

The Maya Myth about Two Suns

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This paper compares the Central Mexican and Maya myths about the world creation, and deals in particular with the creation of two parallel Suns, one of which was redundant. This mythological motif is subsequently analysed by the author through Maya narratives over time, and specifically among Lacandons, a Maya group with the best preserved original mythological sources. In the myths and their fragments that he collected from Lacandons he identifies and classifies various versions, in the background of which he observes the same motif which has survived thousands of years. The reason for such survival, as noted by the author in the conclusion, is its ability to absorb social antagonisms, explain them and accept them on the basis of a traditional cosmological model.

Key words: Suns, Venus, Maya, Lacandon, myth

Tecuciztécatl and Nanahuatzin

There are several widely shared narratives that are important for the history of Central Mexico, the best known being the myth about two Suns¹. Three versions of this myth have been known to the public in particular based on the mythological work by Walter Krickeberg (Krickeberg, 1994: 28-32). The first and the best known version is about a god named *Nanahuatzin* who was poor and ugly, yet brave, and a god named *Tecuciztécatl* who was wealthy and handsome, but coward.

The story is set at the beginning of time, in his former centre – Teotihuacan. Led by *Quetzalcóatl*, gods sought to get the Sun onto the sky to make it shine through the darkness and the cold, to make life exist. The main candidate for becoming the Sun was the wealthy, yet arrogant god *Tecuciztécatl*. He made pretentious sacrifices, and was expected to run jump into a bonfire to sacrifice himself and become the Sun. However, not even after four allowed attempts was he able to do it, as he was too coward. He was therefore “substituted” by *Nanahuatzin* who not only had a pockmarked face, but was also poor and made sacrificial offerings of small value. After *Tecuciztécatl*'s

failure, he bravely leaped into the flames and turned into the Sun. In that very moment, *Tecuciztécatl* also took his courage and jumped into the fire – and appeared in the sky as the second Sun. Two rival celestial bodies were shining in the sky with same brightness. And it is the existence of two rival celestial bodies that, as we will see further, is an important motif of the Maya and, in particular, Lacandon mythology, as well as the need to subsequently eliminate one of them. In the Central Mexican cosmological story, one of the angry gods threw a rabbit in the face of the coward *Tecuciztécatl*, causing him to lose his brilliance. *Tecuciztécatl* thus became the false Sun with weak brilliance – the Moon.

Hachäkum and Mensäbäk

Throughout the past 15 years, I have conducted fieldwork on the mythology and rituals of the present-day Lacandons, a small Maya group from eastern Chiapas, especially among the northern group originally inhabiting the villages of Nahá and Metzabok. In 2000, I captured the following version of the myth about two rival Suns:

¹ I presented the first, shorter version of the analysis of this mythological complex at the Permanent Ibero-American Conference in Pardubice (Kováč, 2007).



Fig. 1. Stela 2 from Izapa displays the fall of false Sun, World Tree and victorious heroes - the true Sun and the Moon.



Fig. 2. Stela 25 from Izapa displays the true Sun losing his arm to Principal Bird Deity.

"After people were created, the gods decided to give them two lights in the sky: the Sun during the day, and the Moon during the night. The god of rain Mensäbäk did not ask anything, and decided to create the Sun and the Moon his own. And thus, Mensäbäk made the two celestial bodies on his own, both of them being his work. However, the Sun and the Moon had already been created by the supreme god Hachäkyum, about which Mensäbäk had no knowledge. When Mensäbäk threw his Sun and his Moon onto the sky, there were suddenly four celestial bodies there: two Suns and two Moons. Hachäkyum, however, did not like it, as people could not sleep. After the Sun rose, the day began; the Sun was losing its strength in the afternoon, coming to the end of its path in the evening; however, a second Sun rose at around six o'clock in the evening, preventing the day to be over. This was the reason why people could not go to sleep.

Hachäkyum said "we cannot leave it as it is. The people we created need to rest at night. And since they are made of clay, they need to sleep." And as Hachäkyum told it, we claim the same: "We're just clay, because we're from earth." "This is why people need to sleep," said god Hachäkyum and decided to bring the second Sun down from the sky. And he also decided to eliminate the Moon from the sky. If he did not do it, there would still be two Suns and two Moons which could collide at any time. He brought both

bodies back to the earth, keeping them here for memory. He left them at the place called Toniná, where god Mensäbäk lived. They look like two big rounded rocks, reminding of the work left by Mensäbäk. They could not stay in the sky also because Mensäbäk wanted to have the same power as Hachäkyum. He was equally great god, no smaller, but Hachäkyum was the supreme god and could not let the Moon and the Sun created by Mensäbäk shine in the sky. What we see in the sky today is the Sun and the Moon created by Hachäkyum. Mensäbäk abandoned his attempts to create celestial bodies, though he was not prohibited from doing so by Hachäkyum. He told Mensäbäk: "Yum, tell me your decision, shall we bring your celestial bodies down here because the people we created cannot sleep?" And Mensäbäk admitted that there was nothing else to do. And after they agreed, they brought Mensäbäk's Moon and Mensäbäk's Sun down. They preserved them as rocks at Toniná, as a demonstration and a memory of the work created in the beginning by god Mensäbäk..."

The myth adds that if they kept both Suns and both Moons, the gods would lose the power to bring the end of the world, as it would come after the eclipse of the Sun. And while they would be obscuring one of the Suns, the other one would rise. "The world could not be ended," affirms the sad supreme



Fig. 3. Hun Ajaw (prototype of Hunahpu) shoots by blowgun the false Sun on the tree. Classic vase (Kerr 1226), Museum of Fine Arts Boston (photograph by Justin Kerr).

Lacandon god *Hachäkyum* in the myth. Hence, this eschatological plan also played a role in the gods' decision.

Most important for us, however, is the model similar to the creation myth of Teotihuacán. In this case, two rival gods created up to two pairs of rival celestial bodies. The solution was, similar as in Teotihuacán, to eliminate the false Sun. According to the Lacandons, the false and redundant Sun must have been brought down from the sky, and the present state is the result of this primordial act.

Vucub Caquix and Hunahpú

In addition to the version about the two Suns that the gods placed in the sky, with one of them being false, the Maya tradition also offers another, slightly different mythological matrix, the prototype of which can be found in the Quiché sacred book *Popol Vuh*.

This myth is also about two rival Suns, one of which must be eliminated. The first one is a false Sun embodied in the world parrot named *Vucub Caquix*. It is a kind of a universal celestial body, because he says: "I'll be the greatest one of all created beings. I am the Sun and the light, I am the Moon" (Recinos, 1992: 33). *Vucub Caquix* was wealthy, proud and arrogant, just as *Tecuciztécatl*. Unlike *Tecuciztécatl*, he lived in a tree. It was certainly a world tree, axis mundi. *Popol Vuh* also mentions the type of the tree: this tree was originally called *tapal* (Edmonson, 1971: 37), Lacandons call it *chi*, and in Mexico it is commonly known as *nance* (*Malpighia Byrsonima crassifolia*). It is similar to a cherry tree, yet with smaller, yellow fruits with bigger stones. Laden with fruit it reminds of a sky full of stars – a sublime prototype of the world tree and of the first Sun residing in the night sky. The story described in *Popol Vuh* continues with the appearance of the true Sun - *Hunahpú* who fights against the false one - *Vucub Caquix* together with his brother *Ixbalanqué* who represents the Moon. *Hunahpú's* shooting of

the big bird god with a blow gun, which acted in this form as the alter ego of the supreme god *Itzamna* known in the Classic period (Freidel, Schele, Parker, 1993: 70) is one of the oldest narrative elements of Maya art. It appeared in stelas back to the 1st century at the Pacific coast of Chiapas – in Izapa. In this case, in addition to the archaic nature of the motif, the world tree and the false Sun living in the tree are also important to us, as well as the fact that it was removed "from the bottom" by the true Sun.

Older and younger Sun

I found this picture in up to three Lacandon myths during my field research.

In 2005, I heard the following myth about the beginnings of the Lacandon cosmos:

"There used to be two Suns shining on the earth. One of them was older and bigger, and the other one was younger and smaller. The older Sun was bad and did not let people rest. It was shining constantly, during days and during nights, everything was burnt and people died from heat. The younger Sun shone during the day and rested at night. One day, the young Sun found a tree which had a hollow full of honey, and called its elder brother: "Brother, look, we can get sweet bee honey here." "Be the first one to climb up," called the smaller Sun his elder brother. The big Sun climbed up the tree and tasted the honey. "It is very sweet, come up, too, my little brother." "I'm coming," said the small Sun, "but you should go higher, there's more honey." "I'm high," cried the big Sun. "Higher, higher," cried the youngest brother. When the big Sun was on the top, the young Sun took an axe and started to cut the tree. He was cutting very fast, and the tree fell soon. The big Sun fell down to the earth. As he was falling, a big bang could be heard, and everything was set in fire. After a while, animals started to jump out from the fire: parrots, deer, coatis, peccaris, monkeys and all animals living in the earth today. This is how animals were created, and people could hunt them. Only the small Sun stayed



Fig. 4. Blowgunners and PBD on the Maya plate, Gran Museo del Mundo Maya, Mérida (photo by author).

shining on the earth, having lost its strong brightness and letting people sleep at night. It is the same Sun that shines on our earth even today."

Here, the world tree is an anonymous botanic species, but has the property of many mythological world trees – a hollow full of honey. It is also important that all animals were born from the tree. The breaking/cutting of the world tree is present in many Mexican codices, but its cutting with an axe also evokes the image of the god *Chak* cutting off the tree with an axe, as seen in Maya iconography. The most important thing for us is that we again have here, along with the motif of annoying people with constant sunshine, the solution being the elimination of one of the Suns. The fact that the seemingly smaller "from the bottom", yet true Sun liquidates the seemingly bigger, yet false Sun is a motif very similar to the one in Popol Vuh, as well as the setting of the plot in the world tree.

Nuxi and Kisin

An even more interesting context can be found in the introduction to the great Lacandon mythological cycle about *Nuxi* which, unfortunately, cannot be described here due to its extensive nature and length. Shortly said, based on the retold story that I published elsewhere (Kováč, 2011), *Nuxi*, i.e. Old Man, in numerous versions also called by his real name *Ah Lehibah* – Hunter of Gophers (small rodents from the family Geomyidae, *bah* in Maya language), enters the underworld for some time. His wandering in the underworld, witnessing different fates and adventures, as well as his return from below the earth are preceded by a bizarre prologue set in a tree. *Nuxi* is sitting on

a tree and is picking unma-
tured fruit; the tree is nothing
else but *chi* (*nance*), the same
world tree that we know from
Popol Vuh, with *Vucub Caquix*
sitting on it. Suddenly, *Kisin's*
daughter (the daughter of the
god of death) appears under
the tree, throwing fruit in *Nuxi*.
Such "shooting" of a god sitting
on a tree appears suspicious to
us, even though the "shoot-
down" from the tree is only
symbolic. *Nuxi's* defeat was
based on the fact that he let
himself entrapped, and entered
the hole under the tree,
leading to the empire of the
death. In *Nuxi's* case, we find the

original scene of the myth about two Suns: the world tree, two implacable gods, one under the world tree, another one on the top of it, accompanied by "shooting" and the symbolic death of the god on the tree.

In the story, *Nuxi* marries *Kisin's* daughter in the underworld, and the two of them have children *bah* – gophers (so frequent in the Classic Maya art). At the end, *Nuxi* returns to the earth after many adventures and after discovering the secrets of death. According to a version that I have captured just recently, he is carrying a strange item – a human bone stolen from the ruler of the underworld, by means of which he revives dead. After *Nuxi's* return to the earth, the necessity of death ceases to exist. After some years of stay in the grave, when their bodies are decomposed and only their skeletons remain, people are put together and revived, returning back to life. Humans are thus becoming immortal. However, while *Nuxi* is sleeping, his wife finds the secret bone and gets scared; so she throws it to the ground, breaking it and burning it. As a result, any possibility to bring dead people back to life is over, and the unhappy *Nuxi* dies.

Apart from the fascinating background of this story referring to secondary Maya funerals – the picking of bones from graves to make them – apparently symbolically – revived, there is one more analogy worth noticing. In Central Mexico, *Quetzalcóatl* was the god who took the bones from the underworld. He also stole them from the ruler of death. After bringing the bones up to the earth, the bones got damaged by falling and spilling (Krickeberg, 1994: 26), which seemingly resulted in the mortality of humans. Thus, the Lacandon *Nuxi* should be related to *Quetzalcóatl*, the god Venus. In this case, many things give an even more interesting picture. It was apparently god Venus

who was sitting on the tree, being the false Sun, just as the ancient bird *Vucub Caquix* from *Popol Vuh*. And because the ancient bird as the Principal Bird Deity (PBD) is the alter ego of the supreme deity *Itzamna*, this god should also refer to Venus, specifically the Morning Star which brings/creates day/light, as well as the Evening Star which is the father of all stars/deities. One should be, however, cautious about such simplified causal chain in mythology, even though it seems to be logical for the creator deity, as it may not always work straightforwardly.

Chak Xib and T'uup

On the contrary, the two other myths with the motif of two Suns present completely reversed protagonists. One of the important stories of Lacandon mythology is the story of two brothers, *Hachäkyum's* children, who get into conflict (Bruce, 1974: 169-178). The elder son was called *Chak Xib* (*U Paal ÄkYum Chäk Xib*) and the younger one *T'uup*. The Lacandons explicitly associated the latter one with the Sun (Bruce, 1968: 132; Kováč, 2002: 322-323). After many twists, the two brothers become enemies, and the elder one *Chak Xib* shoots *T'uup* down with an arrow from a tower in Palenque (Ciudadela) where he settled. The world tree seems to be replaced by an impressive tower, a different kind of *axis mundi* and apparently with the same cosmological meaning. Another version of this myth by Southern Lacandons from the village Lacanjá offers the same story, with the only difference that *T'uup* is not shot down from the tower in Palenque, but from the ceiba tree-top (Boremanse, 1986: 283-288). Here again we have two brothers – Suns, but unlike *Popol Vuh* or the story of *Nuxi*, the true Sun is sitting on the tree-tower (though it is not for sure)², while the false Sun is shooting from below, until killing the true one. With such reversal of the roles where the true Sun is on the top and the false one is shooting from below, *T'uup* dies just seemingly. Moreover, he has wings and flies to another world with a new life awaiting him, while his originally successful brother symbolically classified as the false Sun is destroyed.

The Morning Star and the Sun

This model also has an analogy in Central Mexican mythology – in Krickeberg's second version of the creation of celestial bodies:

As the Sun was not moving, the gods sent an obsidian sparrow hawk to him to speak to the Sun: "Gods have sent me here to ask you why you're not moving." And the



Fig. 5. Lacandons with stone altar at Toniná regarded as *Mensäbäk's Sun* (drawing taken from Blom, 1944: 44).

Sun replied: "Because I ask your blood and your empire." The gods got together, and the god of the Morning Star became angry and said: "Why don't you let me shoot arrows in him? Hope it won't destroy him." He began shooting in the Sun, but without a hit. And today, the Sun is shooting arrows decorated with the red feathers of the macaw in the god of the Morning Star... (Krickeberg, 1994: 30-31).

This suggests that the true Sun can be in the "up" position, being shot by the Venus, the false Sun, from below, as we could see it in the story about *T'uup* and *Chak Xib*. On the other hand, the exchange of arrows is bidirectional, which allows the variation of the characters. After all, the throwing of spears with regard to Venus is very well illustrated in the Dresden Codex, pages 46-50, where the victims and the shooters change on each page (Grube, 2012: 118-127).

Kooch Ich and the anonymous god

In 2005, an old Lacandon man from Nahá told me a local reflection of the shooting in Venus, called *Kooch Ich*:

The largest star in the sky is called Kooch Ich – Big Eye. It is huge, and actually it is as big as the Moon or the Sun. It is this star that will destroy this earth one day. It will fall on the earth, and since it is so large, the world will be over. Everything will be destroyed, including the United States, and the whole world. But Kooch Ich is not just one star, there are two Kooch Ich. One of them appears in the morning before the dawn, and the other one right after it gets dark. The morning one is very good. It is a great fighter, always carrying its arms. But the other god is al-

² *T'uup* is considered to be the "guard of the Sun" and is able to cause its eclipse; hence, his solar attributes are not necessarily straightforward. I elaborated on the possibility of *T'uup* being Venus and all related parallels in a different study (Kováč, 2005).



Fig. 6. Tower at Palenque where T'uup was shot down (photo by author).

ways shooting arms in him from the other side of the world. Kooch Ich is therefore wounded. Arrows are sticking out of his waist and his belly. There are telescopes today, just look through them and you'll see that Kooch Ich has a wounded belly and is bleeding. Our supreme god Hachäkyum would not let it as it is. He always takes the arrows out of his body and heals his wounds. But Kooch Ich is shot again, and Hachäkyum treats him again. And this happens all the time. If Hachäkyum let him die, he would fall on the earth and the world would be over. One day this will happen.

This narrative looks like a mythological, slightly updated comment on the 500 years older Dresden Codex that my old informer, understandably, had never heard about. The stories depicted in the Maya book must have been socially so important and so deeply integrated in the society that they have persisted for hundreds of years among illiterate Lacandon people scattered in the forest. What is important for us in this context is the fact that the story is about shot-up Venus, and even though the "other god from the other side of the world" stays anonymous, it is almost for sure that it is the god of the Sun.

Wan T'ut K'in and the man climbing to pick up honey

I have captured the last of the stories just recently, and though its more extensive version has been nar-

rated by Didier Boremanse (Boremanse, 1986: 163-168), my informers – in this case younger ones – related it indirectly to the Maya concept of two Suns. At first sight, it seems to be differing from the basic matrix to the greatest extent, but as we will see further, it is very interesting:

My grandpa told me that there grew a big tree full of honey. A man climbed up the tree to pick some honey. But the honey was too high. And so the man was climbing and climbing until he got to the very top. And when he reached the honey, he found out that he would not be able to get down from such height. He tried and tried, but he did not manage to get down even a bit. He was very scared and stayed up on the tree as if he

was rooted to the spot. A woodpecker was flying by, and the man asked him: "Woodpecker, please, help to get down from this tree." And the woodpecker replied: "I'll help you if you give me some honey." And the man gave him honey and the woodpecker promised to help. Suddenly, a coati appeared under the tree. The man cried at him: "Coati, please, help to get down from this tree." The coati replied: "I'll help you if you give me corn." The man gave to the coati the corn that he was carrying, and the coati promised to help. Afterwards, the woodpecker and the coati called the other animals to bring the man down from the tree altogether. They were gradually placing his feet to the spots with holes in the tree, and the man was slowly descending. In that moment the demon Wan T'ut K'in was walking in the forest with his dog which suddenly started to bark. When the man was almost down from the tree, he quickly jumped down and climbed up to the top of another tree nearby. Wan T'ut K'in knew what had happened, and since he wanted to do bad, he yapped at the coati: "Was it you who helped the man to climb down?!" "No, it wasn't me," replied the coati. "It was you!" yelled Wan T'ut K'in angrily. "No, I was just strolling around, searching for some food," said the coati. Wan T'ut K'in turned his blow towards the man on the tree, wanting to shoot him. The coati, however, took out his knife, leapt from the side and cut Wan T'ut K'in's throat. Wan T'ut K'in fell on the ground and started to bleed – his blood was green. "Come and look at him," called the coati the man who had this

time got down from the tree easily, trying to hide. “He wanted to kill you,” said the coati, and the man was happy that it was all over. Ever since, woodpeckers like honey and coati like corn, just as the man taught them.

We again have the archetypal world tree full of honey here. It is again the true Sun climbing to the tree top, though without a name. He is shot from the bottom by *Wan T’ut K’in*, a clearly negative being (in Maya language the Spanish word “demonio” was used), the relation of which to the false Sun is indicated by his name (literally meaning Quail Parrot Sun)³, and his falseness is demonstrated by his arrogant behaviour. The Sun on the tree is not eliminated; on the contrary, it is the shooter who is killed – the false Sun that liquidated animals, the allies of the true Sun. Their alliance is, however, accompanied by future obligations concerning their subsistence.

Maya cosmological matrix

All the six Lacandon stories which refer to hostility between two Suns shows coincidence with the Mesoamerican dualistic story about two Suns from the beginning of the world, one of which was redundant and had to be eliminated. Even though their matrices are different: while in one of the cases both Suns appear in the sky at the same time, similar to the Central Mexican myth about the world creation in Teotihuacan which needs to be diplomatically solved by the gods, in the other one the (presumably) Sun shoots at his rival Venus, and the plot of the other stories is set around a tree or a tower onto which one of the opposite cosmological characters climbs up, and is accompanied by shooting or throwing leading to permanent or temporary elimination of one of the characters. Due to the prevalence of these four versions linked to the iconography from Izapa, we should not consider borrowings from Central Mexico, but rather the original Maya or older Mesoamerican background of this central cosmological myth. What is sure is that this story has gradually acquired many different local versions in the Maya region. The expansion and the fundamental position of this cosmological matrix among ancient Maya is also represented by the fact that the story can be documented throughout almost 2000 years from the Izapa stelas 2 and 25 from the 1st century A. D. through Classic pictures on ceramics from the 6th – 8th century A. D., the Quiché story from the 16th century up to Lacandon narratives captured in the beginning of the 21st century.



Fig. 7. Incense pot (*u lak i k'uh*) represented god *T'uup* in god house, *Nahá* (photo by author).

The observation of updated mythological narratives about this topic can represent a big challenge. Today, few doubt that the myth is a dynamic narrative entity the main function of which within the lived context is to explain and justify this world and its functioning at the cosmic, natural or social level (Honko, 1984). Just as the view of the cosmos, nature and society changed over time, the myths also adapted to the new circumstances to preserve their ability of interpreting the changing world. Also, there is no doubt that the view of the cosmos and nature changed very little in ethnic groups like the Maya, as a result of which it was mainly societal changes that the myths had to absorb and on the basis of which they had to transform. Apart from numerous updates of the environment, such as the telescope to observe the mythological story or the destruction of the United States by the fall of Venus, two types of more significant changes appear in the Lacandon myth about two Suns, reflecting the processes in greater detail.

Updates of the pattern

One of the changes in the Lacandon society concerns, in particular, the mythological struggle between the god *Hachäkyum* and the god *Mensäbäk*. This struggle reflects presumably the actual tensions between two main North-Lacandon *onens* (clans), the first one of which *ma'ax* (spider monkey) accepted the *Hachäkyum* as the main god, and the other *k'ek'en* (peccari) worshipped the god *Mensäbäk*. This diametrical differ-

3 Alternatively Iguana Parrot Sun. We are of the opinion that this version of the Lacandons is more original compared to the narratives with a phonetically similar demonic entity *Juan Tuul* spread in Yucatan (Evia, 2006: 43-48), which refers to cattle. It is apparently a colonial adaptation of the original narrative element in Yucatan to Christian demonology linked to the new environment of cattle ranches.

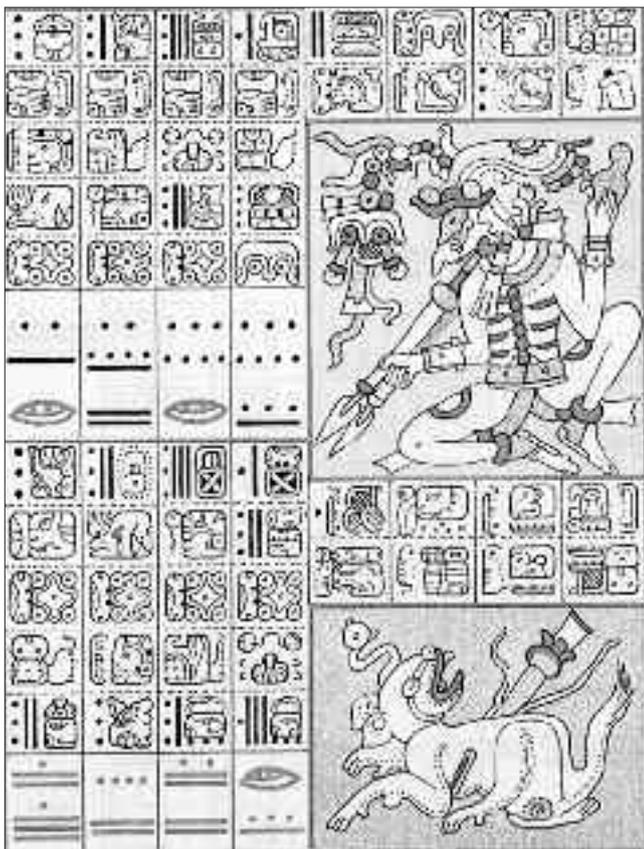


Fig. 8. Lower part of the page 47, Dresden Codex (taken from Gates, 1932).



Fig. 9. Lower part of the page 50, Dresden Codex (taken from Gates, 1932).

ence in religious preferences can be well identified in the narratives of older people, as well as in the live mythologies and present-day eschatological concepts, where both groups continue preferring different interpretations under the protection of both of these different gods. This antagonism can also be observed at other levels of the society, surviving until today, after the mixing up of the populations of the two *onens*, with *ma'ax* becoming the dominant one. The traditional myth about two antagonistic Suns must have been re-created in the spirit of "Hachäkyum theology" after *ma'ax* obtained definite superiority with *Hachäkyum* as the main god, which, on the basis of historic facts, cannot extend further than to the beginning of the 20th century. The myth emphasises the meeting of the gods and the "voluntary" retreat by *Mensäbäk*, which is, however, just a cleverly disguised image of *Hachäkyum's* power intervention and the enforcement of his superiority through the legitimisation of "his" true Sun. I believe that in this case the traditional material has apparently been re-created in order to legitimise the new theological arrangement

according to newly established religious subordination of the *k'ek'en* groups.

Another other kind of change can be observed in the myth about *Wan T'ut K'in*, especially in the version by Didier Boremanse (Boremanse, 1986: 163-168). The negative character – the false Sun – has some notable attributes. *Wan T'ut K'in* has a sombrero on his head, wears trousers and plays guitar. These attributes leave us in no doubt that they represent the signs of a white man or a mestizo, in any case a foreigner – a representative of the Hispanisation of the Maya culture. It is not by coincidence that it is the false Sun that takes over these attributes, thus expressing the attitudes of the Lacandon community towards the arrival of the Spaniards. The myth is thus communicated at the next level by means of signs, and the negative character is presented through the attributes of white men (I discovered a similar approach in at least two other Lacandon myths).⁴ The false (white) man is in direct opposition to the true – real (Lacandon) man. The new relationship – the new form of antagonism was updated and reflected in the story about two Suns.

4 I elaborated on this topic in my study: Lo verdadero versus lo falso. Estrategias para evitar conflictos socio-políticos en las comunidades lacandonas en Chiapas (Kováč, 2014).

Model for acceptance of new social facts

The external signs of the upgrade include the green blood of *Wan T'ut K'in*, which only appears in my version presumably because the whole scene was "upgraded" after watching the Hollywood movie *Predator*, so popular among the Lacandons. The extraterrestrial being moving within an environment resembling their rainforest was identified with the "demonio" *Wan T'ut K'in* (or with the god of death *Kisin* in other versions that I captured), due to which his blood had to be green, just like in the movie. This detail also highlights the way negative characters and their symbols are grouped in a single semantic chain, whatever gloomy sounds the fact that they also show the attributes of the representatives of Western civilisation.

Some more upgrades could be found in these myths at the structural level. The two selected models demonstrated that the myths about two Suns are not only a euhemeristic reflection of certain historic events, but rather document the fact that if important events happened (integration of clan groups, the arrival of white men), they necessarily had to be incorporated in the myths. Otherwise, the new social facts could not have been explained and accepted by the society. It is also essential into what myths they were

incorporated, i.e. which group of myths was updated through them. It is not the group of numerous Lacandon myths about animals or myths about gods or heroes, but the category of myths about fundamental antagonism between two implacable entities, of which the false one must lose. This is the model in which the Lacandons have set the different modalities of the domestic vs. foreign type to translate them into the contrast of true vs. false and to confirm, as a result of the tension, the authenticity and dominance of their social preferences.

The concept of the myth about two Suns was created in the past on the basis of the Mesoamerican kind of religious dualism (León-Portilla, 1979). No matter whether the original was the cosmos: the Sun and the Moon, the Sun and Venus, or whether it was primarily the opposition between the day and the night, life and death... What is much more important is the fact that this myth has seemingly, unlike many others which got lost in the abyss of time, survived until today, as it helps the present-day Maya to cope with everything that entered their world as "the other one".

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