

## Notes



### PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1. This text is based on four public talks delivered over the course of two weeks at the University of Rochester in March 1991. I originally formulated the text to be presented in oral form since I tend to be a lyrical writer and enjoy that particular dimension of the spoken word. But lectures do not a book make, and the text proved too unwieldy to be directly translated into book form. As it was, the material included more information than was necessary on substantive domains ranging from ritual secrecy in New Guinea, to gender and sexuality in the transition to the modern age, and on to conceptions of the modern self in literature, social relations, and personal development. For this reason, the original lectures were revised, and the other material, including the historical and cultural emergence of modern sexual and gender categories and identities—especially details concerning the ways in which the epistemology of closeted homosexuality created new secret desires of the sexual citizen and the state—was removed. These other aspects of the lecture series are dealt with elsewhere in my writings. My theory of secrecy has also undergone three transformations on the way to its present form, and at present it is something which I like to call a semi-ontological theory, for it asserts that there are different kinds of secrecy that are grounded in distinctive social problems within varying historical periods, each having divergent social economies of exchange, different realities, and distinct challenges to trust and commitment in the individual.

### CHAPTER I

1. Much of the detail surrounding the childhood and family life of Morgan in the following two paragraphs derives from Carnes (1989: 94–98), whose book is recommended.

2. I owe this insight to my friend Raymond Fogelson.

3. Fenton quotes Parker: “The society was to be a most secret one and only for a qualified number. Its meetings were to be held only when the moon was away” (148). Though we cannot be sure, the well-known correspondence between Parker

and Morgan (see Fenton 1941) raises the question of Morgan's own idealized influence upon Parker, and whether the Masonic activities of Parker, which may have been participated in by Morgan, were not in themselves a source of Parker's own romantic ideas regarding the revival of Iroquois ritual practices.

4. Parker's later account of the secret medicine societies and initiations of the Seneca praises Morgan's. Fenton (1987) has objected to Morgan's handling of secrecy in particular, arguing that the kind of secrecy Morgan reports was not traditional, at least in the period before the revivalism of Handsome Lake. But Parker's account of social change and competition within the tribe over the role of Handsome Lake's religion and the rites of the medicine group "performed in secret places" over the years following the prophet is supportive of Morgan's view (Parker 1909: 163).

5. Though he might not have approved of its use, for he meant it to be secret, let us begin the larger investigation to follow by invoking a ceremonial injunction that draws the line between insider and outsider, a necessary condition of all ritual:

Guard of the Forest, you will see that the outer wicket is securely closed during the burning of the council fire so that no paleface may enter or pry into our secrets. You will permit no member of another Tribe to pass your wicket without giving the proper signal and universal password of the current term.

Thus opened the initiation into the Grand Order of the Iroquois according to the rules of the Kindling of the Fire penned by Morgan himself.

6. In later years the Reverend became a professor of belles lettres at Princeton University and eventually founded the Evelyn College for Women in Princeton in 1887 (White 1959: 202).

#### CHAPTER 4

1. "The wide differences in gender imagery which we observe in different cosmological sub-traditions arise from clearly identifiable processes. The starting point is provided in a basically shared wide spectrum of male experience and emotions relating to women: sexual drive, lust, repulsion, fear, love, deepness, nurturing" (Barth 1987: 43). Notice the completely unreflective categories, such as sexual drive, which we have long since come to think of as being anything but "natural" or "raw," and which are social constructions within our own historical and social tradition (reviewed in Herdt 1991b, 1997a; Knauff 1999: 167).

2. "Le secret des hommes, c'est de devoir, pour atteindre leur masculinité, agir selon le modèle de la procréation, où la femme a le rôle majeur. Mais, par définition, le contenu d'un secret—ici, à la fois l'imitation des pouvoirs nourriciers féminins et les différentes opérations de déféminisation—ne peut en lui-même constituer ce qui met l'autre, ici la communauté des femmes, dans un état d'infériorité" (Bonnemere 1996: 375).

CHAPTER 5

1. So many cultural complexities and discrepant sources of information surrounded Marind-anim ritual and religion, provided by an army of reporters, many of them letters from missionaries, that after a thousand pages of that extraordinary and maddeningly multilayered work, *Dema* (1966), Van Baal would in the end throw up his hands at the apparent “contradictions” of Marind-anim belief and mythology, allowing that a “phallic” religion must reside ultimately in the inscrutable mysteries of the archaic human mind. We have come across the notion before in the nineteenth-century armchair evolutionary view.

2. Margaret Mead’s Preface to D. F. Tuzin’s (1976) first book praised its careful attention to the larger themes of Arapesh culture.