raid can be set in 1907. The same series of dates can be calculated from the age of an old man in his late 70s who went on a raid near the turn of the century and who voluntarily ceased living during my stay in San Francisco in 1977. Thus one can bracket the end of active hostilities over much of the central Ucayali between 1900 and 1920.

29. The tiati is larger than another bamboo flute called the pacá and has a deeper sound. Either flute is pierced in the upper node and intact in
the lower. They are played by holding them vertically below the mouth.

30. Unlike the Shipibo, they Cashibo did not have dogs to warn them of the approach of strangers, so the Shipibo were often successful in surprising Cashibo *malocas* if they attacked at first light. Neither side attacked at night because both feared the darkness and evil spirits who roam about then.

31. This is an onomatopoeic Shipibo word imitating the crackling sound of crushed arrow cane, which formed the shafts of both Cashibo and Shipibo arrows.

32. While this act of generosity would have been done with apparent sincerity, it entailed much bitterness on the part of the giver, feelings that would later surface in the context of a drinking bout. This was a matter of some economic importance for the warriors, for they frequently sold these children to the rural Peruvians for slaves. Some, chiefly the girls, they kept as brides or concubines.

33. The returning Shipibo warriors, still “angry” from the battle, would quaff the “hot” drink to vomit and purge the aggression from their bodies so that they could reenter Shipibo society, a society that values equanimity and emotional control and only allows personal aggression to surface in pattern drunkenness. Here a passive mask of social affability is coupled functionally with violent periodic cathartic release.

34. The Cashibo traditionally went naked save for a string belt. This scandalized the Shipibo, who always have been very prim about exposing their genitals.

35. Shipibo women cut their bangs at the eyebrows, so this halfway practice indicated that the recently captured Cashibo women were only half “civilized.”

36. Note here the emphasis on removing the long or profuse head and facial hair from the male Cashibo captives. Beards are unusual in South Amerindian populations, partly because facial hair is grown only scantily or otherwise plucked out, but also because facial hair is regarded as being ugly and monkeylike. In this case the removal of the Cashibo hair also coincides with how the Shipibo viewed them in their oral tradition, as minor variants of the hairy Forest Ogres. Like so many Samsons they were being converted into civilized people by having their symbol of unconstrained sexuality cut and thereby controlled.

37. Notice how the Cashibo man is made to request that his relatives also the same civilized life he is having with the Shipibo.

38. My male Shipibo workmen signaled this find with laughter and calls of “*Șhērvēnanti!* Șhērvēnanti!” On inquiring I was told that they had found an artifact associated with their traditional female puberty ceremony, the *ani Șhrēati*. The men were sure of its identity, and all the women I showed the clay object to agreed that it was indeed a *șhērvēnanti*, although covered with slightly different (incised) designs than the painted
decorations they applied to similar objects. Its close formal similarity to modern Shipibo šërvënantì is shown in Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe (1975:51, fig. 29). Inquiring into the ethnographic context of the šërvënantì led me to delve into Shipibo oral narrative and establish the contacts I later used in my research on mythology—a good example of the kind of fertile interaction between archaeology and ethnology possible in the Peruvian montaña. Weber (1975:388) has since recovered a Conibo šërvënantì in an archaeological context at Caimito, south of Cumaná.

39. For a similar definition of ritual see Goldman:

Ritual is in sense an esoteric language that uses actions as its symbols of meaning. From this point of view each ritual act may be considered a statement that dramatizes and, therefore, accents some principal cultural values and social patterns, while ritual structure, as a whole, may be expected to reveal modes of conceptualization that show less clearly in secular life. (1964:111)

and Weiss:

Ritual will here be defined as any action or actions on the part of any of the members of a society directed toward or relating to what is understood in the cosmology to be the hidden reality, or any part of the world of appearances insofar as it is understood to possess hidden [supernatural] properties. (1975:510)

40. Indeed the Campa may once have had important rituals in the form of fire ritual (Weiss 1975:470).

41. The preparations for the ani Šhrëati were indeed onerous. Segundina mentioned that the pressing of the cane would begin about two weeks before the ceremony was held. (At the same time the šërvënantì would also be made.) It takes guarapo (“sugarcane whiskey”) about fifteen days to become fermented, but it is still a little sweet by then. After about twenty days, however, it is very strong. The cane juice is cooked for about two and a half hours and then decanted to a large chomo (“a painted ceramic jar with a resin-coated interior used to carry or store liquids”), where it will ferment naturally. It is covered with a plantain leaf to keep things from falling into it and to keep people from sampling it until the proper time comes. Masato takes only about three days to ferment. It is cooked and then some sweet potato (kàrì) is chewed and spit into the liquid, the enzymes in the woman’s saliva hastening the fermentation process. A little guarapo is sometimes added to the masato to make it stronger. For a typical ceremony Segundina mentions a line of chomos comprising five of masato and six of guarapo (these are chomo ani standing 1 1/2 m. tall and even more around); Otelia and Inesía mentioned two of masato and eight of guarapo. Many textiles and much ceramics also had to
be made for the ceremony, keeping the women very busy weeks and sometimes months before the actual ceremony.

42. The men hold the quënán on their shoulders like macanas after they have carved them. They sing while doing so. Then they are handed over to the women to decorate them. As balsa wood is soft the quënán can be made quickly, one day before the ceremony (Segundina).

43. After drawing the designs on the quënán the women walk about carrying them on their shoulders just like the men. Singing, they then dance a ronda among themselves, forming a circle and holding hands. Then the leader (and any woman could be the leader) breaks the circle and pulls the group in a file behind her to a new area on the plaza. There the circle resumes itself in any direction, clockwise or counterclockwise (Otelia).

44. The mother of the girl searches for two assistants to hold the girl’s arms during the operation. One important requirement of such women was that they be good singers for the songs that would accompany the ceremony. The mother had to give them a special šhërvi or šhërbiana quënti, a quënti (“cook pot”) with broad designs painted on its interior (rather like what is done for modern quëncha or solid food bowls) as well as on its exterior. Ordinary cook pots are undecorated save for incisions and in their normally blackened condition present quite a contrast with the elegant painted serving ware. This šhërvi quënti had to be carried to them before the ceremony so it could be used during it to hold the water and piri-piri solution that would stanch the girl’s bleeding and wash her bleeding vagina (Segundina).

45. Special coded signals would be sent out on the big two-tone signal gongs (ani tempora, the latter word being a clear cognate with the Spanish tambor) informing those close at hand of the preparations that were underway (Juan). The same drums would be used to call people to the actual ceremony itself.

46. The guests arrive blowing a tiati. All the groups that arrive at the ani Šhrēati, or any other fiesta for that matter, have at least one tiati. They blow—Tiiiii!—hence its name. After they have arrived they put it away and don’t use it again. Its sound can be heard from a great distance away, and as a party passes by a village in their canoes they will sound the tiati to inform the villagers that they are going to a fiesta. When they arrive the father of the girl goes to the canoe landing, ostensibly to greet the guests, but his real purpose is to gauge the size and formidable qualities of the arriving party. If they are few and the hosts numerous he will call back, “don’t worry, we can take them” (Segundina).

At the landing, if the guests can drink all the masato in the quënpo the host offers it to them in, they can keep it. Then the guests are led up the bluff to the village and seated on benches in the plaza, the women sitting on cajuin (“a large sleeping mat,” of long filaments of aguaje tied together with string to form a diamond network pattern—different from the com-
mon sitting mat made of plaited palm leaves, the *pishin* placed on the ground nearby. The father of the girl then goes to the line of uncapped *chomos* (the leaves having been taken off their mouths to show that the fiesta is underway) and ladles their contents into a *quênpö ani* (“a big, low bowl with constricted orifices and lacquered interior,” a liquid food bowl), which he offers to each man on down the line. After the drink the guests fight with the hosts, but it is not a real fight; the two parties just wrestle with each other or, if *huino* are used, opponents will merely be pushed with it. The women also test their strength with their female counterparts. After the wrestling the parties drink (Segundina and Otelia).

47. Segundina asserted that the ceremony starts about 7:00 or 8:00 P.M. of the first night when everybody is drunk and that it lasts all night long. This is in accordance with Tessman (1928:206).

48. On the second day the girl dances a special dance in file with the other girls who are going to be initiated, each holding onto the *tari* of the man in front of her.

49. Normally it would not be necessary to tie up the girl, for she would be too inebriated to offer resistance. She would be placed on a special circumcision bench made principally of three balsa logs probably *Ochromia sp.* (like the *quênán*) because the wood is both soft and absorbent, in this case for the blood. Tessman’s account of this bench is the most complete:

On the next day the circumcision bench is built on a free spot near the houses. This bench is constructed out of logs and branches (*ochroma, lagopus, topa*). The branches are placed across two logs, and all of it is held together with wooden nails. On the spot where the girl’s genitals will be, about in the middle of the bench, is left a hole. This bench (*moshó*) is coated with liquid and then allowed to dry again. In the afternoon and evening of this day, singing, drinking, and dancing take place. (1928:206, trans. mine)

Although I doubt that wooden nails were used to construct this bench, vine lashings being more in character, Karsten’s (1964:187-188) account agrees fairly closely with Tessman’s except that he adds that the bench was painted with *urucu* (*Bixa orellana*), a scarlet vegetable paint. Thus the “liquid” Tessman refers to may have been the *urucu*. Farabee (1922:85) adds the further note that the girl’s legs were tied to two upright poles, presumably the legs of the bench.

50. Both Segundina and Otelia agreed that the *quêná* of the *ani Šhrēati* were different from ordinary *quêná* (and presumably those of the *Bêšéti Šhrēati*) in that they were not regular complex geometric designs but merely dots (*cháchá*) or little *x*’s, the latter being painted on the body with *nânë*, whereas the former were painted all over the face. The paint is kept in a special bowl called the *nânë’ ati*. It is later given as a present to the woman who does the operation.

51. On the second day, before the cutting, the girl is decorated with
all her ornaments, including isosheta, the prized monkey-teeth bracelets. She is also hung with trade bells, “the seed that sings” in Shipibo. Their tinkling sound is characteristic of the ceremony, and mothers treasure the bells to hand on to their daughters. At the same time she is adorned the girl is sung beautiful puberty rite songs telling her how pretty she is and that she will be made drunk and will feel nothing. Indeed many older women say they remember nothing of their own operation except the pain and inconvenience afterward.

52. While the girl is brought in with her two assistants, their husbands are playing music on their pacas. The girl first dances with the husbands, then is brought to where the women are who sing songs with her, then shuttled back to the men for more songs, and then finally back with the women once again (Segundina). While this is going on the girl is drinking out of a quënpo ani and getting progressively drunker (Otelia).

53. Tessman records this situation:

The second day of the initiation rite begins with some of the older women, who understand the circumcision process, dressing and preparing for the actual cutting. In addition they give the girls a strong, fermented, sugar-based drink. This beverage they consume until they fall to the ground. In this condition they are carried to the circumcision bench by the older females and other female helpers who will do the cutting. The girl is then placed on the bench and cut. (1928:206, trans. mine)

54. Manuel’s placing of the father near the girl somewhat contradicts Tessman’s account:

At this ceremony everybody takes part. The immediate participation in the circumcision, however, is done and observed only by the women; the men, boys and uninitiated girls are forbidden from viewing the operation. The women nevertheless explain to the men what takes place. (1928:205, trans. mine)

55. The beer is often ladled out of the huge chomo by an anthropomorphic or zoomorphic little vessel, usually equipped with suspension holes near its rim; through these pass string tied to a long stick. The drink is then transferred to the individual quënpo of the drinkers or to a large communal quënpo. This class of vessel is interesting because it represents the only class of representational ceramics used by the Shipibo (others, like the joni chomo, or face-neck chomo, although traditionally made, are always sold to tourists and never used within the tribe). The small vessels are modeled in the form of birds or animals like the manatee. Tessman talks about them:

For drinking the women use beautiful clay molded mugs, which are decorated with birds, parrots, etc….These mugs are the property
of the women, but they of course allow the men to drink out of theirs. The name of these mugs is *tonkonati*. Other vessels are also used, such as open clay bowls with three bands around them that are attached to a stick. Not all the women are capable of creating the mugs that have animal shapes on them, and this is why not all the women have one. (1928:206, trans. mine)

The little open bowl substituted for the *toncoati* (*tonkonati*) was probably a *quënpo vacu*, or small sized drinking cup. The special signif-cance of their realistic shape is seen in two special forms often used at *anti Šhrēati*: the *hoboshco*, and the *šērvī toncoati*. The *hoboshco* was a hollow cup in the form of a phallus complete with testicles. When dipped into the capacious round *chomo* it would not be farfetched to see a symbolic act of intercourse. The *šērvī toncoati* is a realistic vulva with the vaginal slit forming the opening. Here too the sexual symbolism is obvious.

56. The native herbal medicine *huástē*, or as it is commonly called, *piri-piri*, is a sedge (*Cyperus sp.*) grown in house gardens. It is boiled in this water and serves to stanch the flow of vaginal blood, help prevent infec-tion, and quickly heal the wounds inflicted by the bamboo knife. Its other uses include healing men’s scalp cuts caused by the *huishate* knife (Girard 1958:244) and contraceptive purposes (Bergman 1974:127). Further, my informants affirmed that, washed into the shirt or *tari* of a recalcitrant son-in-law, it could induce him to reside matrilocally and help his bride’s parents even if he didn’t want to. It can also be used in much the same way as love magic or to make a former enemy a friend.

As to the operation itself, Karsten gives the fullest account:

The operation is carried out by an old woman with the assistance of other women. The operating knife consists of a very sharp piece of split bamboo. This kind of bamboo is called *paca*, the knife itself being called *kōntsō*. Several of these knives are held ready, stuck in a lump of clay, within reach of the operating woman. As to the extent of the operation there has been a diversity of opinion. Native infor-mants on this point are not quite trust-worthy, and probably no white man has been a witness of the operation. The travelers Reich and Stegelmann state that only the hymen is severed from the labia minora so that the clitoris is set quite free. It would be most natural to assume that the “circumcision” in question consists only of this operation. Tessman, however, is positive that not only the hymen but also the labia and the clitoris of the girls are severed, which seems too cruel an operation. The blood is allowed to flow to the ground from the hole cut in the operation-bench. (1964:188)

Otelia also states that the *quënán* are used in conjunction with the bench to elevate and spread the thighs of the girl, allowing the surgeon better access to her vagina. The extent of the operation probably differed with the surgeon. My informants stated that there was a wide
disparity in skills and that the mother made it a point to search out the best available and paid her handsomely in pottery and other goods (as “gifts”) for her services. Because Inesia, Segundina, and Otelia all said that something was buried, as Tessman’s statement that the clitoris was in fact amputated (1928:206-207) would seem to corroborate, the more severe form of the operation may have occurred, Karsten notwithstanding.

57. Tessman’s account agrees with this: “In the hut the girl is placed on a mat that has been prepared for her” (1928:207, trans. mine). The mat in question was a cajujin. As to the fate of the clitoris, Otelia agreed with Tessman (1928:207), although she volunteered the information independently by saying it was buried nearby. She added that this was to prevent animals like ochiti (“dogs”) from eating it. In the case of multiple girls being operated on, Tessman states: “While the first girl is returned to the hut after the operation, the next initiate in line goes to the bench, and the others all follow as their turn comes” (1928:207, trans. mine).

58. Karsten:

While the operations on the girls are going on, certain peculiar ceremonies are performed by the men on the open place in front of the operating bench....The men drink guarapo, and owing to the strong effects of this beverage they soon become intoxicated. At the same time the dancing, accompanied by chanting and the beating of drums, assumes a more and more ecstatic character. The men are wearing their customary festive attire. They carry macanas (a Quecha word)....At the beginning of the dance each dancer wears his sword on the right shoulder. Later on they are seen brandishing them during their movements, apparently menacing their fellow-dancers and behaving as if they were fighting them. In addition to the rest of his equipment each dancer wears at his back, hanging from a band, his famous scratching knife, the wuishate, nowadays consisting of a small but very sharp crescent-shaped piece of iron. Formerly....the beak of a toucan, the point of which is as sharp as a nail, was used as a scratching instrument. When the excitement reaches its peak, the sham fight seems to develop into a real fight between the men taking part in the dance. One of the dancers is suddenly seen to catch the Indian dancing in front of him by the neck with the forked end of his macana, pressing him down to the ground, whereupon he takes his wuishate and scratches him with it on the crown of the head, drawing a deep stroke from one side of the head to the other, so that the blood flows in streams. Other Indians are seen doing the same to those dancing in front of them....The most remarkable thing, however, is the strikingly good humor with which every Indian submits to this rude treatment. No one appears to feel offended, or tries to defend himself. The whole thing is evidently regarded as...an integral part of the feast (1964:189)
Farabee, although differing on the antecedent of the *huishati* (he thought it was a peccary tusk knife), depicted a very similar light-hearted picture:

We examined a number of heads, and found that about one in four had scars, and some fellows had three or four. Scars are no disgrace, yet those who had none took it as a good joke on the other fellows, and pointed out the guilty ones, who took it all good naturedly. (1922:102)

The *huishati* is, in fact, the last recycling of an expended machete blade. It does not scratch; it slashes down to the bone. It is greatly feared and far from harmless. Juan’s account in particular does not convey the amiable reconstructions of the above accounts. Karsten’s later statement on the role of the women strikes a truer note:

While the “fight” described above has been going on, the women have only been passive onlookers, but when the excitement reaches its height they suddenly join in the game, rush in among the dancing men and try to deprive them of their weapons in the way Indian women generally do when the men really show fight at their drinking-bouts….In such cases the women generally play the role of mediators. (1964:190)

59. The *šërvënantî* was originally made by the mother with her child’s anatomic proportions in mind. When Ibarista made an unusually small *šërvënantî* she had at first made it bigger, then trimmed it off saying it was too big. She obviously had her daughter, Francisca, who was small for her age, in mind. The *šërvënantî* was placed on the girl when she was in her mosquito netting after the operation. It was not inserted into the vagina but rather placed over it, the smaller side downward and the convex side inward, serving as a kind of ceramic bandage or cover for the vagina. Tessman mistakenly identified it as a stone (1928:207). It was secured in place by tying a string around the waist and passing another between the legs (Teolinda and Tessman 1928:207). The girl wore it night and day and only took it out when she had to urinate (Segundina and Karsten 1964:188). Karsten also suggests it was used to prevent the labia from growing together when they healed.

60. Segundina clarified this by pointing out that the girl cannot sit comfortably after the operation and the *quênán* help her to do so. Inside of her mosquito netting the girl is clothed, her skirt (*chitonte*), being put back on after the *šërvënantî* is positioned. Despite some linguistic confusion (*ani* means large and *racoti* is a shawl) the following quote by Tessman applies: “The girl receives a large wraparound (*ani*) or a very large one
(racoti) for clothing. This should be worn so as to cover the loins and breasts of the girl” (1928:207, trans. mine).

   61. The third day is a winding-down day, as more and more people leave when the supplies of masato and guarapo are exhausted. The girl remains under the care of her mother. She maintains her diet and sits quietly on her mat.

   The girl usually feels better again by the end of the festivities and then returns to the hut of her parents. There she helps her mother with chores around the house, and later on she is able to roam around freely. She is in no way restricted from being seen by other people in the village. (Tessman 1928:207, trans. mine)

   The healing process takes a month, two months at most (Segundina and Tessman 1928:207). At this time the šhervēnantī is simply tossed onto the ring of refuse around the cleanly swept Shipibo plaza. The archaeological šhervēnantī from Cumancaya was also found in the refuse. The same fate awaits both the operation bench (Tessman 1928:207) and the quēnān because they are now dirty and have served their purpose (Otélia). The girl’s marriage may now take place.

   62. The placement of the Bēstēti Šhrēati with respect to the ani Šhrēati may have been somewhat variable. Otélia asserted that the hair cutting took place after the clitoridectomy, whereas Segundina was of the opinion that it took place much before, when the child was very small, perhaps only 3 or 4 years old. The weight of opinion, however, was that it took place afterward. How much afterward is another matter, for José witnessed a hair cutting around 10:00 A.M. of the second day of ani Šhrēati, while the clitoridectomy occurred later that afternoon. Several more informants agreed with Manuel and Ibarista, however, that there was at least a year’s interval between the two, that the Bēstēti Šhrēati followed the ani Šhrēati, and that the later ceremony was patterned after the earlier one. The actual hair cutting was done by the same old woman who had performed the clitoridectomy on the girl. Originally, it was also done with the same kind of bamboo knife, pacako̱ntsō, but for decades past an ordinary pair of scissors obtained in trade was used. As the hair was combed forward and cut it was not allowed to fall on the ground but instead fell into a special flaring vessel called a voate, which had been made by the girl’s mother and which was given as a present to the woman who performed the operation. So too was the old woman given the comb, bohuēšēti, which had been made for the ceremony. These combs are often made by men (for example, by a young man to give as a present to his sweetheart or betrothed). It was probably made in this case by the girl’s father. The combs consist of slivers of wood wrapped in parallel to form the teeth of a comb by two horizontal sticks. The wrapping itself is an intricate design done in fine homespun and dyed cotton cloth. The mother
63. The husband of the surgeon will have the first pick of the animals the father and mother of the girl have carefully raised as pets. The killing is usually done in the early morning of the second day, around 7:00 or 8:00 A.M., before the clitoridectomy (Segundina).

64. The owner of the fiesta and the previously arrived guests are in the big house. The new arrivals beat the overhanging thatch of the house with their huino. The owner, his relatives, and those who have already arrived rush out of the house and grab the flaring tips of the new arrival’s huino, and the wrestling match beings (Manuel).

65. Others referred to this as a sort of corral or fence behind the animals, on which were draped the elaborately decorated and newly woven chitonte, racote, and tari the mother of the girl and her matrilineal kin had woven and decorated. This was a display of conspicuous consumption—as was the killing of the animals—meant to show off the industry, wealth, and skill of the women involved and—by extension—their daughters. The husbands of the surgeon and her helpers often had bad aim in killing the animals because by this time they were very drunk. Hence they often put arrows through the cloth rather than through the animals. In their unsteadiness they would also fill the pets with arrows without striking a vital spot. Then the animals would writhe on the ground, kicking up blood and dust in their futile struggles. Then the women would have to bludgeon the unfortunate beasts to death.

66. The five or so men from whom the women— their wives—have stolen the pacas are the same men who killed, or wounded, the animals. Up until this time they had dedicated themselves to making much of the music for the fiesta. None of the other men will carry pacas. The mother of the girl must also present ceramics she has made to these men (Otelia).

After the animals have been killed the men bring them and lay them on the big cajuin the father of the girl has made and which is now laid on the plaza. They lay the animals in a line for the guests to admire. Then the women cover them with racotes (for a slightly different version see Juan’s account that follows). Then they make a special ronda of the animals and sing songs in which the beauty of the animals and the goodness of their flesh is praised. Only then do the women skin and butcher them, placing the meat in the special yahuaiti quënti (literally, “collared peccary cook pot”) to cook it. Otelia asserted that anciently the interior of such quënti were painted with the same kind of simple, broad, geometric designs that are today painted on the similarly unmodified surface of quëncha (“solid food bowls”). In the paranta quënti, or plantain quënti, they boil the manioc or plantains to be eaten with the meat. The owners of the animals do not eat the meat, for they are sad; the animals were their pets. But the guests do partake, although by this time they have drunk so much masato and guarapo that they usually vomit up the meat anyway.
The quality of a fiesta was often judged on both the quantity of the drink and the amount of the meat provided, but these were not the only things mentioned. As in Juan’s account people repeatedly note the beauty of the singing and dancing and the excitement of the fights as earmarks of a good fiesta.

67. The *maiti* in my collection has a tall central tail feather of a red macaw surrounded by a group of fine, quill-like white heron feathers and below that a ring of long black crested oropendola feathers. They are tied to a stick and form the only permanent part of the crown, being carefully sequestered in the house thatch out of the hands of children. The feather group is then inserted in a hollow circular crown made of split bamboo laths wrapped together by two parallel horizontal lines of string. On the top are stuck little yarn crosses, *pën-pën* (“butterfly” in Shipibo).

68. Juan’s account is truer to the realities of Shipibo social structure than Manuel’s, which portrayed the men very much in charge. Actually the *ani Šhrēati* is an affair of the women, particularly the mother of the girl and her matrilineal relatives. Their husbands are given the protocol duties of interacting with the men of the arriving groups and are therefore called the “owners” of the fiesta, but the real business of the fiesta is the clitoridectomy and that is the exclusive province of the women.

69. The *huino* is made of exceptionally hard *chonta* palm cortical wood beveled to an edge on both faces—a formidable weapon. When men are only moderately aroused they use the flat of the club like a paddle, but one can tell immediately that things are getting serious when the men swivel the clubs in their hands so that they strike with the blade of the club. A heavy *huino* used on edge could easily split a man’s skull like a ripe melon. At this stage of the festival Juan is describing, things had clearly not gone that far.

70. The *tamaranti* was played between two files of women, who banged on it with their grinding stones, the same stones used to pulverize clay pellets for pottery or to grind the charred bark of a tree to make *mēi* (“cariapé temper”) for the pottery. It was the big wooden trough (usually an old canoe) the women used to shred manioc for *masato* (see Lathrap 1970: pl. 65).

71. The association of the underworld with death and evil is a strong one in riverine Panoan culture, as the following quotation from Farabee indicates for the closely related Conibo: “They believe in an evil spirit, called *Urima*, who lives in the earth. All evils are attributed to his influence. They fear him, and refrain from mentioning his name, but address no petitions to him” (1922:84).

72. Tessman (1928:199-200) was confused when he stated that an Inca called *Yoashiko* gave roasted maize and other useful plants to the Shipibo-Conibo in their myths. On the contrary, as myth 10 shows, he does not give them willingly. Instead intermediary figures such as birds must wrest them from him.
73. Farabee defines him:

The Conebo believe in a creator, who was once on earth when he made men, animals, plants, mountains, and valleys, but is now in the sky, from whence he watches the activities of men. He is called Otcipapa, or grandfather. They offer him neither homage nor devotion of any kind. (1922:84)

74. Farabee further notes a relationship between mankind and the moon: “The Shipibo worship the moon as mother of all men.” Although the moon festivals he notes in the following sentence appear not to have been held strictly for its sake, there is no doubt, as I have mentioned for the ani Šhrēati, that the moon was an important “guest” at such festivities. As to his statement that “they have no worship of the sun” (1922:104), he may be correct in the public sense, as in a ceremony, but as we have already seen curing shamans invoke the sun in a ritual sense in their songs.

75. Harner identifies this plant:

*Psychotria viridis*, containing the powerful hallucinogen N, N, dimethyltryptamine, has been identified as a [banisteriopsis] admixture regularly used by the... Cashinahua of Eastern Peru, who call it nai kawa.... On the Río Ucayali in Eastern Peru, I found that the Shipibo-Conibo also add to ayahuasca the leaves of a botanically unidentified plant called cawa, which presumably is the *Psychotria* of the linguistically related Cashinahua. Carneiro also reports... that the neighboring and closely related Amahuaca Indians use kawa leaves as a strengthener. (1973:4)

76. To emphasize the power of the drug, Shipibo men relate stories of how mestizos have come to the settlement to drink nishi and have had to be tied to the house posts as they rave through the night, afflicted by very alarming visions.

77. The shaman uses other methods of curing as well. He will combine massage of the afflicted areas with strong tobacco smoke blown on the area from his shinitapon, as I witnessed once when I had borrowed a shaman’s old tari, heavy with his power, to trace its quenêa. The loan was for an afternoon after I promised the reluctant shaman that I would have my field assistant return it by late afternoon at the latest (it is significant that the shaman cannot be without his tari during the night, even now when he wears Western clothing). Halfway through the morning my assistant came rushing over pleading with me to return the tari because the spirits of the tari were afflicting him with nausea and stomach pains. We did so and the shaman treated him in the manner specified.

78. My data indicate at least a year for this period of apprenticeship, during which much herbal lore is accumulated. Because bewitching is a
private and hidden matter, in contrast to curing, which is public and visible, I was able to get little data on it.

79. Note that whereas the curing shaman smokes—and therefore “cooks”—his tobacco, the bewitching shaman drinks his “raw,” mixed only with his own saliva.

80. The parallels between the dietary restrictions placed on evil shamans and those imposed on menstruating women and the girls who go through the ani Šhrēati should be obvious.

III. The Model

1. Sometimes good is located below the earth, but in such instances there is always a lower realm where evil is to be found, as with the River Campa:

Beneath our earth two strata are distinguished. The stratum immediately below the earth is called Kivínti, inhabited by good spirits and into which the earth’s river falls at Ocitiriko [east point]....The second subterranean stratum, presumably situated below Kivínti, but the Campas are somewhat vague on this point, is Sharinkavení, the Campa Hell, the stronghold of demons, where the Lord of Demons, Korioshpíri, resides and presides. (Weiss 1975:255)

2. The lowest sphere of the Campa-Nomatsiguenga cosmos, two levels below the earth, is Sharincabeni (cognate with Sharinkavěni in n. 7), where, unlike the general pattern of South Amerindian Hades, it is hot; ardent fires burn perpetually; and the only food of the dead is burning coals (Shaver 1975:50). This shows Christian missionary influence. Otherwise this Hades is a typical underworld abode. There is no manioc beer there, indeed no vegetable food at all. It is shrouded in darkness without the light of either the sun or the stars. It is also the abode of evil spirits who had their origin there and from there visit the earth to wreak havoc. It is the miserable home of the unsuccessful souls cast down by the Tsirontsiro.

3. The Apinayé actually speak of a huge post that supports the world rather than a tree, but that it is carved out of the World Tree is indicated by the fact that it is alive and regenerates itself like the World Tree and defies the attempts of humanlike creatures to cut it down.

4. For another variant of this myth see Loriot and Hollenbach (1970:44-47). This myth is clearly related to a Machiguenga myth from the same culture area (Shaver 1975:52) in which a World Tree connected with darkness (the underworld aspect) lifts the people who have cut it down into the sky.

5. The World Tree does not cause the world flood in this particular myth. Rather that is one of its central functions cross-culturally within the
area. The flood is not a malicious act on its part but an act of passive revenge; the flood issues from its severed trunk.

6. The Pemon link one kind of noxious insectlike creature, the spider, with snakes. The venomous spider *akurik* invents venom, is the owner of it, and becomes the Master of Poisonous Snakes (Armellada and Napolitano 1975:259).

7. Weiss suggests an accidental homonymy between their morpheme to *kill* and the name of this particular frog demon, *Oánto*. That demon is described in the text itself as *Oantapinitátsiri* (“he who always killed”) (personal communication 1980). It is here that the model can give a satisfactory reason for this puzzling association by taking into account the lowland-wide role of the frog as either the giant ogre or its miniature progeny. In that model, being the defender of Nature, the evil associations of the frog make this particular Campa piece of symbolism utterly appropriate. There is a way of reconciling the specific with the general here. Weiss states, “Perhaps we can explain the myth as a Campa etymological effort to explain the peculiar name of this species of frog in terms compatible with the general view of the Salientia in the South American tropical forest to which you refer” (personal communication 1980).

8. Powlison does not connect this story with the Guianan frog stories; instead he regards it as a European-introduced folktale. Yet the functions and attributes of the old witch, although specifically not identified as a frog, play the same role in this Yagua tale as the human transformation of the frog does elsewhere in the lowlands.

9. This cayman is related to the moon, as the following Warao mythical paraphrase hints: *Imanaidarotu* (“lord of the night”)--in my system an analogue of the Caymaniac Moon Dragon--makes a Wooden Bride for *Jokojiarotu* (“lord of the sun”) from the trunk of a *jobo* tree (Barral 1960:95-99).

10. Karsten (1964:54) cites a similar myth from the Toba that makes the further connection between the invasion of a young girls’ body while she is bathing or menstruating for the first time by evil spirits in the from of snakes, who make her pregnant, and the similar invasion of the bodies of fish by the same evil spirits, or spirits of the dead. Hence women must abstain from eating fish for some time after a death. The same logic probably also explains the Shipibo food taboos they place on young girls undergoing their first-menstruation *ani Šhrēati* ceremony—that they cannot eat large fish.

11. This aquatic connection of women with death and fish poison, as well as the male Yellow Jaguar’s opposition to such associations, is shown by a Tupi-Kagwahiv informant who “goes on from recounting the jaguar threat to his father telling him not to ‘play with the little girls’ when the fishpool was poisoned, or ‘the fish won’t die,’ a reference to the taboo on sexual intercourse during *timbó* poisoning” (Kracke 1978a:261f.) If death
is an autoerotic act for females when self-inflicted, then males having intercourse with them will keep women from dying.

12. Armellada and Napolitano (1975:351, on the Piaroa) point out that a variant of the fishing of the first woman out of a deep pool or river is the hoisting of her out of a deep hole. Both entries into the dry masculine world show the Fish Woman’s close connection with the subaquatic realm.

13. Kracke (personal communication 1980) notes that the Tupi-Kagwahiv regard dolphins as human and stress their playfulness. They are respected and not eaten under any circumstances. Further, dolphins are beautiful sirens that endanger men by luring them into the water.

14. There are also dolphin sorceresses. Recall the Shipibo belief that the small black (gray) dolphins are the effluvia of the Shipibo variant of the Fish Woman. The larger red dolphin follows the color code for the lowlands by being identified as male. It is he who is the principal threat to women as an aquatic seducer. Presumably the female dolphins can act as sirens for men, but I have no specific data on that function.

15. Other forms of the anaconda can also assume the role of the rainbow. For some lowland groups the rainbow is the electric eel (Lehmann-Nitsche 1919-1927, 28:230, 232). Among the River Campa the rainbow demon, Oyéchari, predictably lives in foul places along the rivers and brooks, but instead of appearing as an anaconda it takes the form of a giant catfish (zungaro in local Spanish) with longitudinal stripes along its body like the stripes on the Campa men’s robes (Weiss 1975:287). The largest of these armor-headed catfish I have seen killed in Campa territory (also Shahuaya) was a huge Brachyplatystoma filamentosum over two meters long, but it is unknown if this is the species, among others, to which the River Campa refer here. As Weiss points out, ecological circumstances could be responsible for this switch: “Because the River Campa do associate the rainbow with a catfish-like demon, it could be argued that the Campa belief is an aberrant form of the rainbow-serpent concept, in a region where the anaconda does not occur” (1975:490). Similarly, the rainbow-anaconda can be associated with other aspects of the Dragon such as cayman and turtles—witness Whitten’s summation of the dualistic master-mistress of the water spirits among the Canelos Quichua:

Sungui is master of water spirits; he is Yacu supai runa and his wife is Yacu supai huarmi, water spirit’s woman, or Yacu mama, the continuity of water life. Sungui, whether male or female manifestation, is dressed in a beautiful multicolor cloak representing the spectrum of the rainbow, with red predominant. He sits on a bancu which is either the cayman, apamama, or the large water turtle, charapa. Sungui’s animal manifestation is the giant anaconda, which he uses as a canoe when traveling beneath the surface of a river and which itself spans the forest domain as a rainbow. (1976:38)
16. Excessive noise is also linked to excessive water and wind, as the following Warao story indicates. The father of a mythical woman (the Fish Woman) is a huge serpent. She warns her husband that he will swallow him. Of her father the Fish Woman says, “He comes like a hurricane; he always comes by here like a strong wind...that shakes the trees and batters the roof of the house.” He comes to the accompaniment of lightning bolts and thunder (Armellada and Napolitano 1975:132-133). Rain and thunder are related to excessive noise in an even more transparent manner by the Canelos Quichua, who have a class of aquatic spirit, from the domain of the anaconda, that makes a terrible noise. It is the

Paccha supai, waterfall spirit, which comes from the river to frighten them during hunting trips to areas rich in large game. The Paccha supai walks amidst thunder, rain and darkness making a frightening, rhythmic noise, represented onomatopoeically as tulú-sdurúng, tulú-sdurúng. (Whitten 1976:61f.)

17. Other groups, like the Tupi-Gavião, also relate the anaconda to the underwater realm, the realm of the Goñañéeč, aquatic spirits (D. Moore, personal communication 1978).

18. Therefore when men want to seduce women they do with the anaconda what they did with the dolphin aquatic seducer; they kill it and use its skin, oil, teeth, brain, or vertebrae to attract women--and, as one might imagine, fish (Whitten 1976:80, on the Canelos Quichua).

19. Keeping in mind Hugh-Jones’s (1974:145, on the Barasana) strictures about the duality of all these symbols, however, there are in reality two gourds, not just one. There may be a symmetry in symbols, but the weight given them is seldom equal. Thus among the Barasana the gourd that is female is mentioned far more often than the gourd that is male, indicating that this symbol, although dualistic, is heavily feminine in connotations.

20. There are always problems with the tapir’s food. His excreted droppings are as unsuitable for human food as are the vomited carrion of vultures. Both foods are too “natural,” being prepared without fire; yet their origin mirrors the above-below polarity of their spheres, the land-bound food coming from the anus and the sky-associated food from the mouth. Similarly, the (Black) Water Jaguar, like the tapir and unlike the Yellow Jaguar, brings fish to his human bride (Stone 1962:59, on the Talamanca).

21. Given the sexually ambivalent nature of the tapir it is not surprising that a Tupi-Kagwahiv informant’s dream of male homosexual intercourse with a bisexual male shaman who can magically change his penis into a vagina leads in real life to luck in hunting and killing tapir (Kracke 1978a:222).

22. If white men are fished out of a lake (Weiss 1975:415), as piranhas
are further down in the lowlands, the Piaroa make a direct connection between piranhas and foreigners, believing the latter were descended from voracious piranha-children while the Piaroa themselves were descended from the benevolent sun (Wilbert 1966:66-71). The Apiayé take a similar tack, attributing the origin of white men to white fish and the origin of black men to black fish (Nimuenendajú 1967:168).

23. Like the cayman or the anaconda, the jaguar can in areas where it is not found by replaced by a smaller form, the ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975:4, on the Guahibo = Cuiva). Normally when the jaguar is present the ocelot is ignored, as are the lesser jungle wildcats; but should the jaguar be absent these smaller forms take over most of its mythical functions. The same sort of replacement has been documented archaeologically for the South Coast of Peru, where the older and more formidable Chavín jaguar was replaced by a smaller indigenous wildcat, the fierce “jaguar” symbolism becoming somewhat domesticated in the process. One can also suggest that the importance of the puma in the Andes is a similar case of ecological replacement because the high mountains lie outside the jaguar’s natural range. Obviously, the content of the symbolism is bound to change under such circumstances because the retiring puma is no match for the ferocious jaguar.

24. Like Leï-Strauss, Reichel-Dolmatoff does not distinguish between the Yellow and Black Jaguar figures. Therefore he lumps all the jaguar’s disparate associations together in one generalized jaguar figure to which he gives the Black Jaguar’s traits: “The jaguar of the hallucinatory sphere, the jaguar-monster of Tukano tales, is a man’s alter ego, now roaming free and untrammelled, and acting out his deepest desires and fears” (1975:132). Though this may be true of the Black Jaguar ogre, it is not true of the Yellow Jaguar, who stands for restraint and constraint—the rules of culture that restrict rather than liberate the libido.

25. The feminine association with death and the death-mimicking experience of taking drugs is reinforced by the Barasana affirmation that the Fish (anaconda) Woman created coca (Hugh-Jones 1974:281).

26. Weiss presents what seems to be anomalous information from the River Campa who, like the Shipibo and others (Powlison 1977:60, on the Yagua), distinguish between good and bad shamans but only link the jaguar with the evil shaman or witch doctor. The bad ones “are shamans reputed to have contact not with the good spirits but with jaguars, which are demons. It is believed that their souls become jaguars at night to attack people as they sleep” (Weiss 1975:245). In my view the River Campa appear to have collapsed a lowland distinction between Black and Yellow Jaguars into the negative connotations of just the Black Jaguar. Weiss states: “The major sub-category, that of the common spotted jaguar is simply called by the general species name [manati] in keeping with Campa linguistic practice (equation of category and major sub-category)” (personal communication 1980), while the Black jaguar is “the only large
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feline given a special name... (cháonari)” (1975:302-303). While Weiss asserts that “the River Campas are well aware of the danger posed by any jaguar and do not make any color distinction in fearing them” (personal communication 1980), a black feline ogre turned to stone in the cleft of a cliff (1975:289) and the appearance of another jaguar demon out of a deep hole from which issues a brook (1975:265-266)--characteristic abodes of the Dragon-affiliated Black Jaguar elsewhere in the lowlands--at least admit of the possibility of a Black Jaguar figure as one of the influences on the formation of River Campa thought.

Indicative of another sort of Celestial Jaguar, which may have been regarded as more beneficent, and which I identify with the Yellow Jaguar, is Weiss’s statement:

I detected a slight ambivalence toward jaguars among the Campas, which might suggest that the big felines had a somewhat more honorable status among the Campas before missionary influence directed the Campas’ reverence more exclusively toward the sky. The jaguar-shamans, who have no special name, may be survivors from a time when all shamans associated themselves more closely with jaguars. (1975:303f)

Last, one is given the important information that “there are jaguars (manúti) in the sky, among the henókuati (‘sky-dwellers’), that are good rather than demonic” (1975:290), which is congruent with the model’s good = celestial/terrestrial = bad equation.

27. The Black Jaguar plays much the same role in a Yagua myth (Powlison 1974:114-122). He is the fierce ogre who defeats a number of heroic workmen employed by a patróín and eats all their food until the patróín himself kills him, decapitating the head while the body runs back to its lair. The patróín follows the bloody trail until it arrives at a dark hole in the earth. The patróín and his helpers then enter the earth, the realm of King Isabel, whom Powlison thinks is a borrowed Western personage. Only his name is foreign; in reality King Isabel is the Dragon whose daughter the Black Jaguar has stolen. A huge spider monkey guards the way to the King’s (Dragon’s) lair. He defeats the various champions, as the Black Jaguar had earlier defeated them, and must also be killed by the patróín. Finally, underground, they find the “daughter of the King,” which because he does not have a comparative perspective Powlison fails to recognize as the Fish Woman. The Dragon then allows the hero, who is really an analogue of the sun acting as culture hero, to marry his daughter but proposes impossible tests and finally pursues the fleeing couple trying to kill them. The ogreish Dragon is easily fooled and confused as in the Barasana myth (T. Langdon 1978) by a cloud of “smoke” (in this case talc powder) and finally blunders into a trap the daughter has set for him and dies. This myth, with undeniable acculturative elements, nevertheless
obey the indigenous logic of weaving together Black Jaguar, Fish Woman, and Dragon (and in some other cases King Vulture Lord, another aspect of the same figure).

28. Schaller (personal communication 1979) has recently embarked on the first intensive and systematic study of the jaguar (in the Mato Grosso) and indicates that rarity may be the key variable in determining what form of the jaguar will be considered the fiercest: “The black is usually rare and mysterious, hence more ferocious. In one area of the Tocantins of Brazil, blacks are said to be the most abundant. And there the regular is considered the most ferocious.”

29. As Reichel-Dolmatoff indicates, “the emphasis on vomiting as a means of ritual purification is of interest in this context; vomiting is noneating, the opposite of food intake, and in this sense it is an asexual attitude” (1975:106), vomiting being the opposite of “devouring,” the typical attitude of the ogre.

30. The red moon in this association may be a reference to the moon being filled with menstrual blood, which in turn is identified with contagion and death.

31. Sometimes, as among the Tupi-Kagwahiv (Kracke 1978a:11), this perceived similarity between monkeys and humans leads to a taboo against the eating of monkey flesh, but normally there is enough demand based on protein insufficiency to make monkey flesh, along with birds, one of the staple forms of game in the tropical forest.

32. Marmosets (*Callithrix sp.*), the primitive lemurlike New World precursors of the monkeys, are morphologically linked to monkeys, and the Yagua (Powlison 1971-1972:78) give the same negative connotations to them. A female monkey (female = bad) lets her brothers who live inside a tall tree trunk (shades of the Dragon-in-the-Tree) kill her own husband. Then they engage in a cannibalistic feast in which they consume his flesh. Here again cannibalism as extreme anticultural activity is linked to monkeys (marmosets) as minor arboreal representatives of the Dragon.

33. The other mythologically important monkey in South America is the spider monkey (*Ateles ater*), the largest platyrrhine monkey and in its arboreal brachiating acrobatics, size, and ecological specialization of feeding from fruit located at the ends of branches, the New World equivalent of the Old World gibbon. Its impressive size; long, black hair; and large canines all make the spider monkey a good associate, and to some degree a substitute for, the Black Jaguar in lowland mythology. As the Urubu Aé figure shows, it has an underworld function (see also the Yagua *patrón*- Black Jaguar myth cited earlier).

34. On occasion the libidinous aspect of the monkey is coupled with its funny character, as when the thin and ugly monkey wins the heart of a heroine because he is the only one capable of making her laugh (Armellada and Napolitano 1975:255, on the Pemón).

35. The color code can take precedence over the zoological code as,
for example, when the monkey plays one of its few positive roles, it does so in Yarabara mythology (Wilbert 1958:61) because it is a white monkey rather than the usual negative black form. In this myth the white monkey receives the Sun Bird, captured by another bird sent from the elder of the Magical Twins (himself a transformation of the sun) and carefully wrapped in a mass of cotton string of clouds so as not to lose its fire. The cloud ball is thrown to earth, where the white monkey receives it in his hands, painstakingly unwraps the mysterious package filament by filament, and places the product in its basketry cage from whence it had been incautiously freed by the curiosity of the moon (the younger brother). Here the “white monkey” is clearly a humanoid culture hero whose anthropoid characteristics are stressed over its antihuman behavioral component because the white color carries all the positive connotations of the Yellow Jaguar, intermediary between man and sun, and the sun itself.

36. The Pajonal Campa (Varese 1968:130) appear anomalously to place the dog in a negative role, opposing mankind. This is so only because it is maltreated and has not been given its fair share of the game it has helped catch. This also explains the Mesoamerican-like association of the dog with death and the fact that in Pajonal Campa thought it receives the dead, like a guide (1968:130). Otherwise when treated justly the dog is both helper and defender of mankind.

37. One way out of the sun/moon anomaly is the Makiritare solution (Civrieux 1970:141-146) of having both the sun and the moon sired by the Father of the Sun and the Mother of the Water, a huge boa. Then the son of the sun, Wanadi, can become a culture hero who fulfills the sun’s role on earth while the son of the boa, Hui’io, can represent the moon.

38. The world flood itself is caused by falling black tears of the star people, progeny of the moon’s incestuous marriage with his bird sister, Jilucu. Thus the Canelos Quichua relate excessive celestial waters to the moon’s incest (Whitten 1976:51). The stars themselves are actually the souls of the dead.

39. Weiss (personal communication 1980) interprets this reference as a postcontact analogy coincident with the introduction of nylon fishing line and metal hooks. I will point out, however, that modern imagery does not obviate ancient symbolism. I do not find it anomalous that a long, sinuous object connected with both water and fish (female symbols) should be treated as an “imported analogue” to the ogre’s phallus with the same connections. Strange as it may sound, a modern hook and nylon line may indeed serve as avatars of the Dragon.

40. Because in River Campa thought the moon was a male with a serpent penis rather than a female who causes a male’s penis to turn into a serpent, as in this Tacana myth, he rescues people from eating termite nests (Weiss 1975:268) by giving them the female crop of manioc rather than turning into the mother of termites as the penis does here.

41. In a River Campa myth (Weiss 1975:378-379) the niece and wife
of the moon, when pregnant by him, spits (his sperm?), which becomes all the
demonic insects and snakes.

42. The transforming demiurge Avírerí of River Campa mythology (Weiss
1975:328) exhibits strong correspondences to the Shipibo tapir cycle (myths 7 and
8) and the theme of birds bathing in the blood of the Dragon (Weiss 1975:488,
501-502 for additional River Campa cases). Like the Shipibo tapir and the ever-
more neotenic genipa trees, Avírerí can be followed by locating his ever-more
neotenic fields of corn. Avírerí, or rather, his grandson Kíri, with whom he is
identified (see 1975:521), dies in a female way like the Shipibo tapir, through a
kind of suicide in which he advises humans to kill him by driving a spike through
his head and body into the ground. They do so, and Kíri is converted into the
spiny kiri palm. Like the Shipibo genipa tree this palm serves as an analogue of
the World Tree as spines are its natural defense. The spines are produced by the
vulture, like the tapir another companion or aspect of the Dragon, who wipes his
arse on the tree trunk. This parallels the anal symbolism of the Shipibo tapir cycle
with its trees growing from the excrement of the tapir. Then, in a passage clearly a
variant of the bathing theme:

His blood forms a lake, and at his bidding birds came to bathe therein.
Some of the birds, including all the sacred birds, bathe only once in the
blood and emerge with beautiful plumage. But others, including the
demonic birds, are greedy, not satisfied with their good looks after bathing
once, and bathe again, emerging with ugly plumage. (1975:328)

Thus we have an indirect form of the World Tree causing the basic differentiation
between good and bad birds based on their greed or circumspection.

43. In River Campa mythology, before ascending into the sky the sun
transforms into animals a number of creatures that are his enemies, but being just,
he does so only as a punishment for their wrongs. Elsewhere in the lowlands these
sun-opposed creatures, all associated with the Dragon and the moon, are: the tapir,
for his disobedience in refusing to accompany the sun into heaven and his oral
greed (Weiss 1975:394); the porcupine, for his warlike tendencies, and his
metonymic similarity to the feminine World Tree and its spines (although the
River Campa liken his quills to arrows--Weiss 1975:396); the sloth, also for his
warlike tendencies--an anomaly; the wasp, likewise and not an anomaly; and fish,
for their cannibalism, like the cannibal moon with which they are associated
(1975:390).

The “anomaly” of the sloth may be clarified in another myth, that of
Pleiades and Orion, which incorporates the same episodes (p. 405). Porcupine and Sloth failed to climb the sky-rope, were cast down and
transformed, because the former lacked strength and the latter
was too slow, so that they could not ascend the sky-rope quickly enough while there was still time: the sky-rope was a test that only the “best” could pass. In addition, the sloth’s upside-down posture is associated with falling (p. 396). (personal communication 1980)

44. An alternative to having the sun swallowed by a woman is to employ another womb symbol, having it hidden in a string bag (Garcia 1971:92-93, on the Warao).

45. Weiss (personal communication 1980) notes that “hummingbirds are sacred birds probably because of their perceived beauty and ability to hover in the air--there is also an association with the sacred tobacco plants, whose flowers they visit. Their dark plumage is recognized as part of their beauty.... The one exception is the demonic hummingbird tsiianti, consisting of all species that are kamára(ri) (i.e., tawny) in color.” Yet kamára(ri) is elsewhere called a “drab brown” (1975:284). This highlights a subsidiary rule of the model: Bright colors generally are good whereas dark colors are evil. Yet, where dark colors are brilliant or shiny, the shiny versus dull or drab contrast becomes the predominant one; shiny being associated with good and dull with evil. Thus it is that a shiny, iridescent black can still be a symbol of good, as where the Canelos Quichua associate it with the life force (Whitten 1976:39).

46. Powlison mistakenly identifies the ruler of the vultures as a “condor” rather than the lowland king vulture it undoubtedly was.

47. The vulture, through his connection with thunder and its underworld affiliations, does have an indirect relationship with the underworld and din. This is later reconfirmed by its location in the night sky despite its being a diurnal form. An Apinayé myth states that Thunder is like a man; he lives in the sky and is painted black like storm clouds. Thus he is linked to the Black Thunder Jaguars and to the night realm. While the sun’s messengers and helpers are yellow eagles, Thunder’s companions are black vultures and their ruler is the king vulture (Nimuendajú 1967:185).

IV. The Zygote Quickens

1. A minor ethnographic detail is that the word peque-peque is an onomatopoeic word for the Briggs and Stratton engine itself and only by extension for the boat it propels, though in current usage the two are jointly identified by the term.

2. This aquatic picture of the underworld is even preserved in an acculturating context. One Yagua Christianized informant, for example, stated that “in back of the house of God there is a deep hole where all the bad ones are deposited when they die. He referred to this place as ‘the lake’” (Powlison 1977:60, trans. mine). This association confirms the underworld = bad/good = celestial heaven equation of the aboriginal model as well as the aquatic aspects of the subterrestrial realm.
3. Some authorities might consider this sketch alien to the viewpoints of their informants in single-cultural systems (Weiss, personal communication 1980). Yet the goal of my analysis is not an “emic” reconstruction (in the “participant’s” sense of that term), but an etic (observer’s) one, because it is meant for cross-cultural comparison. If, as I believe it can, my system decodes many otherwise inexplicable or apparently idiosyncratic bits of mythical symbolism and provides a skeleton for their interrelation, then it will have succeeded.

4. As Lyon (1979:100) notes, these identifications make Cayman B the earliest female depiction in Peruvian art and the Tello Obelisk a clear prototype for later styles—such as the Yaya-Mama style, a Pre-Pucara style from the Titicaca Basin—that juxtaposes male = female depictions on opposite sides of a stela.

5. Yet Lathrap in his summary comes much closer to my system than these discrepancies might indicate:

The gifts of the great cayman of the sky are seedcrops, while the gifts of the great cayman of the water and the underworld are root crops cultivated by cuttings from their underground organs...the gifts of the sky cayman, aji and the bottle gourd, are also classically of the house garden, while the gifts of the great cayman of the water and underworld, manioc and achira, are definitely crops of the chacra. (1977:734)

6. Both Lyon (1979:100) and I (Roe 1978a:23) have independently identified this figure (Figure 15) as a female. My identification comes from the inverted U-shaped continuous mouth band with canines that makes up the central part of the “sash” ending in the snake heads of the loin cloth. The mouth on this loin cloth is equipped with crossed fangs and serrated teeth as befits its function. In contrast, the male aspect of this super-natural, Figure 16, lacks this mouth as well as the “breasts.”

7. Luckert connects these depictions with a Kulturkreise-like historical reconstruction of the displacement of the “megalithic” agriculturalist’s serpent cults (1976:27) by a later hunter-society celestial jaguar cult (1976:24). Although the jaguar does seem to get more prominent and the Dragon more veiled in Mesoamerican religious systems as time progresses, I discount such a theory because the model requires both figures to be present from the beginning, although a shift in popularity between the figures could and probably did occur.

8. As far as the general properties of the model are concerned, the rattler and the anaconda are the same; they have the same function. The rattler displaces the anaconda simply for ecological reasons, the big constrictor not being found in this area. Otherwise the underground, aquatic, and feminine functions of “serpents” remains the same between South and Central America.

9. There does seem to be one exception to this identification, and that
is the “flayed pelt” (Joralemon 1971:35, fig. 90) with pelage markings (star patterns) on it. An analogue of the later “starry night” Black Jaguar pelt, this is surely a jaguar and not a Dragon. The difference is small, however, inasmuch as the Black Jaguar is an aspect of the Subaquatic Dragon.

10. This is admittedly a difficult decision because Grove’s equating of the bird-man with the Mayan Moan bird is attractive. Owls are naturalistically depicted elsewhere in Olmec art from the same caves—as in Painting I-E (Grove 1970:15, fig. 9).

11. I am not the only one to use tropical forest data to decode the iconography of Moche art. For example Benson stresses the shamanistic role of this protector status and uses a tropical forest analogy of a stone snuff container from the Sucurujú, Río Trombetas region of Brazil (1947:23).

12. A similar figure is shown emerging from a cluster of the feminine underworld crop of manioc (Sawyer 1966:56, fig. 76); but his headdress is different, and in this style even minor differences in headdress or tunic forms signal a different supernatural. The model suggests that such a supernatural might be the Black Jaguar.