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Robert A. PAUL, *The Tibetan Symbolic World: Psychoanalytic Explorations*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982. 347 pp, US $14.00 (paper)

Marcia Calkowski

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Cette interrogation néglige un peu une idée pourtant prometteuse développée par Augé lors de sa discussion des écrits de Nietzche (chap. III). Car ce dernier a devancé Augé à certains égards, en tant que les idées présentées dans *Aurore* et *La généalogie de la morale* constituent une sorte de profil du paganisme qui correspond assez bien au profil d'Augé. Nietzche n'était pourtant pas africaniste ; il puisait dans l'hindouisme et surtout dans le bouddhisme le type d'idées proposées par Augé sous le drapeau du paganisme. Tout en signalant ce fait, Augé n'introduit pourtant pas le bouddhisme dans l'image qu'il donne à la fin de son livre du paganisme en général. On aurait bien aimé voir comment le ritualisme du bouddhisme — la cérémonie du thé, le culte de l'adresse à l'épée, les règles du comportement social — pourrait s'interpréter dans le cadre du « paganisme » comme défini ci-dessus, et aussi dans quelle mesure le bouddhisme pourrait donner au paganisme la profondeur intellectuelle et expériencielle qui lui assurerait une survie modeste, sans éclats mais quand même moins précaire et menacée par les théologies que dans le passé.

Robert A. PAUL, *The Tibetan Symbolic World : Psychoanalytic Explorations*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982. 347 pp, US $14.00 (paper).

By Marcia Calkowski
University of British Columbia

Breaking with Tibetological tradition, this ambitious venture subjects a fascinating array of Sherpa ritual, iconography, social structure, and Tibetan text to the varying thrusts of a theoretical inspection forged from Freudian and Structuralist tenets. It embarks from the author's contention that the murder of an anti-Buddhist Tibetan king in 842 A.D. by a Buddhist monk was not so much a justified violation of Buddhist vows in the interest of preserving religion as it was the enactment of an Oedipal drama concerned with the succession of political and sacred authority. Paul's analysis seeks to demonstrate that much of Sherpa and Tibetan symbolism centers around solutions to such Oedipal dilemmas confronted by saints, culture heroes, and divine kings.

Paul's thesis is developed by combining Freudian Oedipal themes and their entailments with structural ones conforming to the conviction that symbols play out possibilities paradoxical to the perceived structure of reality, and, thus, point up the paradoxes themselves as the underlying generative operators constructing symbolic formulations (such as ritual) which *are* acceptable to the perceived reality of a society. Paul's generative model, then, consists of four injunctions expressed in two paradoxes : that senior males must and must not kill their juniors, and vice versa. But three corollaries tagged to this model — (1) that guilt is assigned any beneficiary of another's death ; (2) death is meted out to anyone so guilty ; and (3) death is synonymous with murder — indicate that the model favors its Freudian parentage. From these generative principles the author conceives a paradigm wherein the succession of generations requires the efforts of four actors (the paternal 'order' figure, the usurper, the avenger or atoner, and the innocent heir) and the death of three.

Deriving examples from social structure, Paul deftly illustrates how Sherpa ultimogeniture lends itself to this paradigm where the middle son, typically destined for the monastery, assumes the role of atoner as he is denied access to women — i.e., biological reproduction, and, therefore, is symbolically killed or castrated. But, as Paul argues, a monk is not denied reproduction on a cultural level, and may in fact generate a lineage through the transmission of spiritual power from guru to disciple. In this way, the paternal uncle-nephew relationship, generally construed as hostile among Sherpas and Tibetans, is transformed in the monastery (or on the cultural level) into that of spiritual father and son. This transformation neatly condenses the four roles of the Oedipal drama into two.

Paul substantiates his contention that Oedipal themes are a focal concern in Sherpa and Tibetan symbolism with often ingenious analyses of Sherpa ritual and Tibetan text, but the crux of the book appears in Paul's discussion of religious roles. Here he presents two alternatives as role models available to Sherpa and Tibetan males confronted with the Oedipal crisis. The first is that of the tantric master, who marries and engages in subduing wrathful beings for the benefit of the community and successfully overcomes the Oedipal crisis through great struggle. The second alternative is that of the monk, who retreats from the succession crisis altogether and opts for permanent junior status. The ego ideal of the monk is the reincarnate lama, who, according to Paul, never passes through growth and conflict but returns from death to assume his 'throne' and is "self-generating, immortal, and asexual", a perpetual infant who is his own father and the monastery's claim "to the possibility of asexual reproduction". The reincarnate lama would then

condense the four roles of Paul's paradigm into one, and if, as Paul suggests from his analysis of the iconographic depictions of Cherenzi (the patron deity of monks), the reincarnate lama appropriates the aspects of the good father and the good mother, he would embody the ultimate solution to the Oedipal crisis.

But this argument warrants careful examination. As Paul would have it, the reincarnate lama is of special joy to the monastic community in that his existence obviates the need for women. Tibetan symbolism, however, points in a slightly different direction. The reincarnate is not self-generating. The parents of a Dalai Lama are among the most venerable personages in Tibet and the reincarnate lama always travels from one death to another birth in the company of sky goddesses. The chief defender of the Dalai Lama is a wrathful goddess, whether or not she may be a 'bad mother imago', she is necessary for a Dalai Lama's 'being in the world'. Furthermore, Paul disappoints in failing to pursue the question of how a reincarnate lama achieves his 'immortality'. In Tibetan thought, all souls are immortal, subject to rebirth in different bodies and different realms. What distinguishes the reincarnate lama from this lot is the esoteric wisdom enabling him to select the precise circumstances of his rebirth for the benefit of humanity. This esoteric wisdom in Tantric parlance is known as feminine. Paul argues that reincarnate lamas do not pass through an Oedipal succession crisis, but does not mention that reincarnate lamas must demonstrate before their tutors a 'mastery' of this esoteric wisdom upon being initially recognized as the 'true' incarnation and later, upon taking examinations. This would suggest that when biological need for women is repressed, Tibetan symbolism finds a way to introduce this need on another level. The subtleties of this transformation are worth pondering.

In sum, this book is challenging and engagingly written, it submits a rich span of cultural materials to a fast-paced analysis, but at times impoverishes that same material by overlooking the discrepancies between Sherpa and Tibetan exegeses and foregoing the import of these exegeses in favor of Freudian symbolic fusions. It will invite debate from several disciplines.

Michael TAUSSIG, *The Devil and Commodity Fetichism in South America*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1980. 256 pp, US $19.50 (cloth).

By Margaret Rodman
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Wage labourers in Colombia sugar plantations and Bolivian tin mines make contracts with the devil to increase productivity, yet they invoke God and fertility spirits when they cultivate land as peasant farmers. They regard practices that we accept as commonplace aspects of economic life, such as the transformation of labour into labour-time, as unnatural and even evil. These are elements of a central paradox whose meaning Michael Taussig explores on two levels : he examines why the people in his study represent their involvement with capitalism in terms of the devil, and he challenges our assumptions about the naturalness of our own cultural forms.

A dynamic blend of fantasy and social realism constitutes reality in the Cauca Valley of Colombia where Taussig conducted four years' research. This is the Macondo of Garcia Marquez' fiction, a land where, as Taussig observes, the production of magic is inseparable from the magic of production. Peasants share and exchange magical power with plants and mountains. Plantation workers make pacts with a devil who is ambiguously evil. Such a contract is believed to enhance the worker's productivity, thereby increasing his income, but the money is "barren" : it "cannot serve as productive capital but has to be spent immediately on what are considered to be luxury consumer items" (p. 94). To make such a pact is to court danger and invite early death. For plantation workers, the devil symbolizes production and destruction, the "dialectical oneness of good and evil" (p. 113). Whether, or how often such contracts are actually made are questions the author find irrelevant to an examination of the alleged pacts as a reaction to the restructuring of the peasants' world.

Analysts who would reduce the fantastic beliefs and practices of displaced peasants in the Cauca Valley (or in the Andean mines) to a desire for material gain, a strategy for coping with anxiety, or a response to perceptions of a Limited Good blind themselves to the vivid images cast up in the clash between an economy based on use-value and large-scale capitalist development. Taussig recognizes that one must expose devil beliefs that seem natural to practitioners for the fetiches they are. But what is