INTRODUCTION: ANCIENT MYSTERIES, MODERN SECRETS

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Classics and Anthropology share a long history of interaction.[1] Anthropologists of the nineteenth century brought a classical training to their work, and included ancient law, kinship and cities in their earliest studies.[2] The fields drifted apart in the early of the 20th century; the rift seems a response to various causes, including increasing specialization, the rise of fieldwork, the excesses of the Cambridge ritualists, and the perception that the study of the living would reduce the status of the Classical past.[3] From the 1960s onward, however, the disciplinary divide has been crossed under various standards. Anglo-American scholars have pursued economic anthropology and Weberian historical sociology; the Paris school has built on the intellectual heritage of Durkheim, Saussure

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[1] A full discussion of this long, complex interaction, and a complete bibliography of those who contribute to it, lie beyond the confines of this introduction. In this volume, Beidelman provides an anthropologist's perspective on the question, and Redfield a classicist's. See also Detienne 2001, 2007; Redfield 1991, 1983; Wyatt 1988; Vidal-Naquet 1986: 129-142; Maurizio 1995; Svenbro 1993; Bettini 1991; Konstan 1981; Valeri 1981; Gernet 1981; Humphreys 1978: 17-30; Lloyd 1978; Finley 1971; Gouldner 1965; Cole 1967 (1990); Kluckhohn 1961. Marett 1908 provides an overview of the status of the two fields 100 years ago. For evaluation of the reaction against the Cambridge ritualists, and more recent approaches to the questions they addressed, see Versnel 1990a, Henderson 1993, Ackerman 2002: 159-197; Segal 1998; Strenski 1996.

[2] Maine 1861; de Coulange 1864; Morgan 1878.

[3] Gouldner 1965: 4 makes an eloquent response to these concerns.

and Levi-Strauss; evolutionary hypotheses and van Gennep's models for initiation inform scholarship in Greek religion; Cohen, Cartledge and others have renewed the comparative study of ancient law.[4] While Classical archaeology was characterized in the 1980s as resistant to anthropology, more recent work, particularly in ancient cult, has engaged directly with social science paradigms.[5] Classicists researching sexuality, the family, and colonialism draw frequently on anthropological data and models,[6] and systematic comparisons have been pursued between ancient Greek and living cultures, including China, Africa and Tibet.[7]

      The mysteries have figured but little in this relationship. This is despite a long Classical interest in cults and rituals sealed by secrecy, a century of sociological and anthropological approaches to the questions of secrecy, and the current fashion for interdisciplinary projects.[8] There are good reasons for this, deriving from both the topic and the history of these disciplines. Mystery cults compound the inherent difficulties of studying ancient religion—fragmentary sources, biases and anachronisms reflecting the Christian perspective, and incongruity between textual and material data—with stipulations of discretion, which

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[4] evolutionary models, Burkert 2001; Girard 1972; Hamerton-Kelly 1987; for reflections on the hostility with which the Paris school has been met among some Classicists, see Versnel 1990: 28-30, who refers to Ellinger 1984: 7-29.

[5] Morris 1994; Jameson 1994; Snodgrass 1994; Dyson 1993; Snodgrass 1987; Kyriakidis 2007. Fogelin 2007 considers recent approaches to ritual in non-Mediterranean as well as Mediterranean archaeology.

[6] bibliographic resources and surveys include http://www.stoa.org/diotima/ for gender and sexuality; Tsetskhladze 2006: xxiii-lxxxiii, and Lyons and Papadopoulos 2002: 1-23 for colonization; Cartledge 1995 for further reading on law, economics, family and gender studies, and religion.

[7] comparisons with China, Lloyd 2006; 2004; 2002; 1996; with Africa, Blakely 2006; Lamberg 1990; Miller 1987; Lévêque 1978; Woronoff and Foeet 1974; Chaumartin 1977; with Tibet, Geoffrey 1989, Bremmer 1983; with Hebrew, Boman 1952; Charachidzé 1986 addresses the survival of ancient Greek traditions, and comparison between modern peasant cultures and ancient traditions, in the Caucasus. While these reflect Classicists taking up anthropological comparanda, Beidelman 1989 offers an anthropologist's perspective on ancient Greek material.

[8] A welcome exception is Kippenberg and Stroumsa 1995, who directly address the question of secrecy, as articulated by Georg Simmel, and the study of ancient Mediterranean religions; their volume includes contributions by Bremmer (1995) and Burkert (1995) on the question for the ancient Greek mysteries.

were widely (almost surprisingly) maintained. The study of ritual has been from the start an interdisciplinary undertaking, and the mysteries demand an array of specializations within Classical studies—philology, history, archaeology and art history—which make the scholarly task daunting even without the addition of another field's perspectives. 'Mysteries,' moreover, are an untidy category for investigation, as the term was used in the ancient world to designate private cures, local rites, and great international sanctuaries, forms which typically fall into discrete categories in scholarly investigation. The mysteries also lack the typical stimuli for comparative studies, offering neither clear parallels with other traditions, nor origins in the great civilizations which interacted with Greece and Rome. The obvious candidates for comparison, moreover, may be misleading. The ancient aitiologies of even the most distinctly foreign mystery gods—the Great Mother, Isis, and Mithras—examined against the evidence for these gods in their homelands, reveal the projection of Greek or Roman realities into an imaginary Anatolian, Egyptian or Persian past. The ritual form of the mysteries, regardless of which gods they celebrate, remains distinctly Greek.[9]

Comparanda for the mysteries were found, however, in two scholarly traditions: anthropological models of 'primitive' religions, and Christianity. These traditions were informed by assumptions and methodologies which differ substantially from those used in anthropology today. The search for primitive comparanda flourished in the early 20th century, when evolutionary paradigms dominated the social sciences. Subject cultures were interpreted as a living museum of early man, and their rituals as the rites from which later religions evolved. Two broad categories of those rites seemed the likely origins for ancient mysteries: celebrations of the agrarian cycle, and initiations connected with rites of passage.[10] Comparisons with Christianity responded to the striking use of the language of the mystery religions in the New Testament, and the significance of the mysteries as part of the historical context of early Christianity.[11] The degree of influence or distance

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[9] This contradicts the long tradition that the mysteries were essentially oriental religions: Burkert 1987: 2-3; van den Heever 2005:16-21; for the Great Mother, Roller 1999: 173-4; Versnel 1990: 108; for Mithras, Beck 1984: 2013-14 n. 14; 2067; 2066 n. 96; 2071-74; Colpe 1975; for Isis: Ferguson 2003: 272.

[10] Klauck 2000: 89; see also Burkert 2004: 91-92; Versnel 1990b: 48-74; Calame 1999: 284.

[11] Wiens 1980; Metzger 1955; Hamilton 1977.

between the two has fueled several traditions of debate. The Apologetic tradition sought to equate Catholicism to its pagan predecessors, and distance Protestantism from any taint of pagan association. The *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* of the late 19th century either affirmed the derivation of Christian concepts and rites from the traditional cults, or argued for the mysteries as preparation for Christianity. Neither approach to comparison, as Smith notes, is 'innocent'; their potential to cast light on ancient cultures is subordinate to their polemical use.[12] They are methodologically flawed, as they rely on implicit models of either identicality or incomparability; the data are decontextualized, and referred to in generalizing terms. In anthropology, in contrast, the value of comparanda is heuristic rather than historical. A second cultural context broadens the base for the testing of models, and also may help destabilize the unexamined paradigms an investigator may bring to the field. This leads to a productive reformulation and testing of models, which are meant to change over time, as indeed the cultures and objects of study are understood to develop.

This capacity for scholarly models to change over time is what most distinguishes comparative work in Classics from the anthropological tradition. As is often the case when one field borrows from another, Classics has characteristically appealed to anthropology's seminal authors and models, but failed to engage with the subsequent work which tested and modified those propositions.[13] Evolutionary models, for example, came under fire in anthropological communities as early as the 1890s for their rigid unilinearity. Application to specific social and historical contexts have yielded more nuanced models, in which the complexity of cultures once deemed primitive plays a central role.[14] The older model, however, often holds sway in Classics, where 'primitive' cultures may be summoned as reasonable analogies for data which is missing from the lacunous Greek past.[15] Such comparanda

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[12] Smith 1990: 25, 34 41 *et passim*.

[13] see MacGaffey, this volume; Leitao 2003: 110.

[14] Apter 1991; Sienkewicz 1991: 184; Lewis 1998: 713; see also Sanderson 1995.

[15] Lévêque, 1978; Lamberg 1990; Jeanmaire 1939: 7-8, 156-161 addressed the question of comparison between Greek and non-urban, traditional cultures; the conversation was further developed by Brelich 1961, 1969. Graf 2003 notes the persistence of a reductive approach to comparanda; Loraux 1993: 4 observes the tendency for comparative studies to be restricted to the search for origins of Greek cultural institutions in the Near East, and cites examples from 1929 to

would seem particularly unhelpful for the mysteries, both because of their floruit into late antiquity, and the sophistication of the cultural forms through which we study them: philosophy, poetry, drama, architecture.[16] These stand at an impossible remove from the ethnographic subject as the traditional classicist imagined him.

This impossible remove, however, is more apparent than real—not only because of the sophistication of cultures once deemed primitive, but because of theoretical bases developed specifically for the study of secrecy. These have developed over the past 100 years, beginning with Georg Simmel's seminal essay in 1908. They provide a theoretical framework capable of embracing data from widely divergent cultures - urban and non-urban, literate and non-literate, as well as ancient and modern. Secrecy, Simmel argued, is more than keeping silent. It is a strategy of communication, which employs the categories specific to its cultural setting, including spoken, graphic and written conventions. These conventions, and the deployment of secrecy, respond to historical eventualities and reflect perennial cultural needs, making secrecy a valuable avenue for cultural investigations. At the same time, the cross-cultural consistencies of secrecy as a human practice make it a useful framework for comparative studies. Classicists seeking insight from the anthropological world may find as much in methodology as they do in corroborating data.[17]

The hypothesis that Classics and anthropology could find common ground in the mysteries provided the impetus for a conference held at Emory University in Spring of 2002. The conference was a practical experiment in interdisciplinarity. Rather than ask Classicists to incorporate anthropological perspectives in their papers, anthropologists were invited to the conference, where they presented research based on their own fieldwork. The juxtaposition of papers, and the presentation of responses from the opposite discipline, provided the interdisciplinary element. The discussion was lively, unpredictable, and characterized by astonishment at the depth and breadth of the disciplinary divide. It

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1953; Arens 1988 offers an anthropologist's positive reflection on the use of sociological models among those studying the Greek past.

[16] Jane Harrison (1912: xxi) famously complained of her weariness at the crudity of primitive societies, which she endured only in order to gain new light on the more delectable bits from Greek antiquity.

[17] Archaeology has taken up the question of secrecy both within and beyond the Mediterranean: see Hastorf 2007; Levy 2006:13; Commenge et al. 2006:788; Peatfield 1994:153; Blakely 2009.

seemed a good thing that anthropologists are used to studying cultures other than their own, and that classicists are comfortable addressing data which is difficult to decipher. A consensus emerged that these two academic cultures are so foreign to each other as to be nearly incomprehensible, and prospects for a fruitful union seemed dubious at best. In an academic age which praises interdisciplinarity, the reality of submitting one's discipline to the review of the other proved intimidating and perplexing, although, thanks to the grace and intelligence of the participants, a matter of good humor.

The conference thus foregrounded the challenges of interdisciplinarity, and illustrated why interactions between Classics and anthropology, numerous as they are, have not been more productive or sustained. The differences between the fields fall into three categories: the role of theory, the nature of the primary data, and the ability to address the realities of daily life. Strategies for addressing each of these suggest new ways of crossing the disciplinary divide; none of them require that scholars master the entire arsenal of theory, history, and method in the second field.

The most substantial distinction between the fields is the approach to theory. Classicists begin from the particular, anthropologists from the theoretical.[18] The goal of the classicist is characteristically to cast light on a historical question; the more specific that question is, the more amenable it is to the kinds of data available for the study of the past, which often come from widely separated authors, eras and regions. As Holzhausen's paper demonstrates, these data must be presented with due attention to their distance from each other. Specificity is a sensible—and intellectually responsible—response to a fragmentary record, rather than attempting, as it were, to glue all sherds together into one enormous vase. The goal of the anthropologist, in contrast, is to use a specific culture to support the development of theory—testing, challenging and modifying models which constitute the framework for discussion in the field. The value of the models is not predicative, but heuristic—the extent to which they open new perspectives, stimulate questions and sharpen debate. Theoretical issues allow fruitful discussion to occur among anthropologists specializing in widely separate cultures. Because of this, a good anthropological paper will both provide an overview of the subject culture—the view from 30,000 feet—and position the article's contribution in anthropological thought, with respect to its

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[18] See MacGaffey, this volume; Redfield 1991; Humphreys 1978: 22.

intellectual genealogy as well as contemporary discussions. This dual responsibility—to cultural description, and to theory building—is the foundation of anthropological publications, and determines the style, tone and scope of papers in the discipline. Classicists who engage with anthropology would profitably begin by taking up these challenges, articulating clearly the setting of the topic in historical and geographical terms, and identifying the intellectual trajectories to which their discussion contributes. The latter would be of substantially more aid, to readers outside the discipline, than ad-hominem responses to other scholars.

A second distinction between the fields is the primary data. Classicists and anthropologists both work in the western intellectual tradition, but Classicists are the keepers of the *fons et origo* of the academy—the term, indeed, derived from the gymnasium named for the hero Akademos in classical Athens. Classicists thus remain within the Western tradition, and study a tradition they consider their own, while anthropologists step into a culture to which they are foreign.[19] Both fields recognize the tensions resulting from the combination of closeness to and distance from the object of their study. The anthropologist's immersion into the subject culture is never complete, and the classicist is frequently aware of the distance occasioned by the fragmentary condition of the sources, the separation of the centuries, and—most definitional for the discipline—the textual form of the sources themselves. Broadly speaking, the anthropologist's avenue into a culture is human contact— the classicist's are texts. Peter Bing describes the jealousy a classicist feels when reading an anthropologist's paper: the anthropologist knows his informant by name, can walk with him through his landscape, and hear his stories as he tells them. The intimacy of such exchanges cannot be reproduced in the study of dead cultures. The closest analogy, as demonstrated in several of the papers in this volume, is the focus on literary genres, styles, and authors. Sarolta Takács' study of *The Golden Ass*, the only extant Roman novel, demonstrates how Apuleius' literary craftsmanship articulates the social reality of keeping secrets. Much is said, but nothing revealed, and the reader encounters, as do the novel's characters, the limitations of human perception and understanding. Holzhausen notes that Euripides is first and last a dramatist: his concerns for performance shape his presentation of the Bacchic cult, and scholars who hasten to liturgical conclusions based on his play are overlooking

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[19] Redfield 1991: 6.

the nature of their source. Texts are the classicist's informants: while we cannot hear the authors' voices or see their gestures, the literary genres themselves were cultural constructions, artifacts created in response to their social and historical setting. Anthropologists seeking to work on ancient cultures could deepen their readings by engaging with the double filters of the author when identifiable, the genre in every case. This would open their work more fully to Classical readers, and provide a means for investigating a question—the rules which govern communication within the subject culture—which is essential to the anthropological project. Such a strategy could stimulate collaborative projects between anthropologists and classicists, the classicist acting as a guide through the tangled jungles of philological scholarship and literary theory. Redfield notes, of this conference, that the Classicists seem to have been summoned in order to learn something from the anthropologists. In a collaborative project of the type proposed, this type of interaction could yield to a more balanced exchange.

A third division between the disciplines concerns the significance of the quotidian. Beidelman, MacGaffey and Murphy all note the need to ground the analysis of symbol and ritual in day-to-day realities. Such a grounding is necessary if a scholarly argument is to be meaningful not just within the academy, but for the human subjects who inhabit the culture in question. For a classicist, however, the sources which have been preserved typically reflect the most elite cultural perspective. Choice as well as chance determined the composition of the surviving corpus of classical texts, and even apparently humble forms—pastoral poetry, Theokritos' idylls—come with a thick patina of learned constructions. The distance between the personal and the monumental is part of the distinction between anthropology and classics. The philological papers in this collection suggest two routes for closing that gap: engagement with non-canonical sources, and the integration of a broad range of data types. Nikolay Grintser engages himself in an activity much favored by his ancient subject culture—etymological analysis. He presents scientifically plausible etymologies but does not omit their popular, non-canonical counterparts, the folk and joke etymologies in which the ancient world was rich, and which convey most directly the conceptions of the common man. Jens Holzhausen traces the elements of his argument through their appearance in iconography, classical texts, sacred laws, priesthoods, and epigraphical records of associations. These demonstrate the saturation of these concepts into his subject culture, beyond narrow geographical and temporal limits.

Moving from a specific problem to a broader cultural perpective, this approach resonates with the anthropologist's concern, which Beidelman articulates, to identify certain patterns as characteristic of Greek culture, despite the centuries and regions which Greek civilization encompassed. Classical data, though elite and fragmentary, can support the investigation of the non-elite perspectives and persistent cultural patterns which inform anthropological study. The distinction between the fields, however, cannot be brushed away: more meaningful use of anthropological models in Classics will rely, in part, on recognizing that these models are constructed from the data of daily life, and valued for the degree to which they articulate those realities.

The conference thus suggested three new avenues toward cooperation and communication between these two disciplines. It also, in the final analysis, affirmed the hypothesis which inspired it: secrecy is a promising arena for comparative and collaborative research. This is less because of any single paper's contribution, than because of patterns which emerge from a conspectus of the papers. Scholars from both disciplines are in substantial agreement on the fundamentals of the study of secrecy. They approach it as a social practice, rather than a matter of contents to be revealed; they also share a concern for two distinct categories of social practice: institutions, and patterns of speech. Kaguru, Kimpasi and Kpelle initiations show formal hierarchies comparable to the cults of Isis, Eleusis and Dionysos. Speech and semantics play a central role in McGaffey, Beidelman and Auslander's papers, and are the natural infrastructure for the philological contributions. Both disciplines, in addition, consider the relationship between secrecy and the social practices of craft, priesthoods, and gender distinctions. These categories and questions offer promising frameworks for well-focused comparative, even collaborative studies in the future.

As secrecy is a social process, it is appropriate that a collection devoted to it present a crystallization of the process through which these fields investigate secrecy, on the one hand, and also view each other. The two efforts are not unrelated. The conference was convened so that the two disciplines could become less obscure, certainly less deliberately veiled, to each other. What we determined, by the conference's end, was that do have secrets we keep, if unknowingly. In order to open that *kiste*—we had to first identify that it existed.

SUMMARY OF PAPERS

In his keynote address, *Anthropology and the Fate of the Soul,* James Redfield notes that anthropologists have had little interest in the mysteries, largely because the rites' eschatological focus has no role in the kinds of cultures anthropologists typically investigate. Mysteries, focused on the individual's concern for the afterlife, are essentially anti-social when contrasted with funerary rites, which allow society as a whole to resolve the ambivalence of a person departed in fact, but lingering in memory. These positions emerged in the work of Herz and Rohde, an anthropologist and a classicist working some 100 years ago. The anti-social character of mysteries could be overcome: Eleusis flourished in part because it effectively separated the mysteries from Athenian life, and mysteries flourished in Greek communities less bound by tradition, the colonies of the far west and the Black Sea. The floruit of the mysteries in these regions demonstrates the extent to which ritual forms respond to social context. In the sixth century BCE, the time of the mysteries' invention, this context included the emergence of rationalism, as defined in sociology, and charismatic leadership. Both of these represent a break from tradition, and may be viewed as steps toward a kind of first modernism in Archaic and Classical Greece. This 'modernism' is a more natural focus for sociology than for anthropology, given the traditional focus of the latter on the earliest forms of social development. Suitable as sociology may be for pursuing the mysteries, however, its theories must be applied with care: Athens remains a substantial remove from modernity as we know it, and sociological theory offers no easy fixes for the investigation of antiquity.

Jens Holzhausen addresses the venerable argument within Classics that Euripides' *Bacchae* is a reliable guide to the mysteries of Dionysos. He argues that the allusions in the play to *oreibasia, sparagmos, omophagia* and mystic rites, placed in the context of other ancient sources for these practices, fail to suggest a fifth century ritual reality in which all were combined. *Oreibasia* is not clearly connected to the mysteries, nor was it, in practice, conducted by women only; *sparagmos* is not clearly combined with both mysteries and Orphism until the Hellenistic period. Fragment 471 from Euripides' *Cretans* offers a new possibility for correspondence between Euripides' text, ritual practice and Dionysiac myth. The fragment speaks of the 'performance of thunder'; the concept resonates with Dionysos' violent birth by

lightning, to which Euripides refers in other plays. Euripides freely combined disparate Dionysiac rituals to serve his dramaturgical needs: he is first a playwright, only secondarily (at best) a historian of religion. The scholarly drive to reconstruct a ritual reality, however, has often blinded us to this fact. Euripides is no more impartial a guide to the mysteries than *Parsival* would be to the Eucharist.

Sarolta Takács takes up Apuleius' novel *The Golden Ass*, or *Metamorphoses*, considered as vital a source for the mysteries of Isis as Euripides is for those of Dionysos. Arguments in favor of the novel as a source for the mysteries have viewed it through a number of critical lenses, finding comparanda in Christianity, neo-Platonism, and theology. Takács approaches the text and these arguments from a new angle, based on a close analysis of the narratological techniques and the critique of epistemology which runs throughout the novel. Lucius' shifting form, from man to ass and back again through the grace of Isis, embodies the realities of the initiate's liminal state. Metamorphosis was already a popular literary theme in Rome, where Ovid's *Metamorphoses* had wide readership. Apuleius undergirds the narrative with a constantly shifting dichotomy between perception and reality. This grants the reader access to the experience and the emotion of the author-actor who is the novel's center, so that boundaries are broken between the real and fictional worlds. The most critical boundary, however, remains—that between the initiate and the non-initiate. The combination of apparently permeable categories with persistent cognitive inadequacy ensures that the secrecy of the rites remains intact.

In *What did Mysteries Mean to Ancient Greeks?*, Nikolay Grintser opens up a third cornerstone of the classicist's approach to the question of the mysteries: the etymology of the word 'mystery' itself. The term has long been derived from stems meaning 'to keep silent' and 'to keep the eyes closed;' other etymologies, however, were known and discussed in antiquity, including a stem which has received very little scholarly attention to date: the mouse. This tiny rodent offers an enormous semantic range, which is surprisingly and thoroughly apt for the fertility rituals, cults of the dead, and mysteries as we understand them, combining crops, the earth, the underworld, magic and prophecy, blindness, sexuality and progeny. The use of mice in religious contexts from Hittite, Asia Minor, Slavic and Germanic contexts demonstrates that these connections are not unique to Greece, but may be traced through many examples of Indo-European civilizations. The mouse' association with mysteries has been little explored in scholarship, and in

fact in antiquity was dismissed as a joke. This dismissal itself, as well as the intricacy of its semantic realm, suggests it was all the more suitable for rites whose contents stayed hidden, even while their reality informed the most public of displays—including Aristophanes' comic chorus, Grintser's last and most provocative example.

In *The Ritual Person as Subject or Object in Ancient Greece and Central Africa*, Wyatt MacGaffey critiques the argument that the focus on the individual most distinguished the mysteries from other ritual experiences. The contemporary concept of the individual is a creation of Western critical paradigms, based in the Cartesian construction of an autonomous person opposed to the social collective. This opposition, though foundational for the social sciences, is not recognized in all cultures, and is demonstrably inadequate for the Kongo. Kongo cultures identify the individual through four matrilineal clans, and four parts: the body; an animating force; the personality, which inhabits the land of the dead until it is forgotten; and the anonymous *simbi* spirit. This *simbi* can be incarnated in a *nkisi*, a created object which is animated when the focus of social relations, a mere object when neglected. The *nkisi* has volition, however, beyond its social role, as it is able to attack, summon, or display emotion. Kimpasi initiations are rites of passage. While the young are the ostensible focus, the rites are not made available to all youth, and much of the rituals' force is devoted to affirming the authority of the elders and responding to local crises. Brück's relational model of personhood, in which identity is realized in social relations, is a more suitable paradigm for this ritual than one relying on a simple bifurcation between individual and collective. The individual proposed as the focus of the Greek mysteries is similarly problematic; he emerges naturally from evolutionary models in Classical scholarship and modern Protestant ideas of religiosity, but has only slender attestation in the ancient sources for the rites. The closest analogy would be the intellectuals, whose writings are a primary sources for the ancient mysteries, but who can hardly be considered a typical initiate or an adequate representation of the many thousands who experienced initiation. Greek mysteries and Kimpasi initiations thus share a lack of centrality for the individual who has been proposed in both cases as the focus of ritual action.

Thomas Beidelman, in *African and Classical Secrecy and Disclosure: The Kaguru of East Africa and the Ancient Greeks,* uses his fieldwork among the Kaguru of East Africa to propose approaches to secrecy in Greek contexts from Homer to Classical Athens. Among the Kaguru, management of information about persons is essential to one's

affairs. The most significant object of secrecy is sexuality, which is linked to kinship, resources of land, labor, and ancestors, and may bind an individual to competing loyalties. This network of associations is what makes sex powerful, and so a matter of secrecy. Its facts, however, are widely known. The secrets of sexuality which are revealed in puberty initiations are twofold: the rules and etiquette for speaking about sexuality, and the full semantic force of the symbols which refer to sexuality in daily Kaguru life. These rules may be ignored by so-called joking relations, who are at liberty to speak things otherwise unutterable. Greek culture shows an analogous connection between sexuality, reproductive power, and core cultural values: sexuality is central to rituals which both apply special rules of secrecy, and suspend ordinary principles of discretion. Perennial Greek concerns for honor, the separation of genders, competitiveness, and the risk of public shame create a context in which one seeks to conceal damaging information about one's self. Women, characteristically marginalized from civic life, were nevertheless needed to make the system work. Dramas, mourning rituals, mystery cults, and civic festivals became occasions on which their ordinarily veiled lives became a matter of public disclosure. As in Kaguru initiation, the contents of the Greek mysteries consisted of quite ordinary things. Their narration, and analysis of the tensions and problems of every day affairs, was the key to their power.

William Murphy, in *Geometry and Grammar of Mystery: Ancient Mystery Religions and West African Secret Societies,* defines mystery as the "known unknown" which evokes wonder, and secrecy as the social practice of setting aside something as mysterious. He offers two critical concepts for building a framework for the comparison of Greek mysteries and Liberian secret societies. A geometry of secrecy, drawing on Simmel, traces the patterns generated in human relations by the act of keeping a secret; a grammar of secrecy is the network of rules which, in Wittgenstein's sense, determine which linguistic moves make sense. These may be combined to yield a broad social theory of knowledge concerned with relations of social hierarchy, social control, and differential access to knowledge. One may specify a set of features which are variables in an abstract model; use these to test historical and ethnographic reality; and consider similarities and differences. Applying this model to ancient Greece and to the Kpelle of Liberia, Murphy demonstrates common concerns for the relationship of secrecy to political power, social hierarchy, and authoritative speech. Mysteries emerge as a system of meanings, centered on a social object, whose signs

must be explained by an authoritative interlocutor. Mysteries are, first and last, a matter of social relations: at the core of the mysteries is the relationship of the individual to society. They may be ranked as one of the major abstract social questions, along with Power, Work, and Beauty; the task of the anthropologist is to link these to concrete social life.

Mark Auslander, in *Going by the Trees: Death and Regeneration in Georgia's Haunted Landscapes*, draws an analogy between contemporary responses to the history of lynching and the function of the ancient mystery cults. Within the African American communities of the semi-rural south, trees embody both the memories of family tradition and community violence. Women characteristically recall the redemptive associations of the trees, root-working and folk medicine, and the nearly universally attested metaphor of the trees as a model for kinship groups. Men, in contrast, hold more ambivalent feelings, as the trees recall the lynchings which reduced men to the status of animals, and the slavery which rendered their own genealogies unclear. These darker memories are often unspoken: their secret contents haunt the landscape in the psychoanalytical sense of unresolved contradictions. Trees evoke simultaneous identification with and distance from the generation of the parents and their battles with Jim Crow. Contemporary attempts to confront these repressed associations offer analogy to the ancient mysteries, as they seek to move across the boundaries of life and death, visible and invisible, and regenerate personal and collective vitality. The ritualistic quality of these attempts is reflected by the emergence of witnessing, a genre of narrative beyond fiction and non-fiction, in which truth is infused with images of transformation, cyclical passage between life and death, and final prophetic vision. Artistic expression, community memorials, and activities including the cleaning and restoration of African American cemeteries may be characterized as rituals of inversion which respond to this haunted reality.

Peter Bing offers a response, noting the classicist's wonder and distance from the anthropological project. Classical tree-lore shows striking parallels to the semantic ranges of the American South: the olive tree on the Athenian acropolis, the miraculous cornel-tree on the Palatine, the living tree built into Odysseus' bed. There are notable differences, however: the source of animation for the ancient trees is female, and the trees are typically the locus of death for women rather than men; except when fashioned into a cross for crucifixion, ancient trees have none of the associations with the dead which characterize their African American counterparts. Perhaps most striking is the total lack of

evidence with regard to trees for the social practices of secrecy, through which the trees articulate both pride and protection of their deep semantic range. Ancient material does not seem to share in the urgency of contemporary life, or the emergence of new rituals seeking to reconcile restless memory. As the tale of the true cross demonstrates, however, the images so resonant in contemporary life often have their own roots in the continuing transformation of an ancient reality.

Mark Risjord provides an afterword to the conference in *Surveying the Mysteries: Epistemological Reflections on Multidisciplinary Inquiry*. Risjord uses the metaphor of triangulation, which behavioral and health sciences have borrowed from the practice of surveying. Methodological triangulation involves the multiplication of analytical techniques; it is distinguished from theoretical triangulation, in which multiple conceptual frameworks are brought to bear. Both types of triangulation were already at work, though not formally announced, in the papers presented at the conference. MacGaffey uses theoretical triangulation to change the kinds of questions one can ask of the data; Grintser, through methodological triangulation, opens our eyes to the validity of formerly ignored hypotheses from folk etymologies. Triangulation may also undermine a thesis, and challenge long-held views. Stimulating arguments, it clarifies the nature of the questions asked and the unexamined prejudices of the investigators, and so may lead to more meaningful investigations. Risjord cautions that such projects should be undertaken only reflectively: they rely on a willingness to engage in the analysis of one's own inquiry, a process which is as challenging as it is promising.

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