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GUATEMALA TRADITIONS



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UNIVERSIDAD SAN CARLOS DE GUATEMALA

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ORIGIN OF CORN IN GUATEMALA: SEMIOTIC LECTURE OF MAYAN MYTHS

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Our **Corpus** is made up of three myths that correspond to the oral traditions of communities that belongs to the Mayan Linguistics Families of Guatemala. These myths have been taken from monographs conducted in the field.

These myths are known as myths related to the origin of corn. All have as their theme the establishment a “know” about cultivable plants and a “know – how” (to cultivate and consequently to make agricultural work systematic).

We have used the systematic method following the orientation and consequently, the metalanguage of A. J. *Greimás*, because it offers the possibility of creating an objective description that takes into consideration “the materiality” of the text as condition of existence of the mystical sense.

Within this perspective the credibility depends exclusively of the text; the context just tap on the analysis in order to confirm a hypothesis that have exclusively of the textual analysis.

It is not about to split off completely the Corpus of the context, but rather of separate the fields and consider the mystical speech as one meaning unit with their own organizational internal laws.

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- 1 Rodríguez Rouanet, F. (1971); Shaw, M. (1972).
- 2 Cfr. Ballón 1978, pág. 58: “En Lingüística el término texto designa cualquier conjunto de enunciados a análisis y actualizado en lenguaje oral o escrito”.

This method will allow us to compare the different versions and establish the relationships that link them to one another; the study of relationships will make these myths understandable and will help us to unravel the ideology that contains without needing to resort to external referents; It will guide us through a reductionist process, to transcend the textual manifestation and access the internal level that has made possible its production, to the axiological structure underlying the discourse which forms the semantic framework and organizes its functioning.

Our work is divided in three parts: the first one includes the analysis of the three variants selected as reference myths; the second one considers the possibility that these three variants constitute a single story. In this case the hypothesis consists of assuming the existence of a process in derivation between the myths, which gives as a final result an “inter-text” or “meta-text”. That can be imagined as the convergence of the fundamental statements of the three variants previously analyzed.

This inter-text constitutes a complete narrative structure that condenses and at the same time completes the meaning of the myths about the origin of corn. In this case each variant of references is considered as sequence of the story.

In the third part we have tried to create an analysis of the instance of the statement considering, as hypothesis, that it is a reflection of situation and above all of “effects” of the statement discourse.

FIRST PART

First Version: Colotenango

“The corn came from a high place – *Nebaj*- where the corn was – at the beginning- Propriety of the owner of the place.

On one occasion, the local people suffered from food shortages; there was hunger. However, the Knowledge holders, aware of the existence of a plant that contains food grain, wanted to take advantage of it.

For this purpose, they dispatched the crow in order to steal it, but however cunning this bird was, the owner surprised him and he never ever returned to the local people who were waiting for him.

So people sent the ***Zompopo****. This insect patiently arrived to the place where the corn grown and stole the grain without being seen by the owner.

So people began sowing the grain and soon the cornfields were reproduced in all fields.

Certain day the owner of the corn went to the fields where the local people lived and saw that they ate her grain and fed with his product.

So she wondered: Who steal my corn? No one answered. She suspected of the *Zompopo* so she asks and tell, did you steal my corn? Did you steal it and give it to the local people? But the *Zompopo* never answered. Then the owner took him between her fingers and compressed him tightly around the waist to make him respond. That's the reason the *Zompopo* has a thin waist and fatter and the ends of the body

That is why it is not good to kill the *zompopos*, because it is thanks to them that men have corn; but what can we do, we have to kill them because otherwise they will eat the cornfield”.

The reference myth has been segmented from a syntactic - thematic perspective, which allowed us to establish the following narrative sequences: Private sequence, search sequence, sequence of theft and sequence of cultivation.

We have used the following symbolic notations to indicate the actantial roles in this version: S1 (the local people), S2-D (the owner), 01 (the food), 02 (the corn).

1. Private Sequence

“The corn came from a high place – *Nebaj*- where the corn was – at the beginning- Propriety of the owner of the place. On one occasion, the local people suffered from food shortages; there was hunger. However, the Knowledge holders, aware of the existence of a plant that contains food grain, wanted to take advantage of it”

In this sequence the actors of the myth are figuratively manifested through the actors “Owner” “local people” “Corn” (with catalyzed synonym: the plant that had the grain). Within the actantial structure they are distributed as two subjects.

- 4 According to tradition, the owner of the corn lives on a hill called *Paxil*, which is located in the municipality of *La Libertad*, department of *Huehuetenango*. Certain traditions affirm that she comes from ***Nebaj****, which is located in the western highlands of Guatemala, a region that seems to be indeed the place of origin of corn.

Zompopo*: Is a large, reddish or brown leaf-cutter ant with a shiny, smooth head, developed mandibles and a thorax well separated from the abdomen.

Whit the corresponding targets, which are in different typologies and presents a different relationship with the target: the subject “people” (S1) is in a state close to disjunction in relation to its object “food” (O1) and disjoint from O2 (corn). The subject “Owner” (S2) is conjunct to the object corn.

This myth does not specify what “the food shortages” are, but they are dysphorically qualified in relation with corn: it is about not enough and very nonnutritive food.

The two subjects are modalized differently in relation to possession. The subject “people” is modulated negatively in a state of suffering provoked by hunger, which modalizes the subject as desiring and gives it the necessary competence for a performance not yet actualized: “they wanted to take advantage of it”.

At the end of the sequence a discursive configuration is introduced: **the benefit**. In this case “take advantage of” implies a function: to increase goods or improve a state through an activity that involves work, the organization of activities; in this case it is systematized agricultural work. On the other hand, the same discursive configuration highlights a reflexive aspect: that of appropriation or theft.

The subject in a dysphoric state is defined by unsatisfied needs to consume for subsistence. Figurative- isotopic subsistence is defined as the actualization of “being” thanks to “having”. Not having means the subsistence of death.

2. Second sequence: The Theft

For this purpose he was sent to steal, but despite the cunning of this bird, the owner surprised him and he never returned with the people who were waiting for him.

Then the people sent the *zompopo*. This insect patiently managed to reach the place where the corn was growing and without being seen by the owner managed to steal the grain”.

In this version of the search sequence is implicit. From the beginning the subject is in possession of the object message (he knows where the corn is and to whom it belongs) but he is in a state of deprivation in relation to the object good (the food) because he does not know how to procure it; he has neither cognitive nor pragmatic competence.

For this reason he resorts to the mediation of the subject’s delegates who supposedly possess the necessary conditions to carry out the performance that will transform the situation. It is the raven and the *zompopos*.

In this way, the discursive configuration of the robbery that was implicit, as a virtual narrative program, in the possibility of “taking advantage” is presented.

The theft becomes a performance at the service of the liquidation of the “lack” suffered by the subject who is in a dysphoric state.

At the level of performance, profit is presented syntactically as an immediate conjunction of the subject with the object to the detriment of another subject. It is a glorifying appropriation that is the consequence of a main proof: theft.

The raven possesses a cognitive skill: cunning, which proves to be insufficient, since the mistress surprises him. This is a deceptive test that aims to create tension in the story and to present the progressive acquisition of the skill.

The zompopo actor possesses the necessary competence, is patient and small (which makes him almost invisible); he is cognitively and physically qualified.

The main test is preceded by a qualifying test - the displacement - with a consequence consisting in the transgression of the boundary.

The problem of "borders" is supported by a normative system that, at the discursive level, is presented as a hierarchical topological distribution; the space of the "high place -Nebaj-" corresponds to the space of the owner and the space below, "of the place", corresponds to the community.

This opposition high/low supposes a euphoric possession (of food) that creates a domination in front of a dysphoric possession (absence or shortage of food by the people of the community). The existence of this domination of this separation of space is the reason for the hardship of the people.

The displacement of the delegated subject has as an immediate consequence the conjunction of the subject with the space is forbidden. Immediately after the conjunction of the polemic type and of a reflexive acquisition of the object takes place.

5 According to Greimás' terminology: reflexive acquisition: appropriation; transitive acquisition: *GIFT*

The owner (S2) assumes throughout the story the crucial actantial role of the anti-destinator. The privacy that S1 knows must be to the domination exercised by D. At the pragmatic level it monopolizes the food good and at the cognitive level it imposes a series of values through the prohibition (obligation “not to do”) that reduces S1 to a dysphoric state of domination and modalizes it negatively.

The prohibition is exercised by the divinity actor who sets himself up as the holder and transmitter of an axiology. The marks of the prohibition are constituted by the qualification of “theft” that the owner uses in the face of the appropriation of the corn by the people (“Who stole my corn?”).

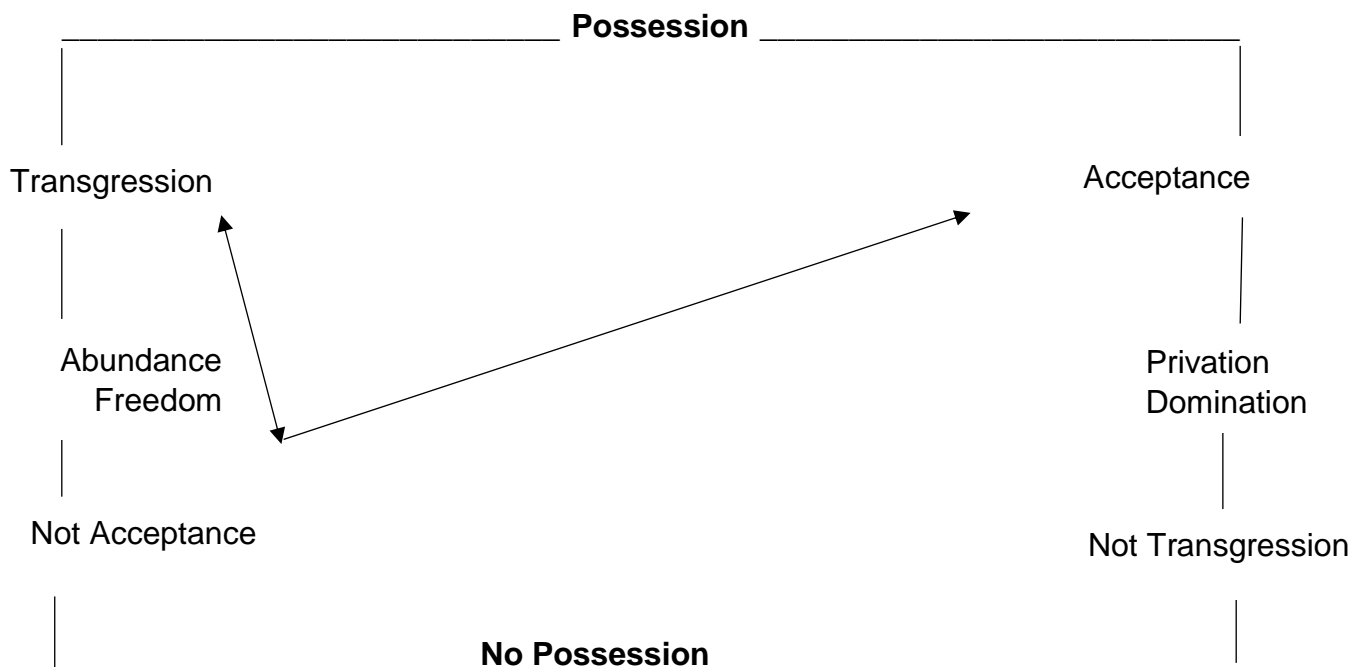
The prohibition is the basis of the contract that exists implicitly between the two subjects. As long as S1 obeys this prohibition, S2 can exercise his domination by reducing him to the state of privation.

The realization of the contract can take place through an acceptance (submission to the rules established by the contract) or a transgression (oppositions to those rules and consequently disobedience).

S1 actualizes and realizes its narrative program through the breaking of its obligations. The result of this transgression is positive for him and is cognitively sanctioned by S2 who performs an act of “recognition” by descending to the land of men and qualifying the act as theft.

From S1's perspective, transgression has a positive retribution: he does not receive punishment but reward: abundance of food and freedom.

A summary of the narrative program based on the axis of possession (from maize) would be as follows:



The antidestructor is dispossessed of his assets in the practical dimension and is challenged in the cognitive dimension. The prohibition is no longer in force.

But if we apply the veridictory modality, the theft is reduced to an “appearance”: it seems to be a dispossession but in reality it is a participation, since the divine goods can never be exhausted, and people steal only once and only a few grains. The owner continues to possess the corn but no longer hoards it.

The subject of theft is defined by the overmodalization of “being” through “having”; within the isotopy of existence (life: possessing the object; death: being deprived of it), access to the object-food is the confirmation of its power-being”.

If we consider the possibility of establishing the thematic isotopy sacred/profane, we can say that from the conjunction with S1, the object that previously belonged to the sacred dimension (above) becomes profane from the moment it is brought to the community (below).

3. Third Sequence: The Culture

“The people began to sow grain and short time the whole field’s harvested cornfield.”

The demonstration of “Know-do” (harvest) is the glorification of the subject as the hero. In this case the knowledge is innate, the competition it does not imply any learning.

Theft makes the object profane and cultivation culturalizes it. Culture has at the same time as a receiver as addressee the actor “people”. The target comes from and originates in the divinity but it does not intervene in its reproduction.

The possession of the owner valorized the grain as a sacred object, theft actualizes it as a profane object (belonging to humanity) and culture realizes it as a cultural object (product of technique).

From the moment the grain descends to the region of man, it loses its divine euphoric character (quality, abundance, inexhaustibility), it loses the possibility of “being excellent” without effort (the owner’s corn is not cultivated). For this reason it becomes profane grain (as opposed to divine) and all the positive characteristics are virtualized, only the work of man can re-actualize them.

Thus, by passing through the mediation of the divinity, through an operation figurativized in the actor “culture”, all the “divine” qualities of corn are recovered.

This operation produces a fundamental economic variation: deprivation disappears and abundance is established. One passes from a production system based on harvesting or horticulture to stop being a harvester and becomes a farmer.

In this last sequence almost all the oppositions that constituted the initial tension are neutralized.

Second version: San Rafael Petzal, Huehuetenango

The first settlers of San Rafael fed exclusively on wild plants called *txetxib* (mule's hoof), which the men eagerly searched for in the forests where it grew. Sometime later, their descendants discovered by chance that the hill called *txe c'ojá* (behind the house) located to the north of the village, at a distance of approximately two kilometers, flowed water and formed a stream. On a certain occasion they were watching it when, to their natural amazement, they saw a small grain of an unknown cereal sliding over the water, which they could not catch because it was lost in the swift current.

Sociological guide by *Lorenzo Castañeda*, Instituto Indigenista Nacional, 1949.

The vision seemed strange to the neighbors and in their minds the certainty arose that the hill was working miracles and that they should pay tribute. Linking the thought to the facts they went to bring a candle that as a gift they lit at the foot of the hill. Immediately, other grains appeared in the water of the stream and they hurried to take them out.

On their return home they sowed it and after some time some beautiful plants sprouted from the earth whose fruits were splendid cobs of white and yellow grains.

When the harvest arrived, they obtained abundant quantities of the precious grain, part of which was consumed and another saved for the new sowing, thus forgetting their old food, which was the *txetxib*.

Time went by and the men did not forget that blessing and all agreed to take another candle as an offering, but when they lit it something unexpected happened: from the crystalline waters of the stream emerged the figure of a human being. It was a corpulent man who with a sonorous voice expressed himself in the following terms:

"I am the man of the corn and my name is *Paxl (Pascual)*, I come from far away, I lived on the coast but I offended myself by throwing myself to the ground so that the animals would eat me. Now I am looking for a new home where they know how to appreciate me. I believe that among you it will be different and that is what made me come to this land".

"May you be good to me and appreciate those grains that I have sent you before my arrival, but I beg you through a **zahorin* on April 20 of each year to celebrate a custom in my name. I will also be in the neighboring town of Santa Barbara. I have already obtained the posada in the *twi'xtuc'* hill whose neighbors have committed themselves to practice the same **costumbre* [word in Spanish] as the one I now request of you".

Having said this, the strange character disappeared as if the waters of the river had entirely covered his body.

Since then those grains were known by the name of "Corn" and every year the **costumbre* [word in Spanish] requested by the lord of the corn is celebrated, but

when the **zahorin* in charge of carrying it out passed away, there was no one to replace him and with time the promise was forgotten...

We have used the following symbolic notation: S1 D2 (the villagers), S2-D1 (the owner), 01 (the wild plants), 02 (the corn).

In this case S1 is linked to the object through the miracle (“act of divine power, superior to the natural order and human forces”, according to the dictionary of the *Royal Academy*).

On a figurative level this miracle is manifested through a series of indexes: a river, the corn kernels and finally the appearance of the divine figure.

The miracle is a discursive manifestation of the power of the subject that produces it and is intended to establish a destined-target relationship. This relationship, due to the overmodalization of the power of the addressee (the power to produce supernatural events) is presented in a hierarchical manner.

**Zahorin: Is the name given to the person who performs a series of techniques that allow him/her to detect water. This set of techniques is known as the dowser's method and is a millenary practice used to look for water under our feet.*

**Costumbre: It is a set of practices, habits or forms of behavior that characterize a group of people or a community.*

1. First sequence: deprivation

“Behold, the first settlers of San Rafael fed exclusively on the wild txetsib (mule's hoof) plants that men searched busily in the forests where it grew”. The subjects are modified by the search-knowledge, the consequence of which is to find. It is a random fact that presupposes a possession also random and that determines a dysphoric state.

This recollection system places them in the same initial state in which the subjects of the first version found themselves: starvation due to food shortage (“they fed exclusively on wild plants”). This situation leads them to a “laborious” search.

The subject's competence is reduced to knowing how to discover and is modulated by a “want-to-be-able - know-have” wild plants (01).

2. Second Sequence: The miracle

The men randomly discover some kernels of corn floating in the waters of the river, but are unable to retrieve them. After worshiping them, they can take some and bury them, obtaining “beautiful plants whose fruits were splendid cobs of white and yellow kernels”.

The topology is presented as a mediator between the subject and the object that enters its narrative program from the miracle.

The miracle is an effect of meaning caused by a “doing” whose purpose is a “doing-knowing” related to the existence of a new object and the possibility of an organized activity (cultivation), at the same time it is a “doing-believing”, since the action determines a belief and is inscribed within persuasion; it is a matter of making believe in the power of the addressee.

The subject's interpretation consists of judging the appearance of the grains as proof of the miracle: “The vision seemed strange to the neighbors and in their minds the certainty arose that the hill was working miracles and that they should pay tribute”.

The positive interpretation of S1 models it according to the “wanting” (taking possession of the object) and transforms it into a performing subject: “Linking thought to deeds, they went to bring a candle that they lit as a gift on the slopes of the hill”.

By performing the performance (paying tribute), the subject is inscribed in the manipulation scheme of the addressee. The first steps consist of cognitive persuasion. Once the subject has become a performer, the addressee. He uses persuasion in the pragmatic dimension: he proposes to him manipulated positive objects: “immediately, in the waters of the stream appeared other grains which he hastened to take out”.

The cultivation and harvesting that men carry out with those grains has for the subject, from a syntagmatic perspective, the value of a glorifying proof whose manifestations at a pragmatic level are abundant food and at a cognitive level the forgetfulness of the old wild food and a permanent memory of the blessing of the hill.

For the addressee, it is the acceptance by S1 of a kind of fiduciary contract-1. Whose purpose is to increase the value of the object that has entered into circulation?

3. Third sequence: The Exchange

“Time went by and the men did not forget that blessing of the hill and all agreed to take another candle as an offering, but when they lit it something unexpected happened: from the crystalline waters of the stream emerged the figure of a human being. It was a corpulent man who with a sonorous voice expressed himself in the following terms.

7. Persuasion involves a persuasive “doing” of the manipulating addressee and an interpretative “doing” of the manipulated addressee. There are two types of persuasion: The one exercised by a subject modulated according to power; in this case the subject performs a persuasive action of a pragmatic nature that consists of proposing objects of cultural value. The second is that exercised by the subject modulated by “knowledge”; it is a matter of exercising persuasion through a cognitive

action: the subject makes positive or negative judgments in relation to the competence of the addressee. Persuasion, according to power, is exercised through temptation and intimidation.

The addressee is presented at the level of discursive manifestation as the owner of the corn with the thematic role of civilizer.

This role allows for a manipulation that is oriented towards an implicit exchange. The addressee establishes a communication that reduces the addressee to a “can't - can't do” situation. To achieve this purpose, the addressee reinforces the persuasion by proposing negative objects (intimidation), threats to leave if it is not worshipped”.... I came from far away, I used to live on the coast, but I was offended by being thrown to the ground so the animals could eat me. Now I am looking for a new home where they will appreciate me. I believe that among you it will be different and that is what brought me to this land”.

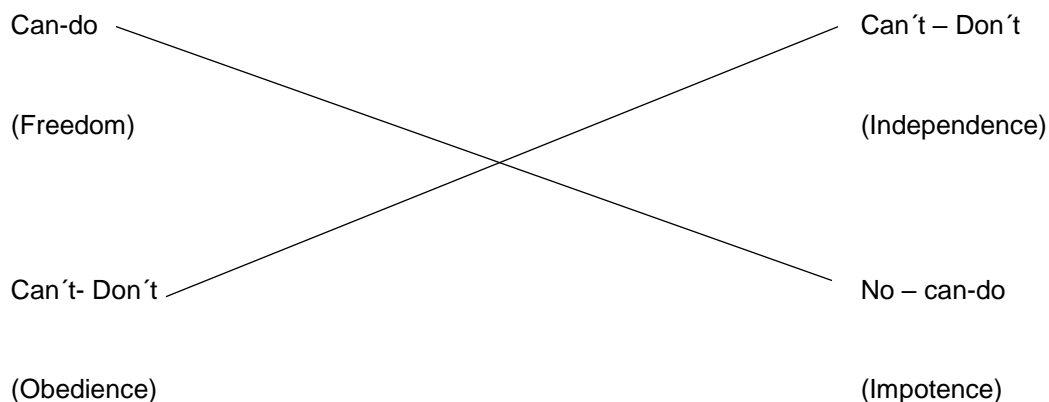
At the actantial level there is a syncretism between D1 and O2 that within the narrative program of D1 serves to reinforce persuasion at the cognitive level. Is necessary to make people believe not only in the sacredness of the divinity that produces the miracle but also in the sacredness of the object that this miracle transmits the object is figuratively identified with the divinity...

The program based on D1 is “Do-do” (manipulate). Through persuasion assumes other programs about use that will transform the modal competition of the addresser (D2): which will provoke a “do-do” (grain temptation), a “can't do – do nothing” (intimidation under the...

8 Dictionary: *Cfr. Grimás-Courtés, 1979: Contract*... For the exchange to take place it is necessary that both parties be certain of the value of the object will receive in return; in other words, a fiduciary contract (generally preceded by persuasion and interpretation by both subjects) be established prior to the pragmatic operation itself “in the first version.

9. The owner carried out a narrative program of opposition, refusing to donate the object of value, presenting herself as anti-allocator of cultural goods. The man had to steal them from her. In the second version, the situation is reversed.

10. Manipulation: From the modality of “can-do” there are four foreseeable ways.



11. According to traditional belief, the identity of divinity and the plant is the same. The farmer in his prayers often asks the divinity for forgiveness because he has to bury her "forgive us corn 'mother your face under the ground". As told Paxil (the owner) herself waiting for the rain, says to the men: I am in agony, my children because of the summer".

It threatens his parting, which would be tantamount to a stripping of the grain obtained and a "believing" in the "must-do" (the believing is realized with the miracle and the announcement of the identification divinity-grain, the "must-do" is proposed through the exchange).

D2 will choose the program for D1 because he "wants", "believes" and "must to do it" since the beginning the answer it is conditioned and accepted by the exchange which enrolls in the situation of submission and obedience. 5. - (Remembered that transgression it has set in the first version under the axis of independence in front of the owner).

The Contract

The owner presents himself as a subject (S2) not modalized by having. This lack incites him to move from the coast to "this land" in search of recognition, of positive sanction lexematized through appreciation.

The relationship that it is established as S1 – eventually dresser- is contractual. The contract aims to modify the initial negative status of both subjects: deprivation of food S1 and deprivation of worship S2, the deprivations are situated on two different dimensions in the narrative. In the case of S1 it is about the pragmatic dimension and in the case of S2 is the cognitive dimension.

A transfer of values will occur between these two subjects through exchange: S2 offers and objective, cultural value, which is inscribed in "having". It is a consumable good characterized by nutritional function.

For his part, S1 offers S2 a modal value, granting him, through the tribute, the possibility of being able to exercise power over him, that is, of assuming the role of a feared demiurge.

For S2, the corn object is an object that allows him to actualize himself as a sender, it is a modal assistant that serves to establish new cognitive competencies in S1 so that the dysphoric situation of dispossession, of random harvesting, of precarious existence is reversed, progressively through corn leads him from a "not-knowing" about cultivable plants to a "knowing" about cultivable

12 The grain – the divinity- is "sacrificed" for men, is buried every year, agonizes and is reborn to be offered herself to them. For this reason, she must be constantly thanked so that she is willing to repeat her sacrifice. This is why "customs" (rites) seek her recognition.

Grains, S2 introduces the competence in order to knowing how to recognize the seed, at the same time the desire to be admitted as divinity. S2 establishes in S1 a practical "Know-how" modalized by "duty". At the discursive level man knows and possesses the seed but to preserve it he must pay tribute to divinity.

The result of exchange means for S1 a loss of “might- to-do” (freedom) and acquisition of “might - to –have” (might – to –be). This modal transformation at the level of thematic roles is equivalent to:

Collector: to Search, to Find, to Discover.

Farmer: to Cultivate, to harvest, to produce.

For his part, S2 maintains his “might- to- have”. The gift of corn constitutes a participation, since the divine product is inexhaustible. The figurative gift serves to actualize his “know-how-to-do-what-doing”, which ensures his control of group.

However, the modal support that allows the narrative program of the actants to play out is the conjunction between “having” and “being”, which brings about the isotopy of existence. Within the immanent level of myth, for S, deprivation of food means biological death, and at the transcendent level, deprivation of worship is mythical death for S2; without the recognition of the addresser it cannot survive in its cognitive dimension.

The exchange is included, encompassed within manipulation, because the relationship between the subjects is hierarchical and because S2 not only establishes the conditions but also makes a gift that does not deprive him of the object. The sender shares in its goods, while the recipient must surrender his entire freedom.

The penalty, as we will see, will take place in the third version, and unrealized exchange negatively modalizes S2 fundamentally in relation to “power”, since the modal consequence of the exchange is the modalization of S2 as the sender to whom worship is rendered, that is, as the sender who possesses the “might-to-see” and the “might-to-do” (to exercise control).

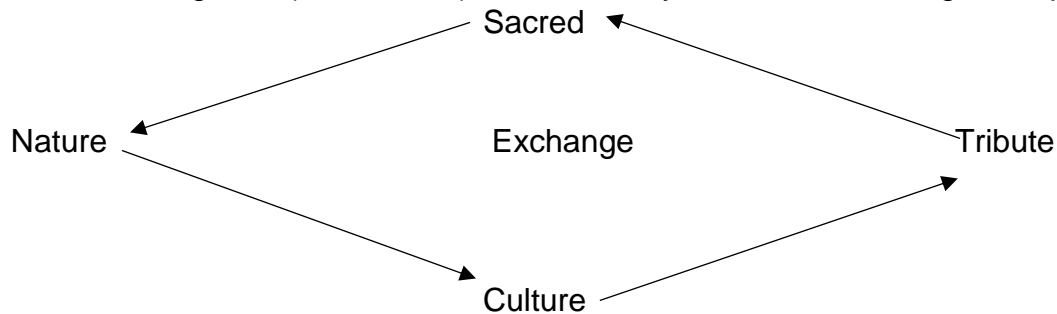
The case of S2 we are dealing with an addressee whose power does not precede the exercise of his “doing-doing” but rather afterward. The narrative program that S2 develops in the story a demonstration of power but it is the contrary, an attempt to “construct” it. This is not a static addressee whose hierarchy has always been established previously, since always, but a recipient in search of identity and acceptance.

The addressee’s investment depends of his recognition as the owner of the corn and as corn itself. This recognition results in S1 gaining access to a state of abundance and dependence. His positive situation is directly related to his submission with respect to “having”, as physical possibility, his state is euphoric but with respect to his “might-to-do” possibility, his state is dysphoric since he has lost his freedom of action.

At the thematic level, this situation establishes a hierarchy of isotopies: the sacred assumes the cultural process. For this reason, the economic is inscribed within the realm of the sacred, not separated as it was in the first version.

The seed comes from divinity and never loses this sacred link, it is closely dependent on its origin and for this reason its delivery always depends on the tribute

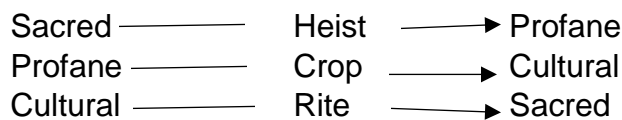
that is paid to divinity, thus a close circle of communication is created; the transformed goods (corn-tribute) are constantly returned to the original supplier:



13. Greimás, A J., preface to *Courtés, J* (1976): "Thus the relationship between the addressee and the subject, as it appears in Prop's account, is that of an established hierarchy and the dominant-dominated relationship is established previously, however, it is possible and even necessary to invert the terms of the problem: instead of considering power as pre-existing to the doing-doing and as its source, one can, on the contrary, claim that doing-doing, that is, the manipulation of certain subjects by others, is a fact that creates relations of domination and is the origin of established power".

Although man modifies the sacred object by cultivating it, he recognizes divinity itself in it and it is to it –which offered as food pay tribute. Culture is presented as sacred, the technical process is subordinated to divine power.

The path that follows the object is:



If we compare the fundamental semes of the first two versions we will see that there is an inversion in one case, it is a question of positive semes and in the other negative ones:

Attitude of divinity

First Version

Greedy
Passive

Second Version

Generously
Active (object delivery)

Special characteristics (Place where the object is found)

Far (of the community)
Hard (rock)

close
soft (water)

Deep (inside of the mountain)

superficial (on the waters)

In the second case a transformation has taken place; the impediments to subject object conjugation have apparently disappeared, the third version will show these inverted versions are **complementary**.

Third version: when Good enclosed the spirit of the corn. Text Achí.

Jesus Christ said that this children no longer remembered him because they have everything to eat. "They have corn, they have everything they need to eat. They already have their beans, their rice, their chili, their tomato, and everything. No longer remember me with candles and that's why I'm suffering a lot hunger (being that the smoke of the candle is my food); no longer give me to drink; no longer feed me", said

They thought about making a decision: I would hide the corn (the heart of the corn the spirit) in a group, so there would be a shortage of everything, and so he did.

The people freak out, when looking for a way to feed themselves. They went to ask the rich people and even they were buying corn. They there was hunger all over the world because God had hidden the corn , - among the rabinaleros, among the cubuleros, among the joyabaj, among the tz'aloj, among the ula'ib – they had sold all the corn in San Martin, in San Juan, In Guatemala, in San Martin near the Antigua, in Escuintla, in Santa Lucia and the coasts. Everyone had sold their corn. Everything was over, we all looked everywhere and found nothing. The corn was over because we forgot God, the holy corn, the spirit of our tortilla, locked him in a rock so that we would remember him.

After seven days the little birds came – the crows came, the xeros came, the parakeets came, the parrots came, and they all asked for their food. They flew around the rocks because they felt their food was there. They thought about how to get it out, but they were not able to open a hole in the rock. At the moment the zompopos came and one of them said to the little birds, "how much will you pay me if I open the rock and take out the corn?" Then the little birds answered: "we are going to eat you", the *zompopo* replied: "No" you cannot eat me, because I'm going to do you a favor, tomorrow at dawn you will have corn, that's what I'm going to do if you don't eat me, ¡come tomorrow and you will see!".

The little birds then said to the *zompopo*: "well, if that's the case, if what you said is true, then we won't eat you." Of course it is true reply the *zompopo* "it doesn't matter that it's on the rock where the Father put it, I'll get it out anyway, and we'll sneak in behind the father. "We'll do everything in secret and tomorrow you'll have your corn, I'll do you a favor".

The next day, when the birds returned, the corn was already out, the *Zompopos* had already taken it from the rock. "Who knows how the taken out the corn that was well hidden in the rock? Our father Jesus Christ said when he saw it, it can't believe that a rock like that has been opened, since the *zompopos* had taken

the corn from where he had hidden it, he thought it best to distribute it among his children, so he did, giving a handful to each one, recommending that they go and plant it, making their cornfields. "Only I want one thing", he said: "that you remember me every day and at all hours, it is not convenient that you just eat without remembering me". And he said to the *zompopos* "I'm going to punish you, I'm going to tie you up from the waist, because you entered the rock without permission". And he tied them, but then, the *zompopo*, being very clever, broke the rope, ran into his cave and so they could not catch him, and to this day, the *zompopos* have this waists.

In any case, it's because of the *zompopos* that we're alive; it's also because of them that the birds, the chickens, the turkeys and the ducks are alive, because they did us the favor of harvesting our corn; and since then we've also had our beans, our rice, our **chiles* and tomatoes, our **chiltepe*, we eat because the *zompopos*.

That's why we shouldn't kill the *zompopos*. It's a shame to burn them and poison them to kill them, because it's not their fault; they're just looking for food. If we light candles and **compal-pom*, they go away on their own. We pray, and they won't bother us again, that's what Jesus Christ commanded. He left it ordered that we have to ask their favor.

"Only for them do we eat, It is an ancient saying that corn was enclosed in a rock".

We have used the following symbolic notation: S1-D2 (the men), D1-D (the owner), 01 (the implied wild plants), 02 (the corn), 03 (the candle smoke), S2 (The birds) S3 (the *zompopo*).

We have divided thus myth into three sequences: theft and exchange. The last two sequences repeat the situation already stated in the first and second versions.

The initial situation presents a state of equilibrium despite the violation of an implicit contract.

1. The first sequence: The sanction

Jesus Christ said that his children won't remember because they had everything To eat..." "Then he thought and made a decision: he would hide all the corn (the heart of the corn or its spirit) in a rock; then there would be a shortage of everything, and so he did".

The sanction is caused by the breach of the contract and by the non-compliance, by the recipients of their "duty – to- do" (pay tribute), that is by the rupture of the exchange of biological food against mythical food.

The return to the state of deprivation (then there was famine all over the world because God had hidden the corn) does not repeat, exactly the initial state of the first and second versions, since now there is a memory of another past time of abundance that shapes the subject by the desire to recover what he had possessed.

This dysphoric situation supposes an immediately preceding euphoria. There is a feeling of lack: "The corn ran out because we forgot God, the holy corn, the spirit of our *tortilla* enclosed it in a rock so that we would remember him".

Recognition amounts to glorification of the power of 01. From the moment the sanction transforms the situation, the actantial roles are modified: God assumes the role of anti-destinator (D) and men role of S1. Both actants find themselves in a situation of lack; for the first time it is a question of mythical food (the smock of candle -03-) and for the other corn (02).

The lack virtualizes again in S1 in the narrative program that supposedly has already been carried out (in the myth there is catalysis of the first conjunction of S1 with 02).

The search for food is inscribed as a deceptive test: no one can provide food except Jesus Christ.

2. Second Sequence: The theft

A micro story incorporates animals into the myth with an independent narrative program, they are also in a state of lack in relation to 02.

The birds (S2) lack the necessary skills to sustain a polemical confrontation with D (piercing strength or small size). An exchange is established with the zompopo (S3); they will let him live if he provides them with food. The zompopo is modalized according to "know-how" and "can-do", which allows them to successfully carry out the main test- the theft- which will be glorified by anti-sender with a positive cognitive sanction, that is, with the recognition of success ("Who knows how they would get the corn that was well stored in the rock") and by a double pragmatic sanction: positive for the "man" actor, since the reward consists of a distribution of goods ("since the zompopos had taken the corn from where he had hidden it, he thought it best to divide it among his children"), and negative for the zompopos, who are punished by having a rope tied around their waist).

From this moment on, "men" rejoin the story to take on the animal's program as usage program in a relation to the subject's base program.

3. Third sequence: The exchange

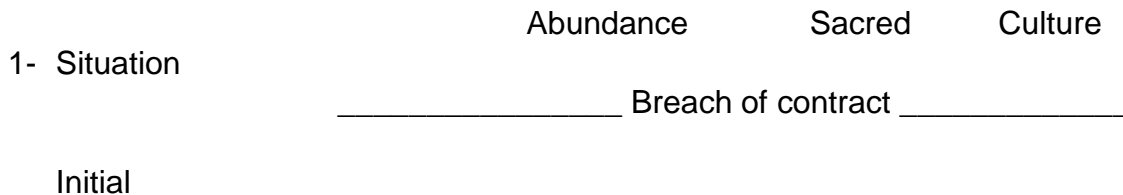
"And so he did, giving a handful to each one, recommending that they go and sow it, making the cornfields". "I only want one thing", he said: "That they remember me every day and at all hours, it is not convenient that they only eat without remembering me".

From the moment that he confirms the theft, he assumes the role of D, the addressee, so as not to lose his power over S1. In this way, he reestablishes himself as practical destinator (giver of material goods), which in turn allows him to become involved in the state of abundance as an axiological sender (creator of norms). The food object is the means through which he achieves his ends; "let them remember

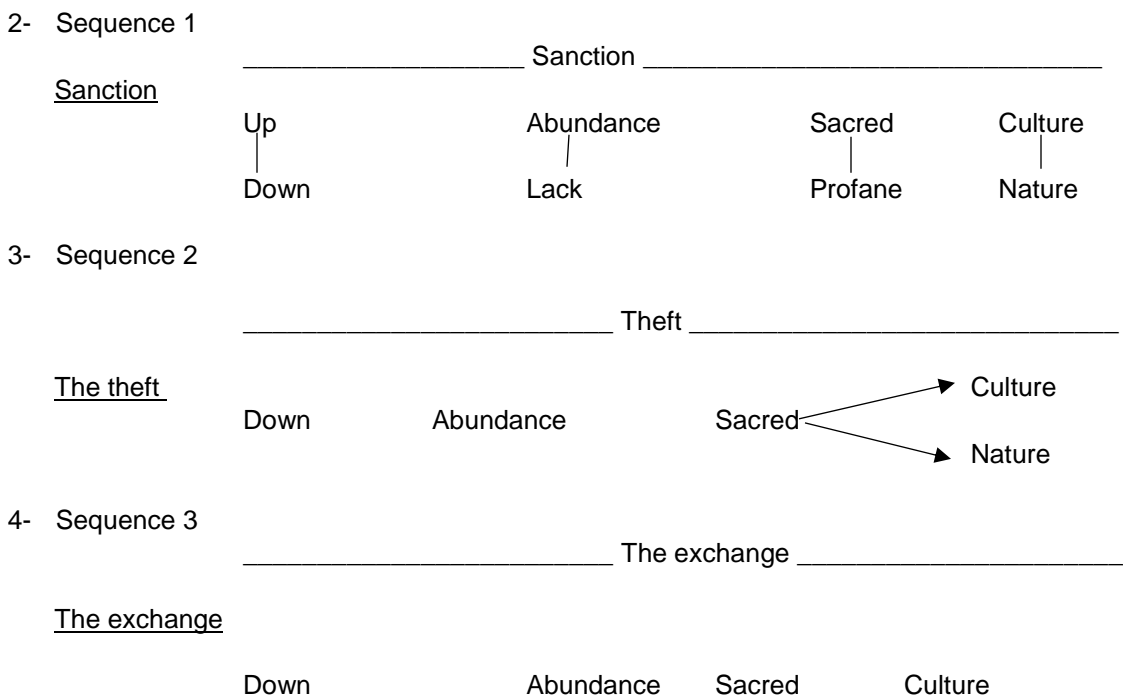
me every day and at all hours; it is not convenient that they just eat without remembering me”.

The cognitive recognition of S1 (memory worship) and the practical recognition (offering a tribute) restore the power to D3 to be able to do-do, to manipulate and the conjunction D-03 (memory, tribute and power to do-do) are updated through distribution.

Throughout the story the destinator has assumed the roles of the destinator-judge (sanction), anti-sender (theft) and destinator-manipulator (exchange as a strategy against A, general scheme, following the model proposed by Ballon (1978) will allow us to observe the cyclical nature of the myth that is updated every time there is a tension: the beginning is a possible realization of the end in which the balance is established.



14a we distinguish: Base program- main program- which sets the guiding line of the narrative and usage program: those collateral programs that help the main program to be carried out.



Annotations

1. Equilibrium: Man's transformative "doing" is sacred, and therefore there is acceptance of a practical and at the same time axiological destinator; he gives gifts and imposes norms, however man violates this contract by forgetting the tributes the owes to divinity.
2. The sanction of divinity reestablishes appositions and lack.
3. Theft mediates all oppositions, but the sacred remains only as mediator between the terms of nature/ Culture opposition.
4. If we analyze theft from modalization of veridiction within the position of "appearance", the destinator distributes the goods, but in "reality" he distributes that which men, through animals, have already obtained.

Whit this manipulation, he attempts to present himself to men as a donor in order to stablish the exchange. Distribution is a manipulation that incites the subject to (virtual) acceptance of a narrative program proposed by the destinator. In this way, he can take on the cultural process.

The fundamental transformation of the narrative occur through the actions of the actors we can present the as follows:

- 1) Make the owner transformer:

Sanction

Action:	Hide
Competence:	"Wanting- being able to know"
Consequence:	Deprivation

- 2) Make animal transformer (*zompopo*)

The theft

Action:	Appropriation
Competence:	"know-how"; "can-do"
Consequence:	acquisition ("can-have")

- 3) Make the owner transformer:

Exchange

Action:	Distribute
Competence:	"Know"; "can-do-do" (manipulate)
Consequence:	Recovery of balance

B. Second Part

We will try to analyze the three references myths as if they were a single story composed of three mini-stories.

The corpus thus constituted assumes, among other premises, the existence of a link between myths, a relationship of derivation and fundamentally the possibility that starting from a primary myth (which could be the first version) each myth could be considered as a reflection on the preceding myth, which would establish a causal link of evolution.

If this hypothesis is correct, it would involve a progressive adaptation of the myth –of the symbolic representation- to the reality experienced by the group in each new circumstance of tension, we do not intend to establish a chronology of the appearance of the myths but to suppose a significant progression that, considered in its entirety would demonstrate the complementary of the three reference versions.

In this succinct manner we will take into account the following aspects:

1. The syntax level and the fundamental semantic level.
2. The level of syntax and surface semantics; narrative programs, narrative scheme, actantial syntax;
3. And discursive level: actors and figures.

Textual delimitation

The men are hungry in the lower region because they eat roots or poor-quality wild grains. However, they know that up there in the mountains deep in a cave, lives a divinity who hides the grain of a magnificent food. For this reason, they go up and steal it with help of animals.

When the divinity discovers the theft, he decides to distribute the grain to men, telling them that he is the grain itself and that it is necessary to respect and honor him with offerings because otherwise, he will punish them by denying them the grain. From that moment on, men began to cultivate the cornfield.

1. Syntax and fundamental semantics

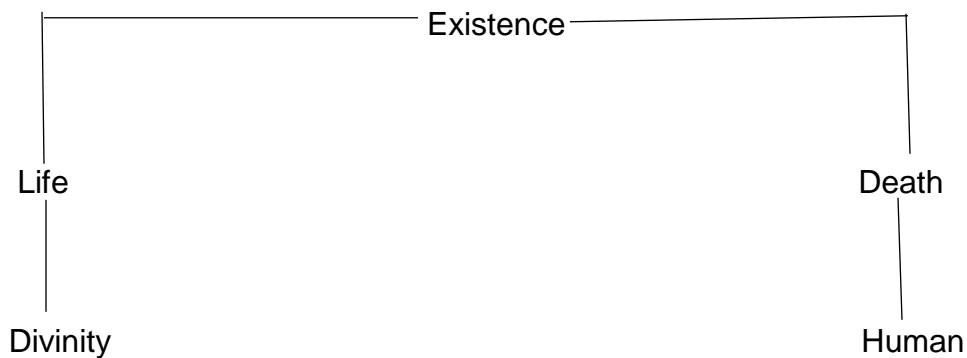
In the initial situation of the myth, man depends entirely on the plant world for his substance; he maintains a direct relationship with it based on harvesting. In contrast there is a divinity also linked to the plant and world and owner of a particular plant: Corn

Between the two actors there is an intermediate world, the animals that act like helpers of man, bringing the “sacred” plant to their “natural” world.

In the initial stage (a situation of deprivation), the myth postulates, at first glance, two opposing instances; natural versus divine. The first term of the opposition would seem to be articulated as human-vegetal. The second would be articulated as divine-vegetal.

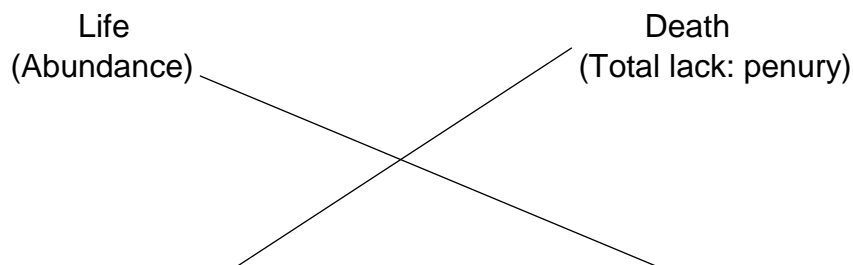
However the difference between the possessed plants (hard and scarce for humans; tender and abundant for divinity) allows us to establish a fundamental opposition: human-divine. We can observe that a paradigmatic actuarial opposition refers to categorical oppositions at a deeper level.

Mans´ situation of food shortage due to the lack of seeds brings to light the term “existence”, the axis of the semiotic category that subsumes two contrary terms: death, which semantically define the divine and the human.



Within the human paradigm, the thematic role “hungry” lead us to associate this terms with death, while within the divine paradigm we associate life with the abundance of food.

If we consider the scheme composed of the contradictory axis of “life-non-life”, we see that human life is defined by the negative deixis of death, which translates into total lack of hardship plus the negation of the opposite; non-life, non-abundance or partial hardship. In this way we can establish the following model:



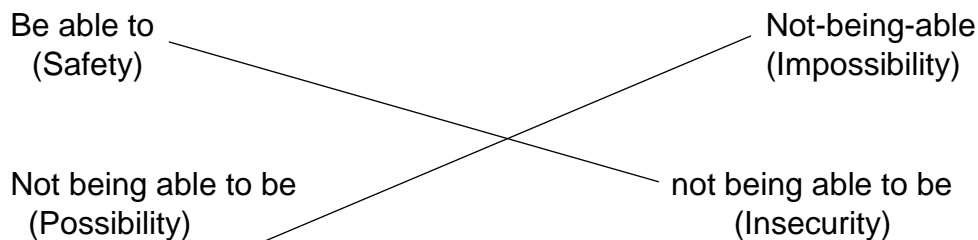
Non-death
(Non-lack non-poverty)

Non-life
(Non-abundance; partial lack)

There is a relationship at the discursive level between the quantitative gradation of possession and the aspectual gradation (inchoative, durative, terminative) of the states considered as processes and this allows us to move from a logical semantical level (where contrary and contradictory terms are situated without a solution of continuity between them) to the discursive level in which anthropomorphization makes it possible to move from one term to another.

This is how the thematic role of “hungry” (inchoative: “dying”) that corresponds to the life-non-life axis explains the situation of non-life due to the partial lack that leads in the short term to a terminating state: death, this situation forces us to try to resolve the situation through a transformation capable of modifying the state of the subject and placing it on the death-non-death axis, which, in turn has life as its terminating state.

The relation of contradiction leads to the affirmation of its opposite “life”, as a consequence of the performance of the theft. A fundamental syntactical framework can be established through modal oppositions:

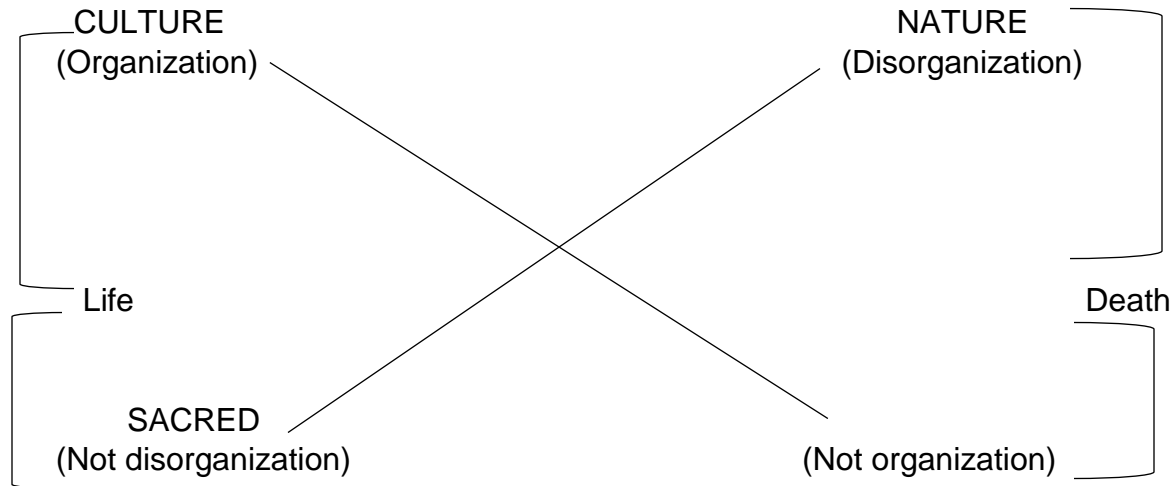


At the beginning, man finds himself in a state of existential impossibility due to the lack of good quality food grain and the absence of organization that translates into a state of nature.

The divine authority possesses the food but not the organization necessary to ensure human subsistence, the divine does not require any type of organization, since it possesses spontaneous effortless order. Within the sacred medium, the grains exists spontaneously.

Man secures the grain through theft. This means he ceases to be in a state of impossibility and insecurity in order to moves to a state of possibility and virtually, represented by the sacred (figuratively, the grain of the corn). The next step consists of reaching a state of organization where the security of being-able will exist. This state is that of a culture founded on the systematic organization of work and based on the possession of a domesticated vegetable.

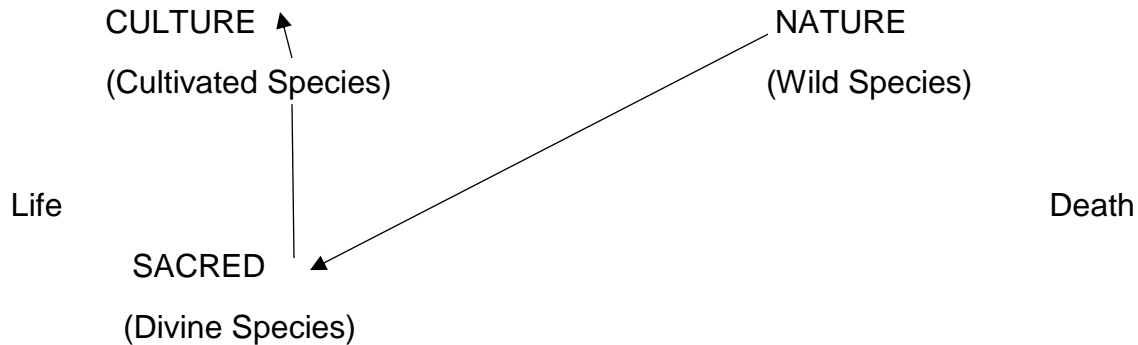
These three terms constitute oppositions that combine to give rise to an elemental structure of meaning. Using arrows, we will show the relationships between the subject's narrative programs and the binary categories of the semiotic framework.



At the superficial level, the transition from nature to culture occurs thanks to man's strategy towards divinity, the result of a series of cognitive and practical skills that culminate in the appropriation of the sacred object.

The passage from the sacred to the cultural involves, on the part of the sacred, a manipulation that is resolved by an exchange. In this way, the euphoric object enters a new circuit in which is planted, harvested and consumed by man (as opposed to the spontaneous existence that characterizes the divine object) to then return to divinity in the form of a tribute.

Within the mythical program, each transformation of state is equivalent to a communication of objects. The passage from disorganization (nature) to non-organization (sacred) implies the abandonment of a wild food and the conjunction of it with another divine origin. The passage from the state of non-disorganization to that of organization (culture) supposes a transformation of the divine object into a cultural object (elaborated, cultivated, and worked). However, it should be noted that the undomesticated wild object is abandoned while the divine object is transformed by subjecting it to another type of reproduction that derives from human labor (as opposed to its previous divine generation):



The cultivated species comes from the sacred instance and positive deixis is situated between the terms sacred and culture, put in a relation by simple implication.

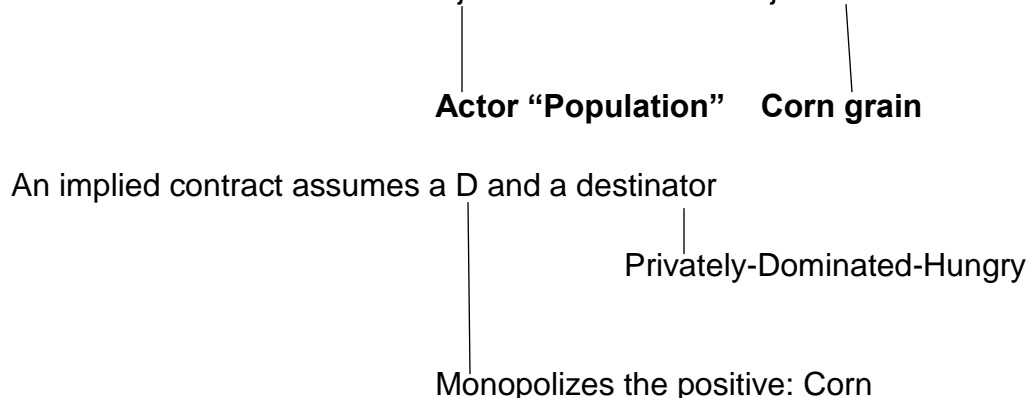
The orientation of the subjects' narrative programs and the circulation of objects are determined by this deep structure based in the contradictory relationship between the terms sacred and nature.

At the discursive level, this internal structure is presented as the group's dependence (debt, tributes etc.) on the sacred and enable it at the group's survival, this create permanent relationships that stablish a cultural process that originates in the sacred realm.

2. Surface Syntax Level: Actantial Syntax

We present below a basic scheme that can serve to support our analysis: The story is determined by the breach of an implicit contract and the acceptance of a new contract.

A) **Polemical Confrontation:** Subject in search of an object of value



Breakup (Rape)

Theft that transforms the recipient into an anti-subject in relation to D and at the same time into the destinator and recipient of his own “doing”: appropriation of the object and subsequent cultural processing.

B) Contractual confrontation: Subject seeking the establishment of a contract (exchange of corn for tribute) Actor: the owner.

Consequences:

- Prescribing Addresser: Imposition of a taxonomic System.

**INVESTMENT OF
ANCIENT
AS DESTINATOR**

- Destinator: Investment of the anti-subject as a dominated addressee (subject whose doing “must-do” is the syntagmatic projection of the Taxonomic system establish by the addresser.

- Addresser judge: Controls the compliance or non-compliance with the duty to-do.

The subject “inhabitants”

The initial situation of S1 is expressed by a deprivation resulting in penury. This fact presupposes the existence of a D on which situation depends.

Through harvesting or horticulture, the subject barely manages to subsist, since he feeds on poor-quality plants (01). Theft allows him to dispossess S2 (the owner) of the object corn (02) and to ensure a state of abundance for the future thanks to the culture.

This surface syntax is comparable to deep syntax. The state of penury corresponds to the lexeme “agony” and virtually to “death”. The transformation brought by theft place the subject in a state of life (abundance) that presupposes agriculture (culture) and the abandonment of harvesting (nature).

The subject’s narrative program implies a modal program or seat, at “not-being-able” due to the insufficient possession that determines the need to have in order to be able to subsist. Consequently, the wanting-to-have of object 02 forces it,

due to a lack of competence to resort to animals that possess the “know-how” (they know where the grain is) and the being-able (they can obtain it). All this makes possible the subject’s having (possessing of the grain) and the “making-be” (reproducing it, cultivating it), which simultaneously determine the being of the cultural object, the being of cultural man.

This narrative program is oriented toward a final state in which subject will be able to have food and will be able to freely make a position through theft, he transgresses the prescriptions and became independent from the sender of the prescriptive contract.

The man presents himself at the same time as destinator, both in the reflexive attribution of the object (theft) as the transformative action to which object is subject (culture).

The main test, the theft, is positive for S1 and puts an end to the manipulation of the anti-destinator. But it is also a negative test, a violation of the prescriptions established by the destinator of the contract. This destinator, at the time, plays the role of antidestinator-destinator. The theft can be considered the culmination of a strategy against D. This performance invests S1 with the actantial role of anti-subject.

This situation immediately provokes in D a manipulation whose purposes is the establishment of another form of communication, this time contractual, as opposed to the polemical communication of the robbery, after robbery D, dominates the situation again because he establishes himself as the sender and assumes the role of distributor.

This form of communication is presented as a new contract in which- at the level of “appearance” – the sender offers the object of desire to the recipient, who accepts it.

At the level of “reality”, the action is not centered on the acquisition of the object, since the anti-subject already possesses it due to the theft (which provokes the manipulation of the anti-sender), but on the establishment of a new order through the actantial transformation implied by the acceptance of the exchange. The anti-destinator becomes the destinator and consequently, integrates into the new situation. In effect, the subject no longer seeks the object, since he already possesses it; this situation implies that his role as D no longer holds true. Moreover, the anti-subject in turn transforms into the recipient, meaning that the violation of the first contract becomes the acceptance of a new contract and consequently a new control.

This new contract is based on exchange, but in reality implies domination, the relationship between the two contracting parties in hypotaxic, and in the case of the destinator there is not gift of the proposed object but rather participation. At no point is he dispossessed of the food good, while the destinator suffers the total loss of his freedom; he must permanently pay tribute, which means being reduced to a state of domination.

The initial contract prohibited possession. The final contract prescribes possession and subject it to compliance with rules. We will attempt to outline the narrative program of S10 by describing the transformations that take place at the actantial level in the modalization:

Controversial Structure: theft

Contractual Structure: Exchange

Anti-subject, Destinator
Destinator (of his own “doing”)
Power- to do
Power- to have

Destinator

Power not to - do
Power to -have

The polemical confrontation corresponds to the first part of the story and is caused by the violation of a prohibitive contract that placed the subject in a state of deprivation and dependence. The theft eliminates this lack at the level of possession, since the negative object (scarce food) is replaced by the positive object (abundant food) at the level of “might-to do” freedom is recovered.

Contractual confrontation is equivalent to the reestablishment of a new contract that closes the narrative in the form of an epilogue. In this way, the subject achieves a reintegration of possession and consequently of his power-to-be (a superficial modal isotopy) but is placed back in the initial situation of alienation, since he is once again dependent on an external destinator.

The subject-destinator: the owner

From the narrative program of S2 (the owner), we must consider a state of initial abundance that is concomitant to the lack of S1 and that indicates a hypotaxic relationship between the two actors, investing S2 as anti-destinator, since the does not want to give up or participate in his positive goods.

Faced with this opposition, S1 reacts and through cunning and violence takes advantage of D goods. Faced with this fact D’s repressive attitude is transformed into an attitude of owner and through a

15 Cfr. Greimás, AJ (1976), p. 234: When analyzing “the search for fear”, he speaks of this type of her who sets off on an adventure embodying “pure will and pure will act without needing a sender; “Thus the hero without a contract becomes his own sender”.

16 It is interesting to note that the ambivalent figure of the repressive-donator deity is common to myths dealing with the donation of cultivated plants.

Lévi-Strauss (1964, p. 175) speaks of several myths in which a star appears as donator of these goods. In all cases, the donation takes place after rape: M89; “One day while her husband was hunting, an Indian rapes the young woman whose blood is spilled. Then the young woman prepares

a potion and poisons the entire population, then she takes to the skies, leaving the cultivable plants to the few survivors left.

Counter-strategy recovers what it had lost (the power of control over S1), this time as a positive destinator.

This is a destinator who accepts is forced to accept a modification and revision of the axiological model he represents. For this reason, he implements a counter-strategy in order to obtain through the apparent distribution of objective values a series of cognitive values that will allow him to qualify in the new situation as a destinator-subject.

The equilibrium situation within his perspective consists of ensuring the permanence of profane world (culture) and the sacred world, it represents this balance existed in the initial situation in which S1 was in a state of domination and dependence due to the deprivation caused by D.

For D, the imbalance means the loss of power (power-to-do) and to recover it, he represents himself in front of S1, after the theft has been committed, assuming a syncretism with the object and attitude of donation (conditioned to the exchange) in order to join the state of culture.

In this way, the purely economic transformation implied by the agricultural process is inscribed within the sacred dimension, this allows the “sacred” to administer material goods, establish norms and assume social control.

In the initial situation, D presents himself as the holder of a power that has always allowed him to exercise an “action” whose purpose is to provoke the subject “to action” of S1 strategy (theft) strips him of this power and forces him to exercise manipulation that will allow him to create new relations of domination. In this case manipulation crates his power and constitutes his narrative program.

This is a manipulative, inchoative sender, a promoter of action, a provocateur of the subject’s actions. This active and performative destinator communicates to the recipient subject the elements of competence: “wanting to do” (through temptation), “must do” (through intimidation), and “wanting to believe” and must do” (through the miracle and acting syncretism).

The destinator, who has recover his power and who transmits to the destinator subjects the elements of competition and the values at stake, has the function of subsequently sanctioning their actions.

17. An aspect that we do not address because it is contextual and would go beyond the limits of our analysis is the study of the roles assumed by certain actors, such as shaman-priests who assume political roles.

We will try to formalize the actantial roles and modalities of the ownership form two types of fundamental relationships that are presented in the story:

Controversial structure

Actant: D

Modalities: Not-being-able-to-do-do.

Contractual structure

D1

Being able-to do-to do

The food object. Relationships

The object of value is represented by the actor “food”. In the first statement of state (lack), it is dysphorically connoted (01). The transformative action of S1 (theft) allows for the substitution of this object with another (02), positively connoted in its conjunctive state with S2 to whom it belonged.

The positive values of 02 (corn) realized in its state of conjunction with S2 are virtualized with theft and are realized again with the culture.

The “inexhaustibility” that characterizes 02 and that guarantees the state of abundance depends initially on its divine condition (conjunction with the sacred) and then on its cultural condition (conjunction with the human).

The sacred object has a real food possibility only for divinity and animals; for humans, it is a virtual possibility. This vitality is mediation that allows the passage to culture, which requires the establishment of the technical process to recover values and transform sacred food into human food.

The myth imposes a sacred origin on culture grain (it nullifies the existence of a wild seed that, through hybridization, becomes domesticated corn).

At the actor level, each grain represents divinity.

Natural food

Manifestation

Wild species

Uncultivated

Poor quality

Weak performance

Scarce

Little work

Exhaustible

sacred food

Manifestation

Grain-divinity

Uncultivated

good quality

good performance

abundant

no work

inexhaustible

Cultural food

Manifestation

Divine cornfield

Cultivated

good quality

good performance

abundant

work

inexhaustible

Relationships of the object corn with the actors of the story.

Within the sender's narrative program, corn is merely a modal helper through which he achieves his ends; from a semantic point of view, in this case, it is a treasurable good, an instrument of power.

In relation to the recipient, it is the object that provokes their desire and motivates their performance. In their narrative program, this good is valued primarily as a consumable good, but, due to the exchange, it acquires a treasurable value for the subject due to its intrinsic divine value.

Theft presupposes a direct relationship between S1 and the food item. No rule conditions it. On the contrary, through exchange, the relationship is established through divine agency, and this for reason the rule (the rite) is introduced.

The discursive level: actors and figures

We present the thematic roles of the "inhabitants" and the owner based on the established sequences and the type of object in circulation.

Shortage situation: wild food

Population	hungry	collectors	dependent
Owner	hoarder	owner	dominant

¹⁸ Lévi-Strauss (1964, page, 177): "in the state of nature, terrestrial humans practiced hunting but ignored agriculture; they fed on raw meat according to various versions and rotten vegetables: decomposed wood and fungi. On the contrary, the celestial gods are vegetarians but their corn is not cultivated".

Theft: divine food

Resident	satisfied	owners	independent
Owner		owner	dominant

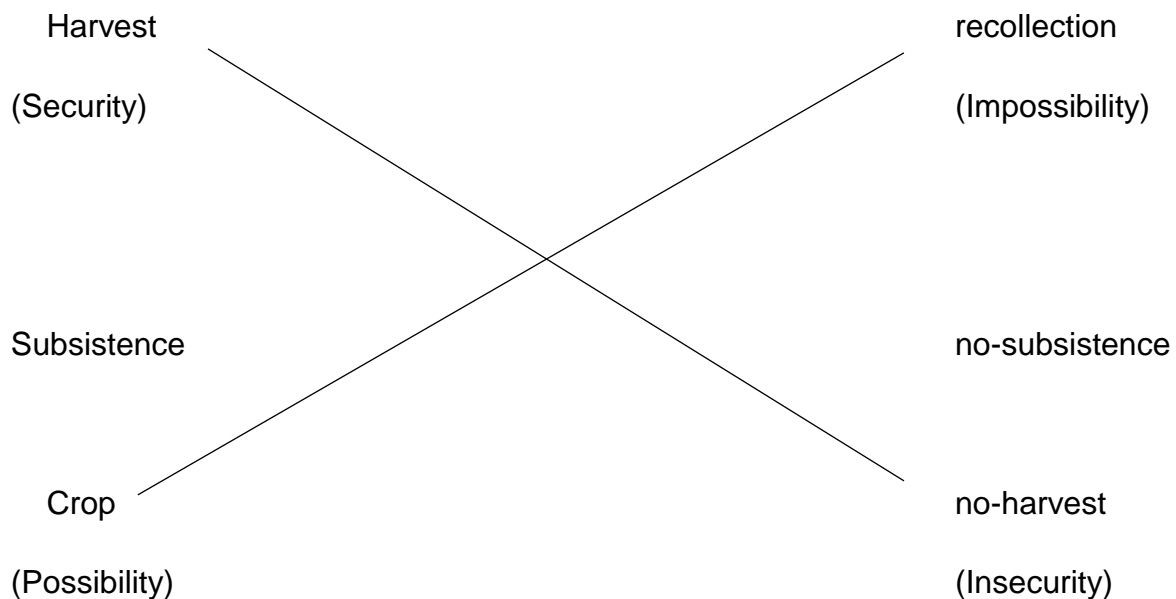
Exchange: divine food

Resident	satisfied	receivers	dependent
Owner	donor	proprietary	dominant

Culture: cultural food

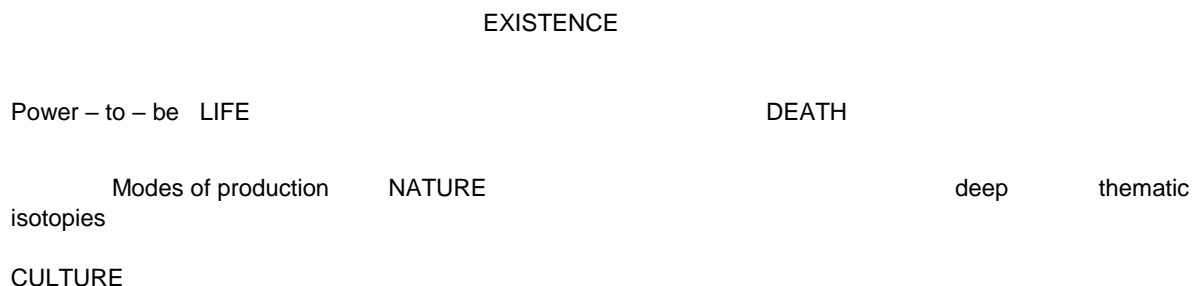
Resident	satisfied	farmer's	tributes
Owner	donor	proprietary	tax collector

If we consider the discursive isotopy of subsistence homologous to that of the existence of the deep level, we can establish the following semiotic framework and indicate in it the transformations carried out by the actors.



Isotopic homologation

Considering the two general levels of the story, we can distinguish a general isotopy – the sacred – that subsumes the remaining ones, each of which comprises two terms in opposition:



Having, determined by the possibility of organizing work and by the possession of the grain, guarantees being. This situation depends on the fulfillment of a “duty – to – do imposed by the sacred instance.

C. THIRD PART

The problem of communication: enunciation

So far we have analyzed the semiotic categories of the text and grammatical rules that govern it. We have addressed the problem of the statement: the representation of facts, the chain of events that carry meaning.

However, we believe it is also appropriate to analyze the type of mentality that produces and receives this message, that is, the problem of enunciation, which is certainly presupposed in the statement and is prior to it.

This purpose immediately leads us to consider the subject of the enunciation. This is a difficult objective to achieve, since if we wish to remain within the limits of a semantic analysis.

19 Greimás, A.J. and Courtés, J. (1976, B): “the enunciation is presented as a set of formal procedures that generate and organize the discourse; these mechanisms can be analyzed without resorting to an external reference (such as the characters moments of an actor’s life, his social relations. The analysis must be carried out only from the text that preserves the traces”.

We must exclude the possibility of a biographical, historical or sociological analysis. For this reason we will try to limit ourselves exclusively to the elements relative to the speaker that are present in the text, without making references, as far as possible, to external referents, for this reason we will take into account an ethnic narrator who communicates to a speaker personified in his own group. In this case the communication has the purpose of homologating the generation to maintain the cohesion and unity of the group.

Axis of the communication: the enunciator and the addressee are the two actors of communication. The object of knowledge is transmitted from one to another through the actors of discourse.

Speech is, above all, a “making known”, a communication based on a series of rules and manipulation games that we will try to analyze.

On the one hand, it is a transmission of knowledge (knowledge about events and the way they are linked) and on the other, a receiver who interprets the message. "The interpretation produces an effect that must be understood as the production of a new meaning. The recipient becomes in turn the sender of meaning, and from the word received another meaning is produced.

In the case of mythical discourse, the response – interpretation – recognition consists of the production of a series of practices, a way of acting, of living, of being, of establishing relationships.

In general, mythical interpretation has practical results (it determines behaviors, ritual attitudes) and not intellectual results (it creates new discourses).

The effect that the discourse provokes in the recipient measures the power of the word. On this point, we fully agree with verón considerations: "the notion of the "power" of ta discourse does not can determine anything other than the effects of that discourse within a given fabric of social relations. Consequently these effects cannot have any other form than that of another production of meaning. We have already said it: all recognition engenders a production results from a system of recognition.

Without a doubt, the meaning of a text depends on the relationship between events, on the organization that links them (level of the statement), but the "elaboration" is not intrinsic; it is the consequence of the use that will be made of that discourse, of the direction it will have, of the type of receiver it is addressed to, of its function from the point of view of emission and reception.

The enunciator

In almost all myths, he is presented as a simple depository or informant of a social discourse.

Apparently there is a distancing of the enunciator in relation to the statement. The situation and the actors of the statement belong to a "past" that is outside (and far from) the present situation. It is an absolute truth that comes from the origins.

Tis pseudo-objectification is the most effective instrument of persuasion. It is a mechanism of hidden manipulation through the cognitive subject's established in the discourse: the ancestors always know and transmit the truth, and this truth acquires the value of an axiom for the group. The ancestors do not make mistakes, they never lie because they possess wisdom by essence.

There is another mechanism no less important; the subjects of the discourse possess knowledge and identify with the recipients, these are their own parents, their ancestors. The group will have unconsciously the same reactions as them in the face of the same situations.

The myths tell how the ancestors, from the moment they acquired knowledge (on how to obtain and Cultive corn), also acquired a feeling of debt and guilt towards the divinity. This interpretation of events by the subject who carries out the cognitive

action within the discourse acquires the value of a behavioral model for the recipient of the message.

Let us remember that we have described the sender-recipient relationship within the statement as manipulative. This situation is repeated in the case of the sender and the receiver of this discourse. The receiver identifies with the suits of the discourse and consequently, also becomes a victim of manipulation; he believes, like the protagonist of the story, that corn comes from divinity and that one must constantly thank him in order not to lose this essential food for subsistence. This is a duplication of situation: the statement would assume the function of encompassing the enunciation which, in turn, would encompass the statement.

Ultimately we have had the impression that the separation, the limit between the statement and the act of enunciation does not exist. In the case of myths, as Levi Strauss already pointed out, it is a question of “a thought and an object which is also the subject of this thought”.

The receiver: power of mythic discourse

The notion of the power of a discourse refers in all cases to the effects that this discourse has on the receiver.

In the case of myth, it is an ideological effect; the discourse is presented as the only possible, the word absolute, as the message that transmits and produces a belief.

From the moment one believes, one obeys or imitates without forced imposition. In the mechanism lies the greatest manipulative power of the myth, since it established a control, a domination that is accepted by the group without any type of resistance.

The imposition of the sender is achieved through the persuasion of a “must-do”, which is at the same time a “want-to-do”, since the group believes in what must be done.

The myth not only creates a model of behavior but also makes us believe in it (we have already seen the mechanism that the discourse uses: establishing the ancestors as performing subjects, identifying the at the same time as the recipients of the discourse, creating the effect of apparent distancing from the speaker, fostering of guilt and debt to divinity through intimidation, imposing the obligation of permanent retribution, etc.);

The myth establishes a “doing – belief” that is operational and that always culminates in a “doing – doing”, that is: repeating the doing of the ancestors, giving back to the divinity the good received.

From the moment that the doing – doing becomes itinerant as is the case with the rites determined by the myths, a hierarchical structure is created: “the interaction, the recurrence transforms the structure by the fact that it fixes, that it stereotypes. The interaction transforms the relationship of manipulation into a relationship of domination because it fundamentally creates an institution.

The myth is repeated incessantly to create a moral, to give an explanation of reality within the epistemological system, to determine a fixed behavior through the ritual.

Ritual interaction is what allows the myth to become an element of power capable of ensuring the reproduction of the group. The myth, like other means of symbolic representation, has above all a real, effective and, above all, practical power. Its fundamental function is to determine acts of behavior, in explain not only why you are acting but also why you should continue to act in that way.

The transmission of the myth allows the agricultural processes (planting, care, and hovering) to be monitored every year, confirming the efficacy of the belief, since corn is always reborn and always makes life possible.

There is an identity of interest between those who control and those who are controlled. This identity is what makes the power of the myth “legitimate” and gives it effectiveness: “in all power there is a game and a fundamental force that keeps things “in order”; it is the consent that the dominated frequently give to their domination. They give this consent because the situation seems legitimate to them. At the bottom of power there is a gear that is at the same time a force and one of the internal mechanism of the functioning of power. This mechanism constitutes ‘a paradigm of legitimacy’.

On the other hand, the myth not only established behavior but also justifies it. While determining the group’s relationship with the ecosystem, it confirms the various actions carried out. In the case of corn, for example, the theft, while presented as a transgression, is at the same time justified by the lack of food, hunger, and the agonizing state of the group.

Myths lead one to believe in an explanation that lends a certain logic to the community process; in this way, it exerts a control that encloses the individual within an obligatory practice. The myth proposes and obliges (without forcing) to a socially determined behavior. In this way the receiving community not only determines its behavior but also justifies it according to a model that was given by the ancestors and divinity.

The sacralization of social relations- in this case determined by a purely economic factor (the transition from wild harvesting to agriculture) – allows for the establishment of the foundations for permanent control. These are the practical consequences of correlation of isotopes established in myths.

32 Goodelir, M (1978).

Conclusions

The myths are presented as a need to explain the transition from a hunting – gathering (or horticulture) system to organize and systematic agriculture.

Agriculture in this case represents culture and implies a new object that enters into circulation to develop another type of economic structure.

Within the group's cosmology, to maintain social balance, it is necessary for the practical action that allowed for the acquisition and subsequent reproduction of the material object (hybridization) to be mythically represented in a different light. For this reason a figurative and narrative dimension are produced. Determined by group's values, which "legitimize" the object and action recently incorporated into group's cosmology.

No event likely to fundamentally change society can be integrated by accepting its purely technical origin. In that case, it is necessary to provoke a mythical split between the action and the practical object. Thus the food grain will be considered a divine object and consequently culture loses at least one part its technical aspect and becomes ritualized.

The myth overvalues the object and the agricultural activity updating and realizing in them the sacred character in order to impose a prescriptive 'must do' (the rite) that will ensure the control of the group.

In this case, the myth constitutes an effective operation: It starts from a practical fact (cultivation) and mystifies it to determine a specific way of carrying out that act.

The manipulation of the myth is such that this domination is not achieved through violent imposition but rather represented in the form of persuasion. In this way, it makes us believe, that both at the same level of the statement and the enunciation in the real existence of an obligation toward divinity on which depends of the power –to- be.

Belief, which over-modalizes the duty-to-do determine the community's mode of action and reduces it to a syntagmatic projection of the taxonomic system established by the sender. In this way, the subject's action guarantees mediation between the system and the process.

Man can cultivate, he can benefit from technology, but at the same time, he cannot and must not to forget that culture is applied to sacred element. One does not bury an object with purely nutritional value, but rather a divinity that will die and be reborn from the earth in the form of sacred food.

Thus, the sacred is established as a meta-cultural instance and encompasses and determines culture. Order and balance are restored through this hypotaxic relationship.

Our analysis has shown – or at least attempted to –that the narrative of the myth constitutes the anthropomorphized representation of a hidden ideological level.

Without resorting to external references, we have revealed an ideology; we have pointed out a manipulation that establishes a situation of domination on which, in turn the integrity and coherence of the group depend. This we believe is a fundamental element, since it is a possible demonstration of a hypothesis by professor Greimás. For whom mythical stories are carries of their own ideology.

Myths do not present the state of culture as a transformation of nature, but as its negation (poor quality grains from nature are replaced by sacred grains). In this case, the cultural process suppresses the object that has nature as its destination and accepts only the sacred as the provider of cultural goods.

In the initial situation (natural state), within the perspective of the sacred destinator, there was a balance due to the imposition of his domination: as anti-destinator he denied the food object and modalized the lacking subjects according to a “not-being-able-to-do” and order to deal with this situation D was modalized according to the “being-able-to-do” (imposing prohibitions) and the “being-able-to-have” (accumulating goods), allowed to be, that is, to have a sacred existence accepted as an instance “not –being-able –to –have” which in practice was equivalent to a “not-being-able-to-be” axiological instance.

Theft establishes an anti-subject modalized according to the “power-to-do” and the “power-to-have” although it does not deprive D of his goods, it deprives him of his “power-to-do” (control of subjects), since the contract expires and the anti-subject becomes the destinator-recipient of his own actions. D’s counter-strategy (Exchange) allows him to become a positive destinator, transforming the anti-subject into a recipient.

33 Cfr. Greimás, A.J. (1976, D), Page 204.

34 According to Lévi-Strauss’s theory, culture is the result of transformation of nature, not its negotiation. It is human technical intervention that progressively brings about this transition. What is interesting in our case is to note that what the myth attempts to deny are precisely these principles ensure the primacy of the sacred.

Modalized according to the “power-to-have” (goods attributed by the destinator) and according to the “not-being-able-to-do” (in the case in which the rules imposed by the sender were not fulfilled).

The glorification of the recipient subject (cultivation and harvest) means a change of state caused by having (being able to have) but at the same time a return to the impossibility of doing, since it is conditioned by a “must-do”. On all this depends his “having” and consequently his “being”.

The reestablished hypotaxic relationship guarantees balance within the destinator perspective. The exchange he proposes creates abundance and at the same time dependency, the final statement is equivalent to his establishment as destinator-judge with sanctioning power over subjects.

The final situation determines the hierarchies and ensures control; the ‘know-how’ (cultivation) of men cannot be carried out if the ‘must-do’ (prescriptions, types of taxes, times assiduity, etc.) imposed by the sacred destinator is not fulfilled. His entire narrative program is oriented towards recovery of the role of destinator (lost at the time of the robbery and the subsequent cultural process in which the subject declares himself self-sufficient).

The exercise of control, that is, the power to punish men in the event of transgression of established norms, positively glorifies their performance, their manipulation of subjects to turn them into recipients.

The manipulation has consisted of persuasion that translates into temptation, intimidation and "make-believe" so that the subject accepts the conditions of the proposed contract.

In the initial situation, the destinator exercised his domination by applying a prohibition that reduced the subject to a state of deprivation; in the final situation, he exercises this domination through a prescription.

The grain-divinity syncretism updates the latter spatially and temporally, as it allows it to occupy a place within the community and at the same time be presented daily in the existence of the group that cultivates and harvest *'the milpa'*.

This permanent presence determines absolute obedience to the prescriptions he establishes. There is no forced imposition since the group is aware of this domination.

At the discursive level, it is a manipulative discourse through a series of mechanisms, establishes a belief (in the divine origin of corn) in order to established domination over the group and thus guarantee social cohesion. The sacred authority assumes the economy in a relationship of dependence. All the resulting economic factors and activities are conditioned in their functioning by the sacred authority.

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