

75.1.19

ANTHROPOLOGY 124

Comparative Religion

Professor Lessa

Final Examination

January 24, 1964

DIRECTIONS: Use blue books (of conventional size). Do not tear out any pages. Answer concisely, without straying from the point. If you do not write legibly it is possible that you cannot be understood, and therefore you cannot achieve the full credit for your answers that you deserve, so make yourself clear. Please write answers in order, allowing yourself space if you want temporarily to skip about. This examination looks different but it calls for basic answers to basic matters considered in this course.

I.

THE ARCHBISHOP. A miracle, my friend, is an event which creates faith. That is the purpose and nature of miracles. They may seem very wonderful to the people who witness them, and very simple to those who perform them. That does not matter: if they confirm or create faith they are true miracles.

LA TRÉMOUILLE. Even when they are frauds, do you mean?

THE ARCHBISHOP. Frauds deceive. An event which creates faith does not deceive: therefore it is not a fraud, but a miracle. . . . Well, the Church has to rule men for the good of their souls as you have to rule them for the good of their bodies. To do that, the Church must do as you do: nourish their faith by poetry.

LA TRÉMOUILLE. Poetry! I should call that humbug.

THE ARCHBISHOP. You would be very wrong, my friend. Parables are not lies because they describe events that have never happened. Miracles are not frauds because they are often--I do not say always--very simple and innocent contrivances by which the priest fortifies the faith of his flock. . . .

(From Bernard Shaw's, Saint Joan)

QUESTION: As an anthropologist who has just written a monograph on the mythology of the Gomongo tribe in darkest Africa, say something appropriate.

II.

Black Muslim leader Malcolm X believes Sunday's jet airplane crash in France, which killed 130 persons (from Georgia, mostly), was divine vengeance against the white race, Mayor Yorty charged Wednesday.

At his weekly press conference, Yorty played a tape recording of a speech he said was made Sunday by the sect leader at the Muslim mosque at 5325 Central Avenue.

"This shows the distorted type of mind this fiend has," Yorty said of Malcolm X.

The mayor played the following excerpt which he said was from the Muslim leader's speech:

"I would like to announce a very beautiful thing that happened. As you know, we have been praying to Allah. We have been praying that He would in some way let us know that He has the power to execute justice upon the heads of those who are responsible for the lynching of Ronald Stokes on April 27."

(Stokes, a Muslim, was killed by police April 27 during a riot near the mosque. A coroner's jury has held the slaying justifiable homicide.)

"And I got a wire from God today."

(Here Malcolm X was interrupted by wild laughter.)

"Wait! All right! Well, somebody came and told me that He really had answered our prayers over in France."

"He dropped an airplane out of the sky with over a hundred and twenty white people on it, because Muslims believe in an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

(More cheering and applause.)

"He gets rid of 120 of them in one whop . . ."

"But thanks to God, or Jehovah, or Allah, we will continue to pray and we hope that every day another plane falls out of the sky. . ."

(From Los Angeles Times, 6/7/62)

QUESTION: What sort of social situation inspired such joy at 5325 Central Avenue? Pinpoint as closely as you can the characteristics of the typological category into which the Black Muslim cult falls.

III.

Viewed in the light of a Pagan religion the characters and deaths of Rufus, Becket, Joan, and Gilles are reasonable and consistent. In each of them the Dying God was incarnate; Rufus died as the actual king, the other three as substitutes in order that their royal masters might live and reign for a further term of years.

(From Margaret Murray's, The God of the Witches)

QUESTION: You should be able to detect the fine hand of James Frazer in this interpretation. In what respects is he the fountainhead of the theory expressed above?

IV.

Washington-worship, be it noted, has not been limited to America. It has jumped boundaries and oceans with ease. In France, Napoleon Bonaparte ordered a week of national mourning when Washington died. Alfieri and Botta in Italy, Byron and Thackeray in England, and Kosciuszko in Poland knelt from afar, looking toward the Washington shrine. Translations of the Farewell Address flooded South America and Washington's picture was displayed beside Simon Bolivar's frequently.

The modest squire of Mount Vernon had become a world hero. In time, revolutions in far away places paid him homage. The well-laid foundations of the Washington legend today support a structure international in design and craftsmanship.

(From Marshall W. Fishwick's, American Heroes)

QUESTION: People do not weep at the death of a national hero only because they like a good cry whenever anyone dies; nor do they later construct a legendary image of such heroes out of a sheer desire to entertain children and gullible goofs. What are the social functions of national mourning and the myth-making process?

V.

Material relating to the physical anthropology of the Menehune leaves much to be desired, because people who profess to have seen Menehune tend to be incoherent and because no skeletons have been submitted to anthropologists for study. Although Bishop Museum has thousands of ancient Hawaiian skeletons awaiting analysis, no preliminary survey by physical anthropologists has yet spotted what might be a Menehune skeleton among the bones. . . . It is as stoneworkers that the Menehune excel. They have built heiaus, watercourses, fishponds, causeways, rock piles, and stone canoes; rearranged boulders; dug caves; and made many forest roads and trails.

(From Katharine Luomala's, The Menehune of Polynesia)

QUESTION: What similarities in social function do these Menehune have with, let us say, Professor and Mrs. Messenger's friend, Brendan, from Ireland? Or others of that ilk?

VI.

The existence of black madonnas (representations of the Virgin Mary) in various parts of the world has been noted by many authors. It should be explained that some of the so-called black madonnas are not actually black, but are dark brown in color. . . . Third, are the miracle working madonnas. . . . and, with the exception of the Polish madonna, all these images are found in areas occupied by the Roman legions. . . . The black madonnas are Christian borrowings from earlier pagan art forms which depicted Ceres, Demeter, or Isis as black in the color characteristic of these goddesses of the earth.

QUESTION: Doesn't this remind you of something you have recently read and heard about in a cloistered hall of learning? Some kind of process, maybe? Tell us what this process is, and explain its meaning for the study of religious change.