

(1895: 416) mentions that among the effigies constructed on the Bora ground was the body of a bullock formed from logs, earth, and a real bullock's skull complete with horns; and that of a man dressed in old clothes in the manner of a scarecrow and adorned with a crescent-shaped tin plate (resembling the brass breast plates handed out to prominent Aborigines and declaring them as "kings" of a tribe). There were also representations of a horse and parts of a vehicle and the effigies of humankind's original parents Boobarby and Numbardy (415) – which seems to be an allusion to Adam and Eve. Another alien element was obviously the use of flags in the Bora ritual by which groups of female guardians marked their presence (425).

Equally striking and clearly indicative of post-contact intrusion is the use of earth-pictures, scratched into the ground, of bulls and pigs, which in the course of the ritual were symbolically speared – an action to which R. Berndt attributes "increase intent" (Berndt 1974: 44, pictures pp. 49 and 56).

The appearance of such paraphernalia is remarkable and should not be overlooked in its potential for signalling change. Not infrequently is this phenomenon accompanied by a change in motivation or some kind of adjustment to new circumstances. Even if the ritual in the form observed by Howitt and others is faithful to the original, there is the possibility of discontinuity with the past in terms of the ideas and motivations which inspire its performance. Howitt (Fison and Howitt 1967: 186) himself draws attention to the widespread breakdown of old customs and the intrusive effect of Christianity in Gippsland. Areas of New South Wales may have been similarly affected. One wonders how this erosion of old customs goes with the perpetuation of a traditional ritual if this was not linked in one form or another to the impact of Christianity or to the presence of an alien culture in general. Howitt also indicated that this ceremony had previously lapsed and had been revived only recently. Such a break in a ritual practice, its discontinuation and subsequent revival, is certainly of some significance and is a very likely indicator of changes in meaning and motivation.

R. Berndt may have put his finger on the problem when he writes (1974: 29) with respect to Kuringal, Burbung, and Bora that they expressed a preoccupation with a hereafter and thus were in contrast to other Aboriginal ritual which was more concerned with fertility and the here and now. (Berndt says this despite his attributing "increase

intent" to the spearing of the earth-pictures; see above.) Perhaps the difference in "flavour" between those rituals celebrating the All-Father and other traditional ritual is due to the postcontact character of the former.

Moreover, Howitt (Fison and Howitt 1967: 210) described the All-Father figure with distinct European and Christian attributes such as that he was associated with cattle, were sitting on a throne with pillars of crystal rising on the sides thus in fact describing a truly non-Aboriginal imagery, as for instance Worms did not fail to point out (1968: 241). In the context of describing the Bora ritual of which she seems to have had only a rather superficial knowledge, Mrs. Parker also speaks of a crystal seat on which Baiame is supposed to sit (1905: 76), and speaks of "prayers" being addressed to Baiame (1905: 8, 79). Unfortunately, she does not elaborate on whether she meant prayers in a Christian sense, or whether she referred to a traditional Aboriginal incantation. Aborigines believed that Baiame had threatened, if they would not keep the Bora rites, he would make Aborigines die out and only white devils would live in the land (1905: 76). The white devils most probably refer to Europeans and their increasingly numerous presence among Aborigines. This clearly points to the change in motivation for the ritual's performance I have referred to above.

The All-Father is often described as a powerful, all-good deity who has opposed an evil trickster and punished him thus relieving mankind of a spiritual oppressor. The polarization of good and evil is as un-Aboriginal as it is characteristically Christian. Tylor (1873: 419), in referring to the ethnographic record, refers to Turamullun as "the chief demon" who has a serpent as associate. (If it is the Rainbow Serpent which was meant by Aborigines, this would indicate the totemic nature of the belief, otherwise it would point clearly to a Christian origin.) Also, the fact that the All-Father was said to have a son (or sons) shows more than just a superficial semblance to the Christian trinity (e.g., Howitt 1904: 502).

Eliade in his thorough study of the All-Father concept (1966: 111) refers to myths which speak of the Supreme Being as having caused a cosmic cataclysm and thus almost having brought about the end of mankind in a fit of anger. Does this not remind one of the Biblical mytheme of the deluge? His disappearance into the sky is said to have brought to an end a fabulous period on earth. This is quite in tune with the totemic belief that at the end of the Dreamtime the divine beings removed themselves from the surface of the earth,