



WOMB=TOMB=HOUSE=BODY

YAGWOIA EXPERIENCE OF BLISSFUL SELF-DISSOLUTION

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THE COSMO-ONTOLOGICAL BACKGROUND: A BRIEF SKETCH¹

The people I write about are the four central Yagwoia-Angan territorial groups ('tribes') in the borderlands of the Eastern Highlands, Morobe and Gulf Provinces, east Papua New Guinea (Mimica, 1981, 1988, 1991). The empirical domains alluded to in the title are the Yagwoia cultural imaginary (Castoriadis, 1987) and the archetypal dynamics which generate their kinship sociality which is a totalising process of life[^]death.²

Given this immanence of life[^]death in the core of Yagwoia relatedness I will state that as a realm of human material investments, interests and activities, the Yagwoia societal field is a libidinal totality. But libido subsumes here its negative modality of mortido. Nowadays, this term is rarely used (e.g. McDougall, 1995: ix) and here it designates the destructive mode of psychic energy which, in view of the Yagwoia facts, is the mirror-inverse of libido (cf. Spielrein, 1994). My conception of libido is rooted in the classical tradition and *embraces exactly those salient antinomies* which figure in Freud's, Jung's, Abraham's, Klein's and Fairbairn's formulations. This is so because the Yagwoia mode of existence, which I call ouroboric, articulates these antinomies with exuberant transparency and totalising systematicity.

Ouroboros is the archetypal image of the self-eating serpent (Neumann, 1954) which among the Yagwoia has a unique mythopoeic manifestation as their self-created androgynous *Imacoqwa* (The Great-one-he). He is the cosmic monad whose eyes are the sun and moon; he embodies, continuously generates and sustains the world (Mimica, 1981, 1988, 1991). Accordingly, he can be characterised as the Cosmic Self and the container of everything that there is. Under the name of *Imacoqwa*³ he can be aptly glossed as the Father-of-All and as such he is the immanent presence in all the denizens of his world-body, specifically in his human progeny. This is why a psychoanalytic exploration of the concrete Yagwoia simultaneously entails the exploration of this archetypal realm of their cosmic Self.

It will be noted that in this text (and elsewhere, e.g. Mimica, 2003a, b, 2006) I write about the Yagwoia un/conscious. I put it so precisely because the relation between consciousness and the unconscious is subject to diverse articulations in different life-worlds. Experientially, their mutual articulation does not conform to a universal dimensional topography, principally in terms of a distinction between psychic interiority and exteriority.⁴ Hence my use of the slashed un/conscious which indicates that there is no *a priori* assumption made as to how and in what mode, if at all, is something unconscious in a given field of experience. This calibration varies between individuals and life-worlds, and between different periods within one and the same life-world. In terms of the Yagwoia life-world-specific ontological underpinnings of their experiences and existence, the basic dimensionality of their 'I-ness', such as interiority/exteriority and all its derivatives, is a radically different inner/outer field. Spirits no less than the soul, or any other presences experienced, for instance in dreams, are not for the Yagwoia 'internal objects' composed of life-memories or archetypal images. They are the entities either entirely autonomous (e.g., spirits) and external to a given 'I' (ego) or in a semi-detachable incorporative/excorporative relation with the body and 'I-ness', as for instance one's dream-soul component.

The ego and the derivations egoic, egoity, stress the irreducible boundness of the primary, bodily sphere of the human experiential field and its constitution qua the dialectics of the body ego (Fleiss, 1956, 1961; Schilder, 1950) and its maternal envelopment (Klein, 1932; Lacan, 1977; Neumann, 1954, 1988; Mahler, Pine, and Bergman, 1975; Stern, 1985). By a somewhat cumbersome phrase 'egoic self' I specify the figure/ground dynamics within the embodied sphere of experience. Selfhood is the total dynamic ground of the psycho-soma vis-à-vis the ego/I-ness which is the figure subject to a myriad of fluctuating modalities of auto[^]allo-morphic dynamics (including auto[^]allo-centricity, auto[^]allo-recognition) and always in reciprocal formative relation to its total ground. When I write Self with the capital S, I am referring to the realm of the radical, archetypal schemata of experience (Jung, 1959, 1968, 1971) which, in the Yagwoia life-world, is objectified as the ouroboric Cosmic Self. This transpersonal Self is immanent in the egoic selfhood of every living and dead Yagwoia. This cosmic ground is self-centred through all its parts, and the ego derives its own centrality from the omni-self-centredness of its ground, regardless of whether s/he knows and/or likes it or not. It is this total matrix that generates all its parts, starting with the ego who is always the individuating figure and dimension of its total ground and its parts. For a concrete example of experiential manifestation of this dialectical individuating relationship, see Mimica, 2007b. This, in short, is the sphere of Yagwoia 'agency'. Accordingly, my psycho-analysis is phenomenologically grounded in the Yagwoia life-world. Their psychic being is accounted for with a maximal fidelity to its life-world constitution. So, although my use of the notions such as un/conscious, egoic self and internal objects is within the framework of psychoanalytic meta-psychological conceptualisations, this is done as an interpretive exercise which both maintains and amplifies the ontological originality and existential integrity of the Yagwoia selfhood and life-world.

Among the Yagwoia, every human is indeed a microcosmic manifestation of their macrocosmos. In this perspective, the psychodynamics of a concrete ego and his/her intersubjective matrix is conterminous with the archetypal

dynamics of their life-world and its constitutive imaginary. As an archetypal structure of libidinal dynamics, ouroboros crystallises the oral-grasping-ocular unity and nucleus of all drives. Here copulation is the mirror-inverse of sucking, biting, eating, looking, grabbing and evacuation (vomiting, urinating, defecating, ocular emissions); libido is *mortido*. The antinomies referred to above are intrinsic to the ouroboric libido, i.e., the life^death flow, which, needless to say, in a life-world like the Yagwoia, is the cosmic energy that *generates-drives* existence in *toto*.⁵

This intertwining of life^death underscores a specific ouroboric determination of Yagwoia existence (Mimica, 1991, 1996, 2003, 2003a, 2006a,b,c; in preparation a, b) whereby there is no life of the human self without the simultaneous coefficient of self-destruction. In the field of their kinship relatedness, father>son incorporative dynamics (Mimica, 2007b), for which the indigenous image is 'Planting', is taking place correlatively with the mother>child incorporative self-circuitry characterised as 'Eating' (Mimica, 1991). Its libidinal substance is meat. Accordingly, these two modes of incorporation feed differentially into the kinship matrix and both are articulated in the total flow of substances and societal exchange.

QANG IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS OUROBORIC LIFE-WORLD

I first met him in 1977, within a week of my arrival in the Yagwoia abode. Our friendship began to develop a few months after I settled in a village only three hours walk from his home area. Writing now about QANG, with the hindsight of three decades, what has to be reflected upon in connection to his existential milieu is his self-contentment amidst the ceaseless, devouring life^death flow incarnated in him and all those with whom he lives. I have already outlined the narcissistic core of his egoity (Mimica, 2006a) which generates his genuine ouroboric contentment. It can be characterised as a

sense of optimal fluctuation of the fundamentally pleasurable excorporation-incorporation of his libidinal (self-) substance sustained by his matrixial mother^father generative self-unity. Within the ouroboric determination of egoity, in a life-world such as the Yagwoia where there is neither salvation nor damnation but only relentless existence,⁶ the fundamental self-contentment must be lived as a function of that endless life^death process. That is, not just as the self-experience through accomplished sexuality and procreation, or as the satiation produced by a good feed, especially of meat, but as a self-experience of the desire for a good, all-devouring death and bodily self-dissolution. These are the concrete and authentic parameters within which the ouroboric self-contentment is actualised.

How does QANG's self reveal that sphere of Yagwoia existential flow and sensibilities? The Yagwoia mortuary practices make the bodily self-dissolution an ubiquitous aspect of their everyday life (Mimica, 1991, 1996, 2003, 2006c). Apart from the post-partum bodily context of breast-feeding and nurture, it is in this ubiquitous context of socialised corpse-handling that the concrete excorporative-incorporative sensibilities and the ouroboric sense of human mortality are forged. In this transient mode of the imperishable life^death flow also indwells a fundamental feeling of ouroboric bodily intimacy, maternal containment and, through it, the desire for a wholesome self-contentment. In QANG's self-experience several images shape his projections of his own self-dissolution, all of them articulating the dialectical unity of the container and the contained whose irreducible prototype is the foetus inside the mother's womb. Simultaneously, this is the image of the self-unity of the ouroboric phallus as the foetus which reciprocally and indissolubly is the fulfilment of the womb's desire for its own self-completion or self-fulfilment.

House is the root image of the maternal womb-container which, following his/her delivery from the actual womb, contains every human being throughout life. Identified with the human body, the Yagwoia house is the generative womb=stomach container. The door-passage is the mouth=face, while the

interior side diametrically opposite to it is male. The two lateral sections, the ‘rib-cage sides’, are female. A married man effectively doesn’t own a house but the wife for whom he builds it. A polygamist has to build each wife her own house. Man’s main preparation for getting a woman is to build a house into which she can be placed. The idea is that in order to have a womb for making children man should first get the womb to house both himself (the penis) and his womb-container (woman). This image is entirely predicated upon a container-contained circuitry between the two part=wholes (penis-womb) contained within the container (house) but which as such is *erected* by man (see Mimica, 2007a:96-97).

House is an archetypal image-condensation that every Yagwoia knows and lives in various degrees of discursive lucidity, especially in its equation as house=womb=tomb. What is readily thematised is the gestation = copulation = generation equation.⁷ As a mirror-image of eating and gestation, bodily dissolution is cogently articulated in the mortuary practices and is amplified through the use of a net-bag (=placenta) in which the corpse is placed and handled. A particularly powerful instance of this image is QANG’s mother’s prolonged handling of her brother’s (i.e. QANG’s maternal uncle’s) skull (Mimica, 2006a). Many years later, her exemplary behaviour had shaped QANG’s own response to his favourite wife’s death and the way he handled her corpse (Mimica, 2006c).

Concerning the practice of consumption of the putrid fluids which emanate from the corpse while it is being smoked (Mimica, 1991; cf. Dupeyrat, 1954:220-224), QANG had a memorable childhood experience. Once, when he was a little boy, his mother went to the garden leaving him in the care of a very big and strong woman.⁸ Recalling her strength, QANG said that she could lift him up with just one arm, as if he were feather-light, and place him on the top of several net-bags that hanged from her forehead and rested on her back. They were inside her house and he was crying because his mother was gone while this woman was placating him by pointing to the roof-rafters

and telling him to look up there - there were two marsupials for them to eat. In actual fact these were the corpses of two men, father and son, killed by the Iqwaye.⁹ They now were hanging and smoking over the fire-hearth in two net-bags. She told him not to cry but to go and get the *kunyile* vegetables used for scooping the fluids that were dripping from the corpses. When we talked about these, now abandoned components of the mortuary practices,¹⁰ QANG would often recall this particular childhood experience. He said that he was somewhat perplexed when she told him that those two were 'our meat'.¹¹

This is a beautiful example of a tacit yet discursive articulation of the goodness of bodily dissolution pitched in the alimentary-gustatory register. The big woman told him not to cry (because of his mother's absence) for there was tasty game-meat for him and her to eat that would fill-in her absence. The promise of a filled stomach is intended to transmute the absence of the primal, maternal self-object into a palatable and pleasurable substitute which atones the momentary anxiety. This substitutive and atoning use of food is a universal human predilection. Food commonly compensates for this sort of separation experience and for other modes of self-privative anxiety, frustration and self-dissatisfaction. Through eating, a distressed child makes up for the absence or various deficiencies of the maternal container and the contentment that it provides aiming thus to regain the primal dual-unity¹² of the container and the contained. In the ouroboric life-world of the Yagwoia, however, the maternal-domestic contexture of the food and womb as well as of the tomb, i.e., real dissolving human cadaver destined for the actual alimentary incorporation,¹³ has had an acute concrete form of actualisation.

Now, this memory from QANG's childhood is illuminating but still it does not reveal the deeper meanings of this necrophagic nexus. For the prospect of self-dissolution and absorption into the maternal container may induce the feeling of a deep self-contentment and blissful self-extinction into primal generative liquidity. This modality of Yagwoia sensuousness had surfaced

as one of QANG's responses to the most common mode of containment – dwelling inside a house.

It happened on the night before I flew out of the Iwolaqa-Malycaane in February 2003. QANG came to the house where I was staying while at the air-strip where three New Tribes Mission (NTM) families settled. The house used to belong to one of them but he quit his calling some three years ago and returned to America where he was now training to become a parish pastor. This particular house is truly beautiful: spacious, comfortable, and extremely solidly built. It is presently used by the local followers of the NTM and R, the sole remaining NT missionary in this area, who keeps a radio in it. There is a separate study room, very cosy and a real pleasure to be in it. QANG came into this house for the first time in January 2000 when my wife came for a visit and we spent a few days there before going to my village field-base, some four hours walk from the air-strip. On that occasion his response to the house was one of unreserved admiration and uninhibited bodily absorption of its being. Once inside, he looked all around this beautiful spacious interior. He sat on the smooth floor made from the firm sheets of industrially manufactured ply-wood. He touched and felt the smooth texture and solidity of this wood, saying with a mixture of excitement and desire - "Aiiy, white man's house! This is how they make it" (i.e., "I wish it was mine"). It was overwhelming to see him seated on the floor, feeling it with his hands, looking upward into the exposed interior of the roof. He was *all* inside and enclosed by this big spacious house-container yet, simultaneously, he was filling and absorbing its entire volume.

Three years later, on the night before my departure I wanted to finish translating the last remaining section of a shaman's self-account so QANG was there to assist me. We sat in the study room and both of us enjoyed being there. I remarked on the quality and beauty of the house. QANG immediately released his unrestrained admiration for it. He first said that this was a house which "*Amerika* built" meaning specifically that it was exclusively

the white NTM builders who worked on it. This was true - they all were Americans. Therefore it was a superior work whereas, said QANG, the other two NTM houses *Europe* built with the help of the locals: “we local men worked on them”. These are R’s and N’s houses. They are Europeans from the Netherlands and Belgium respectively. Then QANG said that if I bought this house, he would look after it exclusively. Only he (and his family) would live in it; no other man would be allowed inside, no matter what! While talking, QANG was looking up and down, at the roof (sky) and the floor (earth). I felt as if his eyes were touching them; as if he was putting his hands on the wooden surfaces in the way he did the first time he came in. He was now completely *inside* the house, identified with it, or better, he felt completely enclosed and contained by it as if he were in the maternal womb. Then he made the following pronouncement:

“If this were my house I would be staying inside it all the time. No way that I would care to go out. And when I die I would tell my children that they mustn’t take me out quickly. First my whole body has to completely decompose inside it (the house) and only then they can take my bones and bury them in the ground. But not before the body (flesh) is gone. Only then they can bury me.”

I was taken by this stunning self-articulation. Although for years I knew the saliency of the identity of the house = body = womb = tomb, I have never experienced this kind of explicit and verbalised identification. I could see that while he was looking all around the house that he was looking into it as the image of himself, his maternal bodily flesh. What is formidable is this acute image of *his* bodily decomposition inside the house. Only with death does the body truly become inalienably absorbed by its primal cosmic-maternal container, the earth=womb. This is why QANG said that he would want to make sure that he not just dies in this house but that his body would have to decompose in it. The body has to go into, be absorbed by the house and thereby it would truly become his flesh-container just as much as he would

truly come to possess it.¹⁴ He saw this house as the best of the best possible receptacles for his flesh-bound egoic self.

Here, then, is a magnificent example of the ouroboric inside=outside interfusion, the container=contained incorporative self-reciprocity and, through it, of the total self-identification with one's flesh-bound egoity envisaged in the mode of complete self-liquefaction. This is also an image of a blissful self-contentment for the inside and the outside and, conterminously, the egoity and its intra-uterine matrix are dissolved into their primal self-identity which also contains within itself its own self-difference.¹⁵ As for the hard bones, their solar-generative spirit will continue in the progeny's bodies. And if these were the bones of violent contention, all the same, those who have incorporated them will therefore be even more possessed of the father's phallic legacy.¹⁶

QANG's self-projection and verbal elaboration is a sublime modulation of what is otherwise a fully culturally objectified dynamic scheme of the cannibalistic matrifilial self-circuitry ('Eating'). Its core is the desire for eating the mother and being eaten by her and, reciprocally, the parental desire to eat the child (Devereux, 1980). What QANG expressed, however, can be characterised as his intra-uterine un/consciousness. Manifest in it is an image of the maternal oral womb, for in the ouroboric un/consciousness womb is a sector of the oral libidinal zone. The bliss of self-liquefaction is a positive expression of the desire for being eaten (incorporated) and thereby also preserved. But, in liquefaction, the overt aspect of oral destruction is cancelled. There is a passive quality in the sensuousness of corpse decomposition; it *dissolves* out of itself and the fluids, *pars pro-toto*, make it edible without it having to be chewed upon and thus assimilated (this was only applied to the killed enemies, i.e. exo-cannibalism).

Although the liquefying aspect of corpse incorporation is akin to breast-feeding and fellatio¹⁷ the desire for self-liquefaction is fundamentally an expression of an intense symbiotic passivity which can be given the following alimentary

characterisation. It is a self-consummation of the breast that contains the milk and the mouth that sucks and tastes it, the flesh that feeds of it, and all of them become exhausted in a mode of self-consummated liquidity. If divested of the buccal-mammary delineation, then one can imagine it as a liquidity that eats and sustains itself through ceaseless self-absorption. In the sphere of Yagwoia sensuousness, this is the quality of lunar quiddity, a direct expression of its non-spectral (colourless) light and nocturnal fertilising liquidity. In the human body this lunar quiddity is borne by the maternal flesh and its animatedness. Here one can sense the inner vortex of the ouroboric metabolism, its anabolic phase in which all the solid melts into its mirror-opposite, the self-conserving self-liquefaction.

Yet this sublime intrauterine moment of phallic self-dissolution, or its anabolic moment, is at the same time a mirror-image of its seeming polar opposite, the disincarnated dry and hard bones which are to be interred separately while their solar spirit continues in the bodies of the progeny. The bare bones also mark the anabolic point when all activity has exhausted itself into the phase transition of life-into-death in order to carry on living itself ad infinitum. In their mutual self-mirroring, the bare bones and the bliss of liquefaction echo that foetal self-unity of the ouroboric phallus which originates in conception and gestation. This same process inaugurates the dialectics of the container and the contained and with it the archetypal dynamics of the libidinal circuitry of the Self. As an amplification of QANG's intra-uterine self-projection these reflections may also serve as an incipient sketch of an authentic Yagwoia *aesthetics* of bodily existence and ouroboric eudemonics.

NOTES

1. In the ANZSJA 'Uses of Subjective Experience' Conference, this brief outline of the basic lineaments of the Yagwoia life-world was delivered orally using visual material (power-point and overheads). In particular, I outlined their ouroboric cosmology with the focus on mortuary practices. I also introduced the main protagonist of the paper (named QANG) and the problematic of 'blissful self-dissolution' as an authentic expression of Yagwoia experience and of the desire for such a state expressive of self-contentment. I would especially like to thank Dr Peter Fullerton for his superb comments on this paper following my presentation.
2. For my usage of ^, see Mimica, 2006a:31. Briefly, the designation ^ means that any two terms/components thus conjoined are in mutually inseparable yet tensive (conjunctive^disjunctive) unity. This immanent *auto-polarity* is a dynamism which makes the ouroboric dynamics self-generative. Whenever I use it in the text, ^ specifies auto-polarising dynamics that simultaneously binds and generates both the mutual unity and the components/terms which comprise it. Neither component/term exists without the other, and each is constitutive of the other. This auto-polarisation is articulated as the function of the dimensional differentiation (in terms of inside^outside and container^contained) of the primordial ouroboric phallomorph. It can be best explicated as a dynamic topological scheme represented by the image of the Kleinian bottle or the Moebius strip (see further Mimica, op. cit. above). For general formulations of ouroboric archetypal dynamics, see Neumann, 1954, 1963, 1966, 1973, and Jung, 1956. For the specificities of this dynamics in the Yagwoia life-world, see Mimica, 1991.
3. His female mirror-double is *Imacipu* (The Great-she). The two are identified with the sun and moon as well as with the sky and earth. For the discussion of the primal twinning of *Imacoqwa*^*Imacipu* and the symptomatic fluctuation of their luno-solar identity, see Mimica, 1981. For the luno-solar quiddity of the human (Yagwoia) soul, see Mimica, 2003:262-265.
4. In anthropology, this fundamental caution was stressed a long time ago by Leach 1958. Similarly, Lienhardt observed for the Dinka 'who have no conception which at all closely corresponds to our popular modern conception of the "mind", as mediating and, as it were, storing up the experiences of the self (ft.1. *And still less of conscious and unconscious elements, of course*)' (1961:149; emphasis JM).
5. For some, the antinomial modes immanent in psychic energy (libido) and reflected in the formulations of instinctual drives (e.g., the principal Life^Death, Eros^Thanatos, also more recently echoed in the problematics of Narcissism, especially in relation to instinctual drives; Kohut, 1977; Grunberger, 1979), are primarily seen as contradictions that invalidate the formulations themselves. Still worse, those who appeal to 'state-of-the art' developmental neurobiology and neurosciences, or to infant research, think that they, therefore, are really within the truth, and that the notion of libido and its classical formulations (indicated by the great five referred to above) are an outdated psycho-analytic 'mythology'. In this context, it will suffice for me to say that 'they wouldn't know any better', without suggesting that the current knowledge in these fields, including neuropsychology (Winson, 1985, Schore, 1994, Solms and Turnbull, 2002) is irrelevant. On the other hand, in characterising the Yagwoia libidinal dynamics as ouroboric which entails a micro-macrocosmic ego-Self dialectical circuitry, I am demarcating its original actualisations in and as their cultural life-world. Accordingly, it cannot be uncritically assimilated into the exist-

ing psychoanalytic formulations, including such reworkings as in Lacan's opus. For some recent examinations of the problematics of the death instinct, see Grotstein, 1985; Eigen, 1995; Segal, 1993; Green, 1999, 2001.

6. See Mimica, 1996, 2003.
7. A good example is well illustrated in QP's usage (Mimica, 2007b:96-7). To the extent that he is still virile and procreative, he went on to say, he can get a younger and fertile woman. It is not good that he replaces his recently deceased wife Y with a woman as old as himself so that they two would be just sitting inside the *aane acipiye* (food-cook-house) and look at each other. This image plays on the view of sexual intercourse and child-making as 'food cooking'. An active young couple is, through sexual conjunction, inside the 'house' (i.e., penis in the womb) making a baby. The image of an old couple, sexually unproductive, sitting inside a cook-house and just looking at each other conjures an entropic atrophy of the progenitive desire and conjunction. The old couple can only eat cooked food, i.e., the substitute for the sexual-copulative mode of 'cooking', and look at each other while digesting it. But their looks are not the burning, i.e., cooking looks, of the sexual conjunction and are not fuelled by, so to speak, the digestion *a deux* that makes a real baby inside the womb=cook-house. By digesting and looking at each other, the old couple effects no child-generating conjunction. Although themselves contained inside the cook-house ('womb'), they are apart, digesting yet empty of their procreative self-unity in the body of the one who is their third and as such their two-in-one, the foetal being through and in which they will have been replaced. This simple image, then, condenses an entire dialectics of container^contained, being the core of the human ouroboric self-circuitry, destiny, and the quest for self-creation and self-perpetuation ad infinitum. My ontological amplification of it in terms of the self-generative one^two^oneness is entirely grounded in the immanent archetypal mathematicity of the Yagwoia noesis and life-world constitution (see Mimica 1988; 1991).
8. Her big size was indicated by her birth-order suffix inflected with a male gender marker which in this instance signalled her bigness. For QANG's relation with his mother and his parental matrix determined by her, see Mimica, 2006a.
9. Iqwaye are one of the four Central Yagwoia territorial groups with whom QANG's home-group was in war at the time (approximately 1949-1955).
10. Corpse smoking stopped in the mid-sixties but the practice of bodily contact and smearing with the corpse fluids, especially of young nubile women and children, continued well into the present (Mimica, 1991).
11. The dominant game in the Yagwoia life-world are marsupials. The generic term *hiye* labels all marsupial taxa and a species of aquatic rodent. This game also has a generic significance of 'meat' (*namce*) and the term *hiye* immediately equates with that categorical determination. 'Pig' is also 'meat' although it would not be intended as the 'meat' in the sense of the marsupial game (*hiye*). Yagwoia usage of the Tok Pisin *abus* applies to both meat and marsupial game.
12. It is informative to cite here Roheim (1945:1-2): "The expression "dual-unity" was invented by a patient of Hoffman's. "He and his mother", he declares, "formed one being originally. If they had been cut into halves they would both have ceased to exist. Love flowed from mother to him in the

shape of milk and from him to mother – as urine. If he could have the same sensations today he would be immortal because this dual-unity is more than two put together, it amounts to omnipotence. Hoffman describes this stage of dual-unity as follows: “There is no dividing line between the object and the primitive ego. There is both a primary identification with the object and a reversal of this process, an identification of the object with the Ego”. “The same narcissistic libido is reflected from the object which plays the role of the primary ego or of a mirror”. Roheim’s citations are from Hoffman’s ‘Projektion und Ich-Entwicklung’, *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, 21, 1936:36ff.

13. A professional mortician and embalmer who once attended a lecture I gave on Yagwoia mortuary practices told me afterwards that he could relate to this. According to him it is a common experience among his professional colleagues to develop an enormous appetite while working on a corpse.
14. When his favourite (third) wife died he wanted to bury her next to his house-door but decided against it because he thought (correctly) that this would alarm his two other wives who would surely abandon him because they would conclude that he didn’t care about them and, furthermore, the deceased’s spirit (*wopa ilymane*) would be there all the time (see Mimica, 2006c).
15. After so many years that I spent among the Yagwoia plumbing their psyche and life-world QANG’s image truly infused me with a revitalised sense of respect for their irreducible reality: the ouroboric Self-hood which lives in every single one of them. It was QANG, my friend of some twenty-five years, who then and there made me experience anew his and their ouroboric authenticity.
16. Here, I am invoking the dynamics of the paternal bone-power and its internalisation, a subject of a long study from which the present paper is an extract. The Yagwoia notion of the paternal bone and its power pertains to the relationship between the father and his children, specifically his sons (see Mimica, 2007a: 5-6, 2007b:77-105). ‘Bone’ condenses the paternal phallic – i.e., seminal-spiritual - power contained not just in the father’s genitals but in the entire skeleton which in the Yagwoia understanding of bodily edifice is an arboreal structure and, as such, a phallic-ouroboric totality that generates its own animation. Reciprocally, this bodily microcosmos is animated by the macrocosmic metabolism generated by the movement, light and differential temperature of the sun and moon. This means that, like any tree, the bone (metonymically meaning the entire body as a phallic gestalt) is a generative organism whose trunk is rooted in the earth while the branches and leaves extend skyward. In the most expanded terms, the bone, then, is the human embodiment as the microcosmic equivalent of the macrocosmic edifice of the world delimited by the sky and earth (Mimica, 2006a:33). In terms of this global image (body=tree) the notion of the ‘father’s bone’ means that he is primarily a bigger branch (arm) closer to the trunk (spine = central axis of the body), while his sons at first are the smaller branches (hand-fingers) issuing from it. Later, when they replace him, they – in Yagwoia understanding - extract his bone and, in turn, the sons themselves become incorporated into the branch closer to the trunk from which, qua themselves, issue their own branches (children).

Daughters too are the branch-issues, but their destiny is to be like the leaves (finger-nails) that detach from the trunk because they marry outside of their own paternal ‘trunk’ (*latice* group) and enable other trunks and their branches to internally reproduce themselves, i.e., that the fathers

become replaced by their progeny of which the sons continue the process of (endo-) generation of the trunk via the incorporation into its branches which, in turn, are being incorporated into the trunk. The process is one of self-reciprocal incorporation, i.e., ouroboric (Mimica, 1991, 2006). Moreover, every part of this self-totalising totality is identical to the whole (i.e., is hologramic) concretely imagined as a tree closed in on itself, i.e., its branches and roots intertwining. This is the archetypal, cosmic tree of life[^]death whose structural determination is ouroboric because, like the serpent that eats its own tail, this tree grows in-through-and-out-of-itself, ad infinitum. Thus, the trunk = branches = leaves = whole tree = trunk = roots = branches =and-so-on. Apart from their cosmology and its diverse forms of actualisation, this scheme is fully objectified in the Yagwoia naming system (Mimica, 1988, 1991). Finally, the reality of the soul and spirit that this notion encapsulates is best conveyed through a notion of generative energy whose macrocosmic sources are the sun and moon replicated in the human body by the differential flow and interchange of blood and seminal (bone-marrow) flow in the blood-ropes (veins, arteries) and skeletal passages which in Yagwoia understanding comprise a system of intra-bodily ropes. Accordingly, the notion of the 'extraction-incorporation of the father's bone' entails also the incorporation of the paternal spirit-power (energy).

17. All of these (and many others) bodily activities are constellated into the libidinal nexus which pivots on the oral-phallic (hence ouroboric) determination of all instinctual drives and libidinal zones. I am describing here a particular figuration of its sublimated cannibalistic spectrum. A negative mode of cannibalistic desire is the *womba* complex where a person's soul craves raw human and animal flesh and gorges on it, though not in an overt form but by means of invisible devouring. This is commonly reported in literature as 'cannibalistic witchcraft'.
18. For the Yagwoia notion of the soul and its luno-solar generation from which derives their notion of spirit indicated here, see Mimica, 2003a, 2006.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The image on the title page is the author's own: With a friend in the field.

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