

Chapter Three

Do Kamo, or The Stoic Physics of Colonialism

Sociobiology and Anthropomorphism

There is perhaps no one better to offer an antidote to this defense of the Pietist faith and the secretion of its colonialism than the Protestant missionary and esteemed Parisian professor Maurice Leenhardt (1878-1954). In his classic work *Do Kamo*, first published in French in 1947 and then in English in 1979 a careful analysis of decades of ethnographic fieldwork in New Caledonia are set forth to reveal an at least partially self-critical awareness of Christian European metaphysics as well as a vivid portrait of its role in the colonial situation of the indigenous “Canaques” and of his own missionary orientation.

The relevance of such works to the situation in which the Alz people today find themselves is indeed great. What we see amongst these people, a group made up of the ill, their caregivers, and the physicians who are meant to heal them, is nothing less than a situation of colonization. This colonization, which in a strong sense what may be called ethnographic, works through a particular (practical and historical) scientific orientation which I, through the *Journals of Gabriel*, will more directly relate to Pietism. Within this colonization, and within colonization more generally construed, the Alz people, like many Others, live in a situation in which both natural and social science have become complicit in maintaining their state of malaise. Within this state, that which I refer to as “the Alzheimer’s state,” a state in which every human plea for knowledge is met with a version of “I can’t say” there is a need to transgress against the Other, through an applied

science and against the practical. In this search for truth and cause perhaps the most crucial taboos or prohibitions to be transgressed against are those lines which mark the separation between the biological and the cultural. In this transgression it is necessary not to search for ways in which one can be subsumed within the other, as that has already been well done and its absurd failures noted, but rather to search for ways in which both are dialectically imagined within a different frame offering no such resolution. It is in the work of social theorist and Pietist guru Pitrim Sorokin that we find a clear expression of the above prohibition to be engaged through transgression, an imposed prohibition which Leenhardt, in his *Do Kamo*, names as an agent in colonial practice.

In a work entitled *Sociocultural Causality, Space, Time* Sorokin refers to what he calls “a profound difference between the componential structure of sociocultural phenomena on the one hand, and that of physiochemical and purely biological phenomena on the other.” In support of this assertion of a profound difference he writes immediately thereafter:

Any empirical socio-cultural phenomenon consists of three components: (1) immaterial, spaceless and timeless meanings; (2) material (physiochemical and biological) vehicles that “materialize, externalize, or objectify” the meanings; and (3) human agents that bear, use, and operate the meanings with the help of the material vehicles.¹

To Sorokin, these “immaterial, spaceless and timeless meanings” are the “inner aspects” of all cultural phenomena which remain constant though their vehicles and agents using these vehicles may change. Expanding this point, under the heading of “The

¹ Sorokin, Pitrim *Sociocultural Causality, Space, Time*, p.4.

Relationship between Pure Systems of Meanings and Pure Causal Systems -- Empirical Sociocultural Systems as Meaningful-causal Systems” he then writes:

A pure system of meanings may exist in the mind without any definite externalization or objectification in material vehicles. *But as soon as it is transmitted to other persons (intentionally or unintentionally)—as soon as it begins to be socialized—it must be clothed in some sort of external vehicle; because without some vehicle that serves as a conductor, the meaning cannot be transmitted and socialized, and therefore cannot become an empirical sociocultural system.*¹

It is here that Sorokin displays his notion of sociocultural causality most directly. In his “vehicle” one finds a mysterious, yet not too foreign entity. These vehicles of which he speaks cannot be solely material objects for, if this were so, then his notion of causality would in essence posit a wholly physical notion of social causality. If the interactions between physical objects, i.e. their cause and effect relations as material objects, were at the base of meanings, then they would lose their immaterial, timeless and spaceless qualities. In either event, they would, according to Sorokin, amount to “pure causal systems” instead of “meaningful causal systems.” These vehicles are for Sorokin “space-time” vehicles through which meaning and life find expression in material causation. Some of these vehicles, which he alternately refers to as “cultural phenomena,” are mnemonic objects (he mentions phonograph records, manuscripts and books), others are activities (reading aloud, singing), both of which are incorporations of (and giving “space and time” to) meaning. But that vehicle, or “cultural phenomenon,” which Sorokin fails to mention, that which is ever-present on his mind, is both mnemonic object and activity at once, that is to say “the body,” that is to say “the cause,” which is to have not said what one cannot say.

We must remember Sorokin's breakdown: *first*, immaterial, spaceless and timeless meanings; *second*, the material vehicles, and *then, third*, human agency comes into play "with the help of material vehicles." But one material vehicle stands out from the rest, emerges from their fray to become a causative agent, who or what he or she is we cannot say, although causative agency lies within his, her or its incarnation. But can one (or such a thing) *be* if unnamed? What are the body and the cause, and how do they *come to exist together*?

To Sorokin all physical description is thought of as mechanistic, and it just so happens that those whom he criticizes for combining social and natural scientific description do so in a mechanistic fashion. Of them he writes:

Trying to interpret man and social phenomena in the light of the principles of mechanics or general energetics, they disregard a series of specific characteristics of social phenomena which belong only to the human world, and which do not belong to other physical, chemical, or biological phenomena. As a result of the mechanistic school's "equalization" of sociocultural and physical phenomena, the theories ascribe to physical phenomena a series of human characteristics (anthropomorphism), and take off from sociocultural phenomena a series of their specific traits. Because of this the laws of mechanics are disfigured, their "nature" is made "anthropomorphic," and the essentials of sociocultural phenomena are passed over, without even touching them.¹

Here it is most important to note that this mechanist syncretism which Sorokin attacks is said to rely on a certain "anthropomorphism" in which "physical phenomena" are ascribed "a series of human characteristics." More correctly, and unacknowledged by Sorokin, is the fact that these "physical phenomena" to which he refers are *mechanistically construed*, leaving one to wonder whether it is in fact not

¹ Ibid. p.16.

anthropomorphism of mechanism which he is critiquing rather than “physical phenomena” *per se*. Having said this, however, it remains unclear as to whether or not Sorokin even distinguishes the two.

In the end, perhaps the greatest mistake of Sorokin is in making the assumption that we know what we are doing when we do science. On a practical level this is no doubt true, but in terms of applied science as I have described it above we have very little truth about what we are doing in our sciences, yet a great many stories, dreams and knowledges (all objectified) thereof. Furthermore, it is also important to note that most of these stories are utilitarian, either directly as in medicine, or indirectly as in the accumulation of knowledge, or progress.

Cosmomorphism

Inherent in the work of Pitrim Sorokin seems to be that human characteristics come first, and then those of physical phenomena to which these human characteristics are ascribed. In the work of Maurice Leenhardt, however, we find this issue of ascription (i.e. anthropomorphism) addressed in a different, this time ethnographic, light. According to Leenhardt the New Caledonians lived lives in which a certain *equation of* physical phenomena and human characteristics is fundamental. Here, however, this equation is said to take on not an anthropomorphic form in which human characteristics are ascribed to physical phenomena but rather a “cosmomorphic” form in which physical and/or biological/physiological phenomena are ascribed to human characteristics.

¹ Ibid. p.31.

According to Leenhardt, this is not to be understood as a simple reversal of the particular form of ascription to physical phenomena found in anthropomorphism, but rather as a redefinition of physical phenomena themselves.

According to basic post-Kantian phenomenological philosophy a “phenomenon” is defined as that which is perceived by observation and as a thing whose cause or agency we have no direct knowledge of. Phenomena cause things to happen in us and it is these things which they cause which either are or represent phenomena. Although philosophy has described this situation in a multitude of ways, the basic notion that phenomena and sensation are inextricably linked seems inescapable. Sensations are said to be the bridge between inside and outside worlds and will forever be our access to phenomena, whatever their nature. So the story goes.

To the New Caledonians, Leenhardt tells us, sensations lie in “the affective domain.” This domain, through which the individual experiences the world, i.e. gains access to phenomena, is not located in the sense organs of the head, the heart or the skin but rather in the entrails which they describe, cosmomorphically, in terms of the bodies of trees. There is a certain way in which phenomena are known or experienced, a certain way in which human beings are affected by phenomena, that is identical to the way in which trees are affected by phenomena. In his attempt to convey this notion Leenhardt puzzles over the facts he must present in its defense, writing:

Is it by chance that the majority of names for the internal organs originate in the plant kingdom? Is it only a matter of similar shapes? Or does the fact have a

deeper meaning? This vegetable nomenclature is no accident. It reveals an identity of structure and as identity of substance between man and tree.¹

Here one is introduced to what may at first appear to be two familiar themes in ethnographic analysis and “culture”—myths of origin and/or totemism—one being forever linked to the other. But, warns Leenhardt, the identity we see here is in fact not logocentric, i.e. not dependent on any relation in the form of telling, neither in terms of poetry or myth. Regarding poetry, writes Leenhardt leaning towards Romanticism, identifying people with trees “has become poetry for us who live in a secularized world, but it is still a lived reality for [the New Caledonians].” Regarding myth, writes Leenhardt, while it is true that: “Old tales illustrate the Caledonian’s cherished conviction that a single substance gives shape to human and to vegetative life”, it is also the fact that: “This myth of identity is not formulated in mythological stories; it is simply felt and lived in the fibers of the being. We do not know where the mythic ends and empirical reality begins for the Melanesians.”²

What we see here is nothing less than an attempt to describe a metaphysics which does not mirror our own relational metaphysics, and to do so in a way which does not bow to pressures which resist this attempt in the relativist construction of the noble and equal savage which constitute so much of mid-to-late twentieth century ethnographic representation. While this attempt is not so different from numerous other ethnographic

¹ Leenhardt, Maurice *Do Kamo*, p.17.

² The question of the nature of an “underlying sense of myth” so common in certain forms of ethnographic description is a difficult one. Plato denied its existence and import. To the Romantics it was symbolic. The use of this underlying sense (“*hyponoia*” to the Greeks) was seen as the basis of allegory, as a means of reconciling

accounts in spirit it is quite different in the pains its takes to describe other physical conceptions as physical conceptions and not as spiritual and mythical conceptions in lieu of

an ability to have something akin to a physical cosmology. Once again he states that the New Caledonians do not engage in anthropomorphism or analogical description when they maintain the identity between tree and human, writing: "Between the human body and the plant, there is only an identity of substance and not a parallelism of life."

When Leenhardt tells us that there is "an identity of structure" and "an identity of substance" between man and tree it is important to note that by "structure" he does not mean anything akin to the relationality posited in the structuralist anthropological analysis which the successor to his chair Claude Levi-Strauss made famous. Moreover, it is the essential link between structure and substance which he seems to say is very important in New Caledonian cosmology. The "substance" of trees, which means the entrails according the Leenhardt, is not only the wood itself but that out of which and through which the wood is constructed, i.e. fibers. Phenomena, as Leenhardt has explained, are experienced "in the fibers of the being," be that being a tree or a human, but the very term phenomena seems almost as if it is about to dissolve in the identity of (not relationship between) human and tree.

philosophy with the Epic poets. In the Baroque and within Stoicism I will show, as I have already begun to, how this underlying sense and our access to it was something else altogether.

According to relational metaphysics, there are, first, things in the world or simply “the world.” There is an outer and an inner, an above and below, a material and a spiritual, all “worlds” and all in relation to one another through story, myth or some other form of telling. This metaphysics also tells us that we experience these worlds through our bodies, without which we would not experience them, or at least not experience them as living men and women. But “our bodies” are *in relationship to* the world. Relational metaphysics tells us that our bodies end where our minds and the outer world begins. It tells that that there is a certain integrity and a certain boundary to our bodies and that there are spaces and different relationships between our bodies and things in the outside world of which our mind is a mirror and through which the world and our minds mutually construct one another. This is an identity of structure irregardless of substance. A great deal of our social relations, to things in our environment which have this or that quality, and especially to those substances which we incorporate into ourselves, are the subjects of prohibitions which define a structure of relations and not of the substances themselves. In other words, relational metaphysics (from alchemy on down) tells us that we quantify and qualify substances according to their relations to our bodies, keeping some substances or things away from us and incorporating or adhering others to us, and this makes up congruities of structure, be they in the form of signs or symbols.

Is it possible to think of a physics (of substance) beyond both Pietist mechanism and the anthropomorphism of mechanistic physics? Cultural relativist thought, be it like that found in structuralist or symbolic anthropology, has led critiques of science to depict the “truths” and “laws” as well as the basic axioms of science on which they are built, to

be as relative to a certain Western scientific culture as any such laws, truths or axioms are to any other. This view, however, is also not adequate in that through colonialism certain hegemonies come into play which are not as of yet anywhere near as well understood as scientists, social and natural, *think* they understand what they themselves and each other are doing. In both the social and the natural sciences, from brains “utilizing” to social groups “speaking” or “demanding” there is a great plenitude of anthropomorphizing. This stems from some sort of recognition that there are certain parallelisms between things which are seen as living or acting in the world and, in the case of things which we consider to be living, the recognition of certain parallelisms is that which biology is all about, i.e. the maintenance of life and the avoidance of death. But according to Leenhardt the Caledonians lack any such biological outlook and, moreover, any such recognition of parallelism altogether. The human body and the tree are not parallel existences, they are the same, just as the world, i.e. the cosmos (those phenomena affecting one) is (are) not in any parallel existence with the human body, but rather is (are) identical with it.¹ Leenhardt explains this difficult conception thus:

If the Canaque [i.e. New Caledonian] were using an analogy or anthropomorphism, he would surely have gone all the way with the analogy or anthropomorphism and said, in his language, that the tree, like man, like himself, dies. But his language reveals no such idea; one never says that a tree is dead.

The reality of the Canaque’s mythic language is not supplemented by anthropomorphism. In the absence of anthropomorphism lies one of the deep-seated reasons for the conditions which philosophers have shown to characterize

¹ In this we are introduced to a particular notion of identity, an idea which will take on much importance in chapters to follow. Identity here is being invoked *via* a non-Platonic and non-logocentric version of the Greek term *sympatheia*. To Plato and his notion of *logos* the idea of *sympatheia* is used, in the *Timaeus*, to depict the universe as an organism. This notion came, in the neoplatonism of Plotinus, to involve an affective and/or possessive role of the sun in human affairs, seeing the sun as affecting humanity without contact and without the use of a medium. To Plotinus this *sympatheia without contact or medium* was that through which sympathetic magic worked. To the Stoics, and within the Baroque, we see another form of *sympatheia* and theory of sympathetic magic to be elaborated in what follows.

primitive mentality: the absence of distance between people and things, the adherence of subject and object, and all the participation with a world the sees in only two dimensions. In fact, we must come to see that it is not the Melanesian who has discovered the tree, but rather, the tree which has revealed itself to him, as happens for the object at the origin of every discovery. When man lives in the envelopment of nature and has not yet separated himself from it, he does not flow into it [as the relationality of the Romantic symbolist as described above would have it] ; he is invaded by it, and through nature knows himself. He does not have an anthropomorphic view, but on the contrary submits himself to the effects of an undifferentiated view [as opposed to the differentiated view that structuralist and symbolist anthropology continues to refine from Durkheim and Mauss' view of primitive classification] that causes him to include the whole world in each of his representations, without dreaming of distinguishing himself from the world: we might call it cosmomorphic view.

In his eyes, then, the structure of the plant corresponds to the structure of the human body. An identity of substance causes them to mingle in the same flow of life.

The human body is composed of that substance which turns green in jade, gives form to foliage, swells every living thing with sap and bursts out in shoots and in the eternal youth of new generations.

And because the native is filled with the world's pulse, he does not distinguish the world from his body. [my brackets]¹

In this we begin to find an answer to the question with which I began the last paragraph concerning the possibility of a non-Pietist and non-anthropomorphic physics, a physics which, if mechanist, would be so in a way very different to that which it is in today's post-Newtonian-yet-Newtonian physics. Is not such an "undifferentiated view" and the effects it would have on our conceptions of phenomena and the cosmos possible? Totemism and anthropomorphism are both fully differentiated views and within them we supposedly see a whole moral universe in play, relationally, from this clan to that clan, from teleological ends and purposes to sleeping or thinking computers (mine "is an

¹ Ibid. pp.20-21.

apple”). In opposition to this relational metaphysics and the demands it makes upon our understanding, says Leenhardt, “the Melanesian totem [i.e. that which is called this by other ethnologists] assumes a very humble form.” This totem tree, like the human itself with which it is identical, says Leenhardt beautifully, “is the quivering points showing the existence of life in the world’s inert mass.” The term “identity,” he tells us admittedly, “is difficult to apply, and its use leads to abstractions.” The explication of this notion is often avoided by ethnologists and instead substituted with structuralist terminology. “Totemism” he tells us, “lets us see, through myth, a concrete aspect of identity. It allows us a simpler understanding of the vibration which leads man to feel the world within himself and to be formed by it long before he projects himself into it.”

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To the New Caledonians, and to the non-Pietist, non-anthropomorphic physics which I am here describing, the first and most important notion to understand is the above mentioned notion of vibration. The human body, which is also the world or cosmos,¹ is composed (in substance and structure) of, and senses through, the fibers which make up its body. These fibers or the body/cosmos are vibratory.² Knowing what the body/cosmos is composed of (in substance and structure) is, however, not a description of the body itself. To answer the question of what the Melanesians call “the body”

Leenhardt writes:

What do Melanesians call the body, of which they have an external representation and do not separate from nature? Their word for it, *karo*, appears in a number of expressions, which, taken together, will permit us to grasp the true meaning.

¹ Note, as mentioned above, and as will be elucidated below that the Stoics also identify in a like manner.

² Again it is of value to foreshadow the Stoic conception in which human and divine are of similar forms of body and affecting one another through the changes in the tension between them.

Karo rhë: the body of water, which is the river's mass;
Karo so: the body of the dance; it is the carved pole around which dancers circle;
Karo bara: the body of fear; this term designates the reed the women use to make a screen to prevent themselves from seeing or being seen by the elder brother, who is taboo;
Karo boe: the body of night; this is the Milky Way, skeleton of the sky;
Karo nevo: the body of the hole; this is its hollowness or emptiness (nothing surrounded by something);
Karo gi: the body of the ax, that is, its handle;
Karo pa: the body of warriors (army corps);
Karo kamo: the body of the man, the person;
Karo tapere: the body of a table, that is, its base; the expression is not applied to a chair, because a chair has rungs and is considered to be a tree.

In short, the term *karo* indicates the supporting element necessary to the reality of these beings and things.¹

It is in these conceptions of the body that we find a whole form of thinking which will help us elucidate this other metaphysics which we are addressing. Comparing these notions of the body, fibers and vibration to *non-Platonic*, materialist Stoicism we find many important points of conjunction.² These Stoics, Gabriel tells us, held that there were different degrees of being in the cosmos and that these beings differed in their degrees of *tonos*, i.e. tension, strain or tone. Those with the least amount of *tonos* were the lowest forms of being and those with the most the highest. Rocks were seen as having the lowest, then plants, then animals and then “rational beings” made up of man and divinity (both the highest). In the physical world those beings with the highest tension, strain or tone could not help but experience the greatest vibration.

¹ Ibid.p.21.

²Stoicism is popularly spoken of in terms of three groups in the classical age: the early, strongly materialist Stoicism of Heraclitus (Fifth Century B.C.), Zeno of Citium (c.336-c.264), Cleanthes (c.331-c.232) and Chrysippus (c.280-c.206); the middle, still materialist Stoicism of Panaetius (185-c.110) and Poseidonius (135-c.51); and the late,

Although the reasons that the Caledonians chose trees as those beings with which they specifically identified are not known, we must also keep in mind that in their conception, according to Leenhardt, they also, like the Stoics, did not exclude the rest of the cosmos from their body and/or vibrational cosmos. To the Caledonians, as with the Stoics, there was no dualist metaphysics but rather a very inclusive monism in place. As in the Stoic equation of: Divinity = Zeus = creative fire = ether = the word/speech (*logos*) = reason of the world = soul of the world = law of nature = providence = destiny = order, we also find something of a similar equation among the Caledonians indirectly outlined by Leenhardt in which, it seems, *at least*: Divinity = *bao* = *kamo* = *karo* = the word/speech = support of the cosmos = support of the group.

The second term in this equation, “*bao*,” itself designates a great many things and comprises an equation of: *bao* = god = the dead = lucky manifestation = unlucky manifestation = human manifestation (changelings) = the body of the dead man = prestigious person = unusual person = old people. Such equations are often not spelled out, says Leenhardt, and when this is not done we most often find “ancestors” discussed in their place.¹

In contrast with, but also identical to, *bao* is “*kamo*” which is described as “a technical notion of the body,” “a support,” and simply as “the living one.”¹ Somewhat

increasingly Platonized Stoicism of Epictetus (c.50 A.D.-c.138), Seneca (c.4 B.C.-c.65), and Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.D.). Most of my uses of “Stoicism” in this text refer to those thinkers of early and middle Stoa.

¹ One may wonder to what extent there exists a much more pervasive tendency in the history of ethnographic description to ignore such inclusive and monistic thinking regarding ancestors and the ancestral—a tendency fueled by the dualist and Platonic metaphysics which is addressed here and in what is to come. In my own experience the ambiguous separation found in West African ethnology between nature spirits and ancestors may indeed be further

like certain notions of the soul or personality as found in the European imagination, *kamo* is elsewhere described by Leenhardt as “a living personage who is recognized less by the outline of a man than by the form, by what we call his air of humanity.²” When encountering a traveler which surprises or offends him or her, says Leenhardt, the question of what it is that he or she is encountering is the first thought a New Caledonian will have. He or she will wonder if it is human, and will determine this by whether or not there is a living personage whom he or she can identify or feel familiar with inside the skin of the Other. If not, it may not be a human he or she is encountering, but rather a *baos*.³

Key to the interplay of determination between *baos* and *kamo* is *karo* which is, paraphrasing Leenhardt’s earlier description of its forms, ‘the supporting element necessary to the reality of these beings and things.’⁴ Just as *karo* is the support, the body, of *baos* and *kamos*, so do the *baos* act as the support of man and society. “The *baos* dominate society,” says Leenhardt, “they bear it, they insure its existence.” The *baos* are, by this standard, in a sense the body of society, i.e. that which supports it and feels the vibrations of the cosmos. They seem to be, in a sense, fibers through which vibrations of different magnitudes, be they social or natural (by our own conception), affect individual

evidence of this. This subject will be most directly addressed in terms of imagery and spirit possession in chapter 6 of this book.

¹ To the Stoics this support, *pneuma*, was a composite of air and fire which, in its heated air version was also, within their monist formula, soul.

² Note the expression “air of” here, how it strangely connotes that which we breath and live within, whose humidity we sense, etc., and that which blows against us as wind *combined with* manner and appearance. Here one’s “air,” if combined with the *pneuma* of the Stoics, could also be something akin to a secretion of ones soul.

³ In a certain sense, to be elucidated below, this description of this phenomena bears a great deal of importance to the ways in which encounters may be said to be taking place within what I have called *dreama*.

⁴ In Stoic terms this would be akin to *pneuma* in differing and changing states of *tonos* (tension, strain or tone).

members or the group as a whole for better or for worse.¹ In this conception it is neither the living, the dead, nature, society, the gods, or any of the such which alone are causing things to occur, but rather it is all of them together. There is no distinction between them in

New Caledonian monism. As seen in the example of a body of warriors being *karo*, where our own relational metaphysics would look for an *esprit de corps*, their metaphysics looks for a body and a body alone. There is something in this view, in its bare monism and physics, which resists the attribution of a Durkheimian energetics to the *baos* and to their roles in social cohesion and action, an attribution which many ethnographers have given to their ethnographic subjects, and to which they continually refer when addressing matters of “Spirit.”

It is soon thereafter, though, that Leenhardt admits to and addresses the lingering problem [given to him by Lévy-Bruhl and others] of mythic reality, a problem which this monism and physics cannot avoid in that both are in a certain sense dependent on this sort of othering in Leenhardt’s explication. It is above all necessary to give up both symbolic and (Saussurean) semiotic modes in understanding this monism and physics, he insists; we must abandon both the “as people express their lives, so they are” and the reliance on binaries, arbitrariness and difference in our approach to this particular “mythic reality.”

¹ The task of imagining these fibers, especially as material and not ideal, socially relational and so on is perhaps the greatest challenge in comprehending this entire alternate metaphysics being presented by Leenhardt. These fibers seem to be not *between bodies* in as much as *between kinds of bodies* (i.e. the various forms of *karo*, from the body of water = the river’s mass, to the body of the hole = its hollowness or emptiness). In the intermingling of bodies which this monism demands, we see different kinds of bodies both within and outside of each other. There are no “empty” spaces between bodies in that even these are themselves are a kind of body, i.e. body of the hole. From this perspective the notion of fibers takes on a whole new image. In this metaphysics fibers can be nothing more and nothing less than those often roughly defined places where one kind of body is infused with another and can therefore influence, and be influenced by, the another. In this metaphysics fibers do not reach through empty space connecting bodies but rather resonate within and through other forms of body *mediating within* instead of “*between*.”

Here we must “give up the pairs of opposites which are the bases of our understanding: life, death; animate, inanimate; yes, no.¹”

The Stoics treatment of myth and its purported “underlying sense” was first and foremost a discussion of allegory. The Stoics were particularly interested in ancient poets and other texts for their uses in the pursuit of etymological understanding. The Stoics believed that the connection between names and the true nature of things stems from a time of origin in which names were given to things. They also thereby denied that this connection was based upon any form of convention. But to the Stoics, it seems, etymology was not simply a means to find some original meaning to words and therefore to discover their connection to divinity. It was rather a partial means of grasping the true nature of things which supplemented the knowledge gained through the senses. To the Stoics etymology was an important part of *noesis* (thinking, as opposed to sensation, or intuition, as opposed to discursive reasoning), i.e. the operation of *nous* (intelligence, intellect, mind). This *noesis* worked through *katalepsis*, the act of grasping an impression. Unlike Plato’s ideal theory however, what is grasped, i.e. the impression, is in no shape or form an idea, an impression or image on the soul.² For the Stoics this grasping (*katalepsis*) was rather an activation of *nous* within us by its contact, via channels of sensation, with the divine *logos* in the universe³, and this divine *logos* was, in this materialist monism, that all pervasive harmonic formula of material forms which this

¹ Note here that these pairs of opposites are *not* based upon a tension between opposite *meanings* but rather on a tension of opposites, period, by which in this metaphysics would mean a physical tension as exists in material fibers mediating within different forms of body (*karo*).

² For Plato *noesis* equaled *dialektike*. The dialectician, opposing myth, gives an “account” i.e. *logos*, of the true being of a thing.

³ A contact that is maintained in an attenuated fashion during sleep by breathing.

monism described. All put together the Stoics used etymology as a means of thinking and intuition (beyond mere sensation and discursive reasoning) which led to a better contact with or conception of how various material forms stood in harmonic (or disharmonic) tensional opposition to one other within an all pervasive monist formula.

In this use of etymology the Stoic conception of language is perhaps most crucial. In this conception language was divided into two realms: interior *logos*, or thought, and external *logos*, or speech. Whether in discursive reasoning or in the description of sensation the Stoic conception of language is in no way instrumental. Rather, in the spirit of etymology, internal and external *logos*, in thinking and intuition, lead to a greater contact with or conception of cosmic *sympatheia* in their search for origins or non-sensuous, non-representational similarities, for basic “like-ness” as we seek in my friend saying “I resemble that remark.” In neither internal nor external *logos* is any historical or practical origin searched for, whether in terms of onomatopoesis or in terms of historical sociolinguistic convention. The origins sought are not mythic (i.e. edenic) nor historical, but are rather allegorical, material and corporeal. They are not to be gotten at *via* the story of another, which equals sensation or discursive reasoning, but rather *via* a story of one’s own, which equals thinking and intuition through these two. These origins are not gained in sympathetic historical or mythological description “*of*,” but in a sympathetic transgression *against*, the Other.¹

¹ This view is, of course, very much related Georges Bataille’s theory of language discussed at the end of the last chapter. In Bataille this transgression against the other is only a temporary but illuminative means of grasping at such origins. It may also be said that the two great critics of myth Lévy-Bruhl and Walter Benjamin also engaged in this discussion and likewise called for a search for origins in a like fashion. In the case of Lévy-Bruhl the understanding of “primitive mentality” involved an applied knowledge of native *logos* toward an illumination of *our*

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Among the many features of the “mythic reality” used *to describe* the way New Caledonians understand the cosmos the most striking to Leenhardt, as one may expect from a missionary, is what he refers to as “the absence of the concept of death.” This absence, says Leenhardt, exposes three major groups of facts (or ways of description) which constitute this monist and physical cosmos, elsewhere referred to as a form of mythical reality¹:

- (1) There is no opposition between the living and the dead, nor between the animate and the inanimate.
- (2) Due to there being no opposition between the animate and inanimate there can also be no inanimate causal schema. “The causal schema is always a living one from which extraordinary magical or mythic actions may be deduced.”
- (3) There is no continuity or discontinuity (rupture) or life. “There are no possible intersections, no end, no death, no past, no future. The Canaque remains in the present, and he incorporates the mythic forms of his life into the present.”¹

It is most particularly in the idea of causality within the identity of the animate and inanimate that we see the notion of the symbol most fully addressed. Here it is most crucial to understand that “the mythic” of this reality is *not* another word for “the symbol” but rather is the material which the symbol addresses. To say, as Leenhardt has, that among the New Caledonians “the causal schema is always a living one” is to say, as he then does, that it is living in the sense that magical and mythic (i.e.

own rational prejudices. In the case of Benjamin the search for origins involved a mixture of social and individual history, through language and writing, which acted as an applied knowledge of political and cultural turmoil.

¹ We must bear in mind that by “mythical reality” Leenhardt seems to designate a form of description, a mode of storytelling, whose mythological characters and so on are not causes in themselves but rather means through which causes may be explored in a way akin the Stoic etymology or Benjaminian “*ur*-history.”

anthropomorphic) actions may be attributed to it. He is not saying, however, that their causal schema is animate but rather that it may be animated by someone after the fact. While it is a fact that when a rock is thrown it is not the inanimate object which causes the bruise, it is equally true that the cause may not be the person who threw it, or his or her throw.

What is being expressed here is the move from one state to another through one form of body causing change in another. What we see is a physical tension of material opposites changing, one affecting the other in kind, the affect being a mimesis of one thing caused by another. When we hear that there is no opposition between the living and the dead, or the animate and the inanimate, this means that when living cause other people or things to mime them they are the dead, or when the dead cause other people or things to mime them they are the living. Equally, when an inanimate rock strikes an arm and that arm ceases to function as a healthy moving part, that arm (or whatever form of body appropriate here) becomes inanimate and the rock animate. At the other end of the exchange was, of course, another arm, person (or whatever form of animate body) which animated the rock in the direction of the other person's arm. To be more precise, the rock went from inanimate, to animate (the throw and strike) and back to inanimate (as if fell to the ground), and the injured arm went from animate, to hyper-animate (the recoil?), to inanimate. Most important in such determinations of cause and effect, however, is to understand that *there are no absolute opposites but only matters of degree or ratio of opposition*. Very seldom is such mimesis total and permanent. Life is a constantly

¹ Ibid. pp.41-42.

shifting change in ratio and degree of mimesis, between degrees of continuity and discontinuity, animate and inanimate, and the realms of taboo and transgression and, with the New Caledonians as with the Stoics, these changes are wholly material and physical.

Unlike the physical and material, the magical and the mythological are both second order phenomena, neither individual nor social causes but descriptions/determinations/relations thereof. They are akin to the first historical and second practical notions of the cause. They describe and secrete a causal schema which is not yet known, which, while being indeterminate, must feign an all too serious determinacy. The symbol, and symbolism, are a *third* order redescriptive and reconstitutive enterprise of second order mythological, magical and legal descriptions. While many among us say, and as a missionary must believe, that morals and laws (reconstituted, granted or certified by the symbol) are “the support” of society, the New Caledonians, according to Leenhardt, do not do so¹. Among them it is the *baos* which are this “support” and which are primary to the secondary descriptions/determinations/relations given by magic, myth, and their (supposedly constituting) connections to morality.

Above all let us not mistake Leenhardt’s intentions. His interest in the above matters was fueled first by the needs of a missionary to understand what is necessary for conversion of the New Caledonians but, above and beyond this, was his interest as a

¹ One could say in a certain sense that while Europeans speak of “moral fiber” Leenhardt’s New Caledonians spoke of *material* fiber.

scholar and intellectual in offering a strong critique about how missionaries (including his younger self), and (consciously or unconsciously) like-minded ethnologists, engaged in their symbolist (and structuralist) enterprise. First and foremost Leenhardt seems to recognize the crucial fact that it is he who was “symbolizing” and not the New Caledonians, i.e. that it was he who, in giving context, bore the responsibility and the goal of this sort of description. Although Leenhardt certainly recognized that he was looking at

a growing syncretism between European Christian and New Caledonian metaphysics, he also felt that it was still possible for someone with his knowledge of both metaphysical systems to separate the two and analyze this syncretism as it had formed and continued to form during his long tenure amongst these people. A main idea seems to be that before this syncretism grew to a point of significance in New Caledonia the monist, physical situation (described above) in which the *boas* were the support of society was that which held sway, and that notions such as mythical reality, (sympathetic) magic, and myth could scarcely be separated from a symbolic incorporation which followed colonialism. With this idea Leenhardt chooses to make his description address this physical, monist metaphysics at all costs, with the firm belief that in doing so he could spell out a form of colonialism and conversion which did not require the annihilation of New Caledonian culture, and the “I” of the individual via symbolic incorporation, to achieve its purposes. Whether or not this was a wish to have one's Christian cake and eat it too remains to be seen.

What must any progressive, relativist missionary or ethnologist assume if he or she is to seek a “fair and just” colonial analysis/conversion and/or resymbolization? He or she must first realize that his or her native society has cohesion and that this cohesion consists of a certain morality, logic and otherwise rule-governed attributes, and then that these attributes must somehow be altered just enough to allow the salvation or development of this group, but not so much as to create a confusion or loss of control as that found in bad translations. In this regard Leenhardt asks the question as to how, among the New Caledonians, the *baos* “support” society but do so in the way of a non-symbolic (i.e. non-third, descriptive) order, and non-mythological or non-magical (i.e. non-second, descriptive) order. Concentrating on the first, physical order of their monist metaphysics Leenhardt seems to walk a tightrope, ever teetering towards a fall into mythologism, but staying aloft nevertheless. Considering the phenomenology of space, in one instance, he refers to the symbolism of spatial relations of a native house pole as the mere conveyance of “a muted echo of... great mythologies,” which are themselves muted echoes of the substantial nature of the pole.

As strange as it may seem, the New Caledonian metaphysics given to us by Leenhardt is wholly logocentric (valuing speech over writing, identity over difference, presence over absence, ambiguity, simulation, substitution and negativity, and immediacy over distance) yet again, like materialist Stoicism, anti-Platonic. The most crucial distinction between platonic and New Caledonian physics is in their forms of logocentrism. While in Plato this logocentrism is based upon an opposition between *mythos* and *logos*, Leenhardt offers what appears to be a third term in the notion of *bao*.

The *baos*, the support of society, are not mythological but real, partly in the way that Willie Mae referred to the behavior of those with Alzheimer's disease as not living in the past, but real, and partly in the way that one reacts to them and their stories, or the feelings, good or bad, which anyone has for dead loved ones or old times. The being of the *baos*, Leenhardt tells us, "merges with man's existence when the latter is at a point of least physical vigor, as with the old man, or lifeless, as with a corpse, or superior and foreign to the society, as with the first navigators." In this state, attained at a point of least physical vigor, *bao* is merged with *karo kamo* or the body of a man/person and with his *kamo* or his living personage.

It is here that the labor of applied knowledge begins to open the possibility of understanding an affliction not only in individual or psychological terms but equally in terms of that which is manifesting to a group, affecting them, and causing them to mimic, often in melancholia and ostentation, this merger of *bao*, *kamo*, and *karo kamo*. Is it in this way, in causing mimesis in the form of melancholia and ostentation—not at all unlike those of Shakespeare's *King Lear* in which liminal periods, sacrifice, and other rituals hold sway—that the *baos* are the support of society? The answer is yes, but with serious qualifications. First, what we see in *King Lear*, and other dramatic periods of liminality is that while they are depicted according to relational metaphysics and morality, they are best thought of when not being so. Second, from what we know according to Leenhardt's description, the events surrounding Lear would certainly be

mythologized by the New Caledonians, but neither this, nor symbolic analysis, would lead us to the particular affliction of Lear and/or of his kingdom and society.

What we would see in *King Lear*, in terms of *bao* influence, would be, first, the fact that a *bao* merged with the existence, i.e. the *karo* and *kamo*, of Lear at a point of least physical vigor. In doing this the *bao* is, or is mimed by, Lear's actions. But we are also told that the *baos* are the support of society and are in essence the body of society. It is therefore possible, it seems, that by working-into the melancholia and ostentation of Lear we can work into the body of society and in doing so learn about that from which magic, myth and symbolism are steps removed.

But how is this done? How do we, following Leenhardt's initiative, work our way into that which supports society in this way? The *baos*, being the body of society, are that which hold it together and feel the vibrations of the cosmos. They are, as mentioned above, in a real sense, social fibers through which vibrations of different magnitudes affect individual members of a group for better or for worse. If these fibers were connections or lines between two or more points or parts, two or more people or subgroups, and especially if these connections served to relay information or some such activity, then they would be our way back into a relational metaphysics not at all unlike the way chosen by contemporary neuroscience, social psychology or ethnology. But they most certainly are not. These fibers, known alternately as *baos*, are wholly physical, flowing and vibratory not in the way we usually imagine electricity and wires, or

speech/communication but in the way the New Caledonians describe *tonos* and mass change. They physically flow and vibrate not “like” but “as” a river’s *mass*, dancers thumping and moving around a pole, the stars swirling in ether, the mass of air or water filling a hole, the ax handle as its blade strikes an object, warriors charging and clashing in battle, or the base of a table when one raps ones fingers upon it. In these conceptions everything in the cosmos is connected and one. There are no separations filled with space or nothingness. There is no absence between things, but only presence affecting or not affecting, manifesting or not manifesting. There are different bodies, but of quality, of fibers vibrating thus and so, and even what we think of as nothing, as space between bodies, is a body, as seen “the body of the hole.¹” In this vision all bodies are bodies-within-bodies, fiber-systems-within-fiber-systems, resonating (or not resonating) at different frequencies, different tones, depending on that which determines tone itself. Even in the most human of worlds, in which Christian European metaphysics assumes family relations as its most basic source of metaphor and concentration, there are no relations, only blood flowing, branching out, changing and returning, like the body of a river, its mass, a fiber-system-within-a-fiber-system, constituting and suggesting different metaphors in which, for example, a line of affinity *is* “an arteriole, separate from the large artery and aligned with others.²”

¹ These bodies are identical in that they are forms of body within the one body, like organs within an organism. Most important is that they are neither continuous nor discontinuous but, as said above, forever changing degrees of the two.

² Note here that among the Stoics the directive faculty of the soul, the *hegemonikon*, was seated in the heart.

So what then of Lear, of the situation of his existence and the support of society (*bao*) merging? What we see is not so much *bao* “merging” but *bao* displacing or altering another body via tensing or slackening fibers. What we see is a change in tone, from one quality of body acting upon another, from what seems to be the quality of one body to that quality which is that of *bao*.

So what then is this quality of body which is that of *bao*? It is that of the hole. And what of the body it has displaced or altered? The body of the river. What we see manifesting in Lear is the body of the hole and this is displacing the body of the river. The tone of the river body has been decreased (as in decomposition) by that of the hole which is increasing (and which was itself caused a decrease in *kamo*). Although this may be unclear at this time, these ideas will be developed in what follows.

For now consider, to begin with, the notion that the support of society, the *baos*, have bodies which are of the quality of the hole. It is no stretch of the imagination to consider the body of the sovereign as that of the group or society. But, then again, in many ways this “body,” which is a great subject of anthropomorphism, mythologism and symbolism, is the most elusive of all in that that which is seen to bind it together is itself so little understood. Among the New Caledonians, Leenhardt tells us, the chief = the body of society = *bao* = the body of the hole = the Word. “The Word,” writes Leenhardt, “means legends, contracts and affective images, evoking times of mourning and victory in each clan. All is expressed in old stereotyped formulas, to which are added new symbols to actualize the discourse. The Word is like the clan’s social substance.”

This notion of the Word being not only the chief, the support of society, and *bao* manifestation is, again, in no way as hard to imagine as all of these being “the body of the hole.” Nevertheless, Leenhardt tells us, such a notion is in no way uncommon in this part of the world. He writes:

Certainly, many chieftainships have a mythological origin. Malinowski has it that in the Trobriand Islands the chief comes out of a hole. But the same tradition is found on many islands and in Australia.

Perhaps there is a confusion between verbal formulations and mythological interpretation. Thus, on the Loyalty Archipelago, when one seeks to trace a series of events back to its cause, one stops before the unknown and says, “Here is a hole.”¹

The dramatic impact of *King Lear* cannot be fully appreciated if one does not feel the threat that his illness and betrayal pose not only to him but to the body of his kingdom as a whole. It is also not in the contempt for the immoral workings of his daughters and son in laws, or in his own failures and stubbornness, i.e. the moral sentiments which arise in response to these goings-on, which would be the main focus according to New Caledonian notions of sovereignty as Leenhardt describes them. What we would see in *King Lear*, according to this metaphysics, would be first and foremost a crisis in the body of society. This would be followed by a tracing of a series of events, from Lear’s howling insanity and death, back toward its unknown cause and in which one would stop before the unknown and say, like those of the Loyalty Archipelago, “Here is a hole.” According to the New Caledonian metaphysics, as Leenhardt describes it, it seems that one must follow the changes in tone, brought about by fibers, to where it ends and, at this

¹ Ibid. p.118

location, seek the cause in the body of the person manifesting a *bao* and, in doing so, study the affliction of the social and individual body simultaneously.

Assuming, as has certainly been done before, that Lear is suffering from a form of “senility” which is the cause of his actions from start to finish, albeit exaggerated by the betrayal and disempowerment he undergoes, could we not then suppose that he may be said to be suffering from Alzheimer’s disease? If we suppose this, let us then proceed toward the cause of his illness in the way described above. According to this metaphysics Lear’s illness, Alzheimer’s disease, is:

- a) a manifestation of *bao*;
- b) that which affects the Word;
- c) that which affects the body of society; and
- d) that which affects the body of the hole.

In later chapters of this book I will address the first three of these modes more or less directly: the manifestation of *bao* in notions of dream, photographs, and stories of Gabriel, Harwood, Felipa, and others; that which affects the Word in discussions of language, Pietism and the Symbol; and that which affects the body of society in the notion of the (I)nc. as it arises in various times and places. Here, however, I stand before a hole looking in. And what do I see?

Somewhere, midway in the course of my time amongst the Alz people I came to this hole, having gone, with the help of Harwood, and through Gabriel, those physicians I worked with and so many others, further and further into these first three aspects of Lear’s and/or Alzheimer’s disease, finally coming to this hole and seeing in it a body of

nothingness, i.e. “the cause.” But not long thereafter I came to see that this body, as I was seeing it, was of a second order. Having come to work through the third order of symbolism, I stared into a mythological and magical body of nothingness, into an (I)nc. and/or the mythology and magic of the state. Yet within this hole, within this body of nothingness, was something, a body of the hole which was a body as physical as can be, but seldom recognized as such. This body was composed of air laden with more or less water and other substances and some sort of ether, and it was moving in ways I could not fully sense, but which I and the body of society depended upon, which supported us and was connected, as if by fibers, to other qualities of body and through whose manifestation the cosmos cohered. This body of the hole, i.e. the Word = *bao* = the sovereign = the body of society, were all manifesting and causing the often strange manifesting I saw in those like Lear and in my own mimesis of it. The cause was Divinity, as I came to see it, seeing into this body of the hole, and Divinity was a change in tone. In the body of society, as in the sovereign (in this case Lear), as in *bao*, as in the Word (i.e. speech or *logos*) I came to see that the cause of Alzheimer’s disease was a change in tone, inclusive of all of its aspects and, especially, of the notion of *tonos*, construed in terms of materialist, non-Platonic Stoicism, from which they stem.

First and foremost among the concerns of Leenhardt seems to be a clear and continual reassertion that the New Caledonian metaphysics which he is describing is in no way, shape or form akin to that of Platonism or Neoplatonism. Although the key to the body of New Caledonian society is many things in one, as I explained above, Leenhardt seems, as a missionary again should, to lay particular stress on the particular

equation in which the social body = the Word. This is, of course, quite understandable from the perspective of syncretism and conversion in that the new sovereign (France and God/Jesus/Holy Spirit) must equal the new *bao* (the dead in the afterlife) must equal the new body of the hole (spirit) and that all of these must equal, and be one with, the new Word (of God). But it is precisely in the Word (i.e. *logos*), Leenhardt thinks, that Platonism and Neoplatonism work their colonial power and this power, according to Leenhardt, is that which in conversion and syncretism destroys the New Caledonian social body in the form of the “I” and rebuilds it in the form of the (I)nc., thus robbing these persons individually and as a group of their sovereignty and making their relationship with God/Jesus one of ignorance and servitude and not one of freedom and liberation.

In essence, what Leenhardt seems to offer in his emphasis on the Word in New Caledonian metaphysics is a point of resistance against the Platonic and Neoplatonic relationalist metaphysics of colonialism, *and* another way in which a kinder, gentler colonialism can supposedly proceed leaving the “*do kamo,*” or the “authentic personage (i.e. the authentic soul)” of the native intact.

Although I do not entirely agree with Leenhardt’s assessment of the anti-colonial power of the Word as he understands and proposes it, at least as I have come to know it among the Alz people, I do recognize the ineluctable power of the Word (i.e. speech and language) in that it cannot help but be the source of any opposition to colonialism that I, as a writer, can put forward. When taken as it is found in New Caledonian metaphysics,

the most valuable feature of the Word is not its equation with the sovereign, the social body, or the ancestors but rather its equation with the body of the hole, i.e. that physical nothingness which is something. The most valuable feature of the Word is not that which it says, its sound, but rather what it secretes.

The body of the hole as we find it on earth has a mass, and that mass is the quantity of air in it. Where this body ends and another, say of water or soil, begins is not a simple matter to determine seeing that air contains water and soil within it and seeing that we are also unsure to which quality of body either belongs within New Caledonian physical metaphysics. In a hole air mixes with earth and water in ways which outside of the hole it may not. As the body of the hole the Word is linked to air, earth, water and, more importantly is linked to *a change in* these three. The platonic or neoplatonic Word denies this link at all costs, making *pneuma*, or *spiritus*, i.e. making *air and/or breath*, immaterial and insubstantial, but the New Caledonian Word at all costs *secretes* its physicality and substantiality in the form of vibrating fibers. The Word (i.e. speech) in New Caledonian metaphysics does not carry information, or relay meaning, but rather acts, does and secretes its physicality via fibers connecting the speaker to the cosmos and it to him or her. It secretes in the way in which we find in speaking against a mirror one's speech steams the glass, that is, the fibers between mirror and the speaker, the body of the hole, alter the body quality of the mirror in turn causing the tensile vibrations between the mirror and one's eye (the body of the hole?) to change in turn causing one's image in the mirror to be obscured. It secretes in the way in which we find in saying a certain word someone listening smiles, that is, the fibers between the speaker and the

listener, the body of the hole, alter the body qualities of the listener's body, his or her tree substance *karo*, causing the tensile vibrations between ear and face to change and a smile to manifest *via* tensing and relaxing fibers and then tensile vibratory changes (the body of the hole) between the smiling person and the speaker to alter and so on.¹

Above all else Leenhardt wants to make known that in this non-relational metaphysics the Word is not a passive carrier but transgressive physical action or, when strong "like the top of a tree," as the New Caledonians say, "violence perceived as a formidable mass." The Word is also by no means "discourse" in this non-relational metaphysics, says Leenhardt. In the native language "the term *no*," which Leenhardt translates as "word" also means, in addition to speech, both "the context and object of discourse." Further spelling out the Word's relation to discourse he writes:

The word does not imply discourse but is simultaneously spontaneous act and considered act, activity and psychic behavior, through which each being reveals or affirms himself.¹

It is here, again, that we note the element of secretion in the Word, a kind of revelation and affirming which an absent presence, be it a thought, habit, tendency or what have you is secreted. This secretion of the Word is a secretion of its violence and mass, of the fact that it is a forceful physical action. Meanings and other such contents or hangers-on are the major forms of discursive play in this often violent and formidable, yet often fun and erotic, game of secretion. They are the true

¹ Note here the essentially erotic nature of language in this conception. Like Bataille, it depicts language as a form of transgression, subtle moving and manipulating bodies around it, causing changes in ratio and degree of continuity and discontinuity, animation and inanimation, and so on. Here one must imagine every look, gesture, sound and word as a touch.

power of colonialist relationality and all of its metaphysics. The colonialist sees the Word as instrumental, yet does not allow the secretion of violence which it entails, a violence of which the native, be he or she a New Caledonian or an Alz person, is forever aware. Leenhardt writes:

In the colony, the white man sometimes gives his word and by this pledges his being. Sometimes he speaks loudly or haughtily, by which the Canaque perceived an aspect of the whites man's behavior. Sometimes he acts noisily at the expense of the native's safety, and in this way the native feel the bite of his action. And when the white man lightly proffers the term "word" to designate his remarks, or makes himself menacing, saying to the clumsy Canaque "What did you say?" [*Répète tes paroles*], the Canaque entertains no doubt that the term "word" concerns the manifest action of the white man in his secret being.²

"The term "word" is stale in European languages," says Leenhardt, but to the New Caledonian "the word, and language in its multiple forms, are truly the manifestation of being." "Word" says Leenhardt, "has deteriorated into chatter" and "the Word... meanders through grammar and theology."

Being physical, words are deeds and acts which are manifestations of the Word. They are essentially mimetic and creative, mimesis which leads to mimesis. It is Pietist relationality which seeks to undo this power and appropriate it at every turn. Although Leenhardt seems to end in a strange complicity with this metaphysics, his naming of and resistance to relationalist metaphysics in the struggle against colonialist violence teaches us many lessons. Foremost among these lessons, perhaps, is that when one speaks of the Word (i.e. speech) one is speaking discursively about the expression of being and of the violence (and/or eroticism) and mass of the Word without speaking about it and, most

¹ Ibid. p.140

² Ibid. p.138.

importantly, one is speaking about meanings and intentions, truth and revelation as if they were somehow apparent and not themselves secretions—secretions which discourse, being essentially relational, must ignore. Put another way, Leenhardt's distinction between the Word and discourse is mirrored in the distinction between the "I" of the speaker's words and the "(I)nc." of the speaker's discourse.

As a writer it is my task to name the cause of Alzheimer's disease and, in doing so, to resist the colonial force which would reduce the "I" which secretes the body of the hole to the "I" which secretes the (I)nc., the magic of the state, i.e. that which is secreted in place of the body of the hole. In a strong sense the "I" to which I have been referring throughout this text is the Word. It encompasses the expression of my being and the secretion of a violence and eroticism which in some strong way, hopefully, mimes that of my subject. The secretion of the Word as I came to see it, especially as I saw it in the body of the hole, seeks to oppose and replace a colonialism of relationalist metaphysics with a first order understanding which approaches language not as a passive instrument or as a magical remedy or formula, but as physical material changes of tone which lead to further (mimetic) physical material changes of tone. In naming the cause of Alzheimer's disease I use that which the Word secretes, but I do not expose it or reveal it, nor do I deny its secretion. Rather, I wish to work in it and through it, neither magically, mythologically nor symbolically, but physically in a violent and erotic manner which seeks, like Leenhardt's critique, to proceed with my own inevitable colonization of the Alz people in a way which works towards that which they and we all want, i.e. a cure.