

Cultural Hybridization and the Indo-European Expansion: The Tripartite/Quadripartite Ideology as a Manifestation of *Mestizaje*

C. Scott Littleton
Professor of Anthropology, Emeritus
Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA

Save for Iceland, which was unpopulated at the time the Norse arrived there in the late 9th century CE, the Indo-European diaspora did *not* occur in a demographic and cultural vacuum. Indeed, with the foregoing exception, *all* of the territories into which it intruded, both before and after 1500 CE, had long been occupied by human communities that were characterized by an extremely wide variety of languages and cultures. Drawing on the concept of *mestizaje*, as applied by anthropologists and others in the analysis of the cultural hybridization that has occurred in Mexico and other parts of Latin America in the course of the last four centuries as a result of the Spanish conquest, this paper looks at some examples of the same phenomenon in three ancient Indo-European speaking regions—India, Greece, and Scandinavia—and the extent to which each specific manifestation of the common tripartite/quadripartite Indo-European (IE) ideology was the result of cultural hybridization. I will conclude with a brief discussion of the extent to which Proto-Indo-European (PIE) culture itself was an example of *mestizaje*, and that the aforementioned ideology, that is, Dumézil's well-known three *fonctions*, "sovereignty," "force," and "fertility" (see, for example, Dumézil 1958; Littleton 1982), plus Allen's (1987) delineation of a fourth IE ideological function, which he characterizes as "otherness," was most likely the result of cultural hybridization in the Trans-Volga steppes, that is, arguably, in the PIE *Urheimat*.

However, before looking at these IE data, we need to address the concept of *mestizaje*, and see how it has been used in explaining the emergence of modern Mexican and other Latin American cultures.

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The Concept of *mestizaje*

First used in the early 19th century as part of the critique of Spanish colonialism (Alonso 2004:461), *mestizaje* came to refer to the cultural hybridization that began shortly after the Conquest in 1521. One of its earliest manifestations can be seen in Juan Diego's famous vision of the Virgin of Guadalupe a decade later in 1531. Juan Diego was an Indian who had been converted to Catholicism and conveniently "saw" his apparition at a site sacred to Tonantzin, an Aztec mother-goddess (Wolf 1958, Andersson 2001). The *padres*, many of whom, like Cortes himself, had come from the hardscrabble Extremadura region of Western Spain, immediately associated—if indeed they didn't arrange it in advance—Diego's vision with the 13th century vision of the Virgin near an Extremaduran town called Guadalupe.¹ But, as the well-known, dark-skinned image that supposedly appeared on Diego's cloak will attest, the New World version looked far more "Indian" than her European prototype, even though the latter image belonged to a fairly widespread category of Marian images known as "black Madonnas."² In any case, the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe emerged as the first "*mestiza*" image, a mixture of the dominant Spanish (her costume) and subordinate Aztec (her color and features, the location of the vision) heritages. Syncretisms of this sort are everywhere a hallmark of *mestizaje*.³

¹In 1252 a dark image of the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to an Extremaduran peasant living in the hills above the town of Guadalupe. The image was apparently based on one that appeared on a lost icon, dating perhaps from the 8th century CE, whose location the Virgin purportedly revealed. The Guadalupe church in which the icon was subsequently housed has long been an important pilgrimage site, especially for people living in the Extremadura, which, as we have seen, loomed large indeed in the Spanish conquest of Mexico three centuries later.

²Cf. Our Lady of Czestochowa in Poland.

³It might be argued that, at first glance, the concept of *mestizaje* bears a strong resemblance to Lévi-Strauss's (e.g., 1955) structural dialectic, in which myths are inevitably attempts to synthesize between opposites. However, there is a major difference. Lévi-Strauss's model does not depend upon any external impact, let alone a clear "us" as opposed to "them" dichotomy. There is no inherent disparity among the components, only oppositions. Thus, there is no implication that either Kadmos, who dominates nature by killing a dragon, or Oedipus, who, with his "swollen foot," is wholly embedded in it, necessarily come from distinct historical traditions. Indeed, according to Lévi-Strauss Oedipus himself plays both roles at different points in his career (e.g., killing

In the course of the next four centuries, as the two cultures melded, what eventually came to be called *mestizaje* has been perhaps the dominant theme in Mexican history. Indeed, both Benito Juarez and the leaders of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) made effective use of *mestizaje* in defining their positive conceptions of what Mexico had become: a cultural hybrid that had its own unique cultural identity.

Mestizaje is similar, although not identical to the concept of “cultural hybridity,” as defined by Bakhtin (1981). While the latter tends to refer to what Dean and Liebsohn (2003:6) call “the natural product of an ‘us’ meeting a ‘them,’” *mestizaje* carries the further implication of the creation of “an ‘us’ and a ‘them.’”

These two results of asymmetrical, sustained culture contact almost certainly occurred when the IE invaders encountered a “them.” However, in this paper I will be more concerned with the latter aspect, that is, the emergence of an IE “us” and an indigenous, post-conquest “them,” both of which reflect not only cultural hybridity per se, à la Bakhtin, but also *mestizaje*. And as we shall shortly see, the PIE “us” was, from the outset, almost certainly a reflection of these two closely linked cultural processes.

Mestizaje in Ancient India

Although the *Vedas*, and especially the *Rig Veda* are generally held to be intensely “Indo-European” and contain what appears to be a quintessential expression of Dumézil’s tripartite IE ideology (see below), these most ancient Indian hymnals clearly contain an “us” element, the Arya, and a subordinate “them” element: the indigenous and almost certainly Dravidian-speaking Dāsu, or the “People who Live by the Rivers,” that is, the Indus and the other major rivers of Northwest India. Indeed, the majority of the hymns of the *Rig Veda* are concerned, directly or indirectly, with the exploits of that most “Indo-European” of the ancient Indian deities, Indra, vis-à-vis the Dāsu and/or their creatures, such as Vṛtra, an evil serpent that “swallowed” the waters and thus thwarted the divine agenda until Indra smote him (*RV* 1.32). However,

the Sphinx and then marrying Jocasta). In Mexico, the two components that fused to become the Virgin of Guadalupe clearly derived from unequal “us” versus “them” sources.

upon closer inspection, Vṛtra is at once a manifestation of “us” and “them.” Although clearly an autochthonous figure who has counterparts elsewhere (see below), he is also the “chaplain” of the gods and thus, like Mitra and Varuṇa, is effectively an Asura. As “divine Brahmans,” the Asuras outrank the Devas, to which Vṛtra’s eventual slayer Indra belongs. In perhaps the *locus classicus* of the “three sins of the warrior” theme (Dumézil 1985:79-90), Indra, caught in a “Catch 22” situation, is punished for an act of “Brahmanacide,” despite the fact that his primary mission was to save the divine order from the depredations of the monster (*RV* 1.32.10-11). Vṛtra is thus a prime example of mythological Indian *mestizaje*; he is both an indigene and, at the same time, a reflection of the priestly caste of the culturally dominant but most probably numerically inferior Arya, a situation not unlike that of the IE-speaking Spanish soldiers and priests vis-à-vis the conquered Aztecs in 16th century Mexico.

This, of course, brings us to the Vedic and later Indian manifestations of ideological tripartition, which, as I have just indicated, is often held to the “template” or model of the IE ideology per se. This is where Dumézil himself began in his search for the common IE ideology (Dumézil 1930). However, here, too, there are clearly manifestations of both simple cultural hybridity and “us-them” *mestizaje*.

The classic manifestations of the tripartite IE ideology in the *Vedas* includes Mitra and Varuṇa, the prime manifestations of Aryan sovereignty; the aforementioned Indra—the war god *par excellence*—as the prime manifestation of force and the exercise of physical prowess; and the twin “horsemen,” or Aśvins, also called Nāsatya, plus the goddess Sarasvatī, as the divine incarnations of the mass of society, plant, animal, and human fertility, health, wealth, etc. As Dumézil began seeing parallels to this tripartite divine order, which so clearly reflected the fundamental social organization of Vedic and later India, that is the Brahman (priestly), Kṣatriya (warrior), and Vaiśya (herder-cultivator) castes, in other ancient IE-speaking societies, especially those of Italy and Scandinavia, as well as broadly analogous social structures, he concluded that it must have been an essential element in the common IE cultural heritage—one which persisted into the Middle Ages as the “Three Orders” (the *oratores*, *bellatores*, and *laboratores*, or clergy, nobility, and peasantry (Duby 1980; see also Batany

1963), and, as I once attempted to demonstrate (Littleton 1982:232), in the three branches of government in the United States, as delineated in its Constitution (the judicial, the executive, and the legislative branches).⁴

But in all of these manifestations of the theological and social tripartition, ancient and modern, including that of Vedic India, one can discern some clear manifestations of *mestizaje*. Even though the essence of the three Aryan *varna*, or castes, was probably part of the intellectual baggage that accompanied the Aryan invaders in the latter part of the 1st millennium BCE.⁵ In any case, by the time the hymns of the *Rig Veda* were composed ca. 1200 BCE an “us/them” pattern is apparent in the text. The “us,” of course, were the Arya, the dominant, Conquistador-like minority in Northern India, who were primarily reflected in the first two ideological functions. To be sure, the third *function*, the Vaiśya and their twin divine reflections, were also ostensibly “Arya” and have counterparts elsewhere in the ancient IE-speaking domain. But at the same time, it also reflects the conquered majority and especially those indigenes who had begun to be “Aryanized,” that is, the ones who were well on the way to becoming what the Mexicans would call *mestizos*.

This example of *mestizaje* becomes even clearer when we consider the *Mahābhārata*. Here, the prime epic manifestations of the third function, another pair of twins, Nākula and Sahadeva, are clearly described as having specific occupations, respectively, as a “keeper” of horses and a cowherd, both of which are lowly and appropriate to the subordinate, “*mestizo*” population. Such a concern for specific, menial occupations clearly reflects the pre-Aryan Indus Valley civilization, which, if the demographic evidence at Mohenjodaro is any indication, appears to be based in large measure on rigidly defined occupational groups (Piggott 1950:169-172). Moreover, the epic twins, although supernaturally fathered by the divine Aśvins, are specifically described as the offspring of

⁴It can also be seen in a residual form, I suspect, in the traditional make-up of the British Parliament: the Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal, and the Commons.

⁵That there was at least one incursion into North India by I-E-speaking Aryans in the middle of the 2nd millennium B.CE, despite some recent attempts to deny it by Kazanas (2002) and others in the pages of the *JIES* and elsewhere, is today well-nigh certain. For effective rebuttals of Kazanas’ arguments, see Mallory (2002) and Huld (2002).

their mortal father Pāndu's second wife, Mādrī, who may perhaps have been a "*mestiza*." She was a daughter of the king of Mādrī, whose brother Salyi ended up commanding the army of the Kauravas, the implacable enemies of Nākula and Sahadeva and their three elder brothers (the eldest, Yudiṣṭhira, who gambles away his throne; the noble warrior Arjuna⁶; and the club-wielding Bhīma), that is, the Pāndavas. Although the Pāndavas and the Kauravas were first cousins, there is nevertheless a pervasive "otherness" about the latter, even the honorable figures Bhīma and Drona, which suggests to me that they had far more "indigenous demon" roots, at least symbolically, than the sons of Pāndu, including Nākula and Sahadeva, despite their uncle's treachery and the possibility that that their mother was of mixed, "us-them" ethnicity. Indeed, the climactic battle of the epic, Kurukṣetra, pits the two elements in an eschatological conflict between good and evil, between order and chaos. And here Allen's (1987) concept of a fourth IE ideological function, "the Other," comes into focus. It is a function that surrounds, as it were, the tripartite hierarchy but is inherently distinct from it. Allen implies—correctly, I submit—that this fourth fundamental ideological element in the Indian and other ancient IE traditions began to manifest itself as the newcomers extended their sway over indigenous populations. The Kauravas and their allies are essentially outside the tripartite model, as even the third function representatives among the Pāndavas, the aforementioned Nākula and Sahadeva, are "good guys" and essentially part of "us."

As Allen (1987:36) points out, another prime example of the fourth function can be seen in the post-Vedic period, as classical Hinduism slowly began to take shape, when a fourth *varna*, or caste, the Śūdra, emerged, that is, the "outcastes" These "Others," who were believed—by the Brahmans—to descend from the aforementioned "indigenous "demons," are, I think, a clear sociological example of Allen's fourth function. Indeed, as a result of the emergence of the Śūdra *varna*, classical and later Vaiśya, initially in Northern India and eventually subcontinent-wide, became eligible to wear the sacred thread indicating membership in the Aryan community, as well as the fact that they are "twice-born" and thus

⁶For a comprehensive discussion and analysis of the I-E epic warrior figure, see Miller (2000).

inherently distinct from the indigenous “Others.”

However, at the same time, the previously mentioned pre-Aryan concern with specific occupation groups, or *jati*, became more and more important, cutting across the three (and later four) *varnas*. This is especially evident at the local or village level. In many regions of modern India, the local *jati* have effectively superseded the classical caste system. Not that the four “great tradition” *varna* are absent, especially at the Brahman and Kṣatriya levels. But within this broad “Great Tradition” framework specific *jati*, from blacksmiths to carpenters, from barbers to sweepers, loom extremely large in the local Hindu social organization and traditionally govern who marries whom, etc. (see, for example, Marriott 1960, Mandelbaum 1970, Maloney 1974). This is clearly an example of *mestizaje* in action. It is an “us-them” structure in that a major pre-Aryan pattern, the rigid segregation of occupational groups, as shown in the demography discovered at Mohenjo-daro, has melded with the intrusive IE concept of a tripartite social hierarchy, much as the traditional *municipio* system in rural Mexico is a mixture of Spanish legal and religious concepts and pre-Conquest Aztec (more properly Tenocha) social patterns based on what, in Nahautl, are called *calpulli*, that is, wards (or *barrios*, as the conquerors labeled them; Monzón 1949).

And just as the evolved social organization of rural India exhibits *mestizaje*, so do several of the major deities of classical and later Hinduism. The prime example here, of course, is Śiva, whose iconography clearly precedes the Aryan conquest (Wheeler, 1966:38) but who, along with the more IE (but still evolved) deities Brahma and Viṣṇu became elevated to the highest level of the classical Hindu pantheon. Another, I submit, is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of Viṣṇu’s so-called *avatars*, or “divine incarnations.” He becomes prominent fairly late in the evolution of post-Vedic Indian religion, coming into his own in the *Mahābhārata*, and especially in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, where he instructs the reluctant hero Arjuna as to where his duty lies. Although Kṛṣṇa is given a Vedic pedigree after the fact, as it were, his appeal would appear to stem from his association with the mass of the society, which had become thoroughly “*mestizo*” as by the late 1st millennium BCE, at least in North India. (I would go so far to speculate that there may well have been an “historic” prototype of Kṛṣṇa somewhere in the

vicinity of his traditional birthplace, Mathura, ca. 800 BCE, who managed to meld indigenous, Dravidian religious concepts, which probably included the transmigration of souls, with persisting Vedic—and, by definition, IE—conceptions of the divine. But this is well beyond the scope of this paper.)

Mestizaje in Ancient Greece

At about the same time, give or take a couple of centuries, that the Arya were pushing into the Indus Valley, far to the west of India another group of IE speakers, the Proto-Greeks, was moving into the Aegean area, and in so doing came into sustained contact with what Gimbutas (1974) called the “Old European” culture. Although polyglot and multicultural, as Gimbutas (1991) has demonstrated, the “Old Europeans” clearly shared an important trait in common: a strong emphasis on goddess worship (Dexter 1990). The best-known variant of this widespread cult was that practiced by the Minoans, the indigenous population of Crete and the nearby Cyclades. Moreover, its presence implies that women played a dynamic role not only in “Old European” religion (e.g., the famous Minoan “Snake Goddess”; see Caskey 1914, Witcombe, n.d.), but also, as the Knossos fresco showing animated, bare-breasted woman joining their men-folk in watching the Minoan bull-jumping ritual (see <http://kravcev9.tripod.com/arch2/id1.html>) clearly indicates, but in the life of the society per se. In fact, a good case can be made for the probability that Minoan and other “Old European” cultures were matrilineal (e.g., Barber and Barber 2004:141).

Unlike the cultures into which they intruded, the ancestors of the Mycenaeans and later Greek-speaking invaders, who pushed down from the Balkans and/or across the Aegean from Anatolia in the 2nd millennium B.CE, were heavily patriarchal across the board, that is, in both their social organization and religious beliefs. So were the ancient Arya. Indeed, if the aforementioned Vedic Indian variant of the tripartite ideology is in fact a model of the PIE original, female deities must have played a marginal role at best in the proto-Greek belief system and society.

But, as in India and Mexico, hybridization in Greece appears to have begun early on. As Finley (1970:20) observes, “To attempt to separate the newcomers from their

predecessors . . . is impossible.” While this may be an overstatement, the end result of the hybridization process is another example of an “us-them” *mestizaje*, one that permeated the emerging Greek culture. Nowhere, perhaps, is this better illustrated than in the persistence of a great many localized, pre-Greek goddess cults well into the classical era (Pausanias, that indefatigable 2nd century prototype of Thomas Cook, Baedeker, et al., furnishes numerous examples⁷). The most famous “localized” goddess-cult, which almost certainly reflected a huge “them” element, was, of course, the cult of Demeter and her nubile daughter Persephone that took shape at Eleusis, that is, the Eleusinian Mysteries, whose “Old European” emphasis on the female element in fertility and the importance of women, is a clear example of cultural hybridization, as the more “us”-oriented male population was originally barred from the ceremonies. At the same time, goddesses like Athena, Artemis, and Aphrodite, as well as Demeter, each expressing a great many “them” elements that reflect the pervasive importance of goddesses in Gimbutas’ “Old European” culture (see above), loom extremely large in ancient Greek religion per se.

At the epic level, one cannot help but note that Penelope, not her husband Odysseus or her son Telemachus, was the key to the throne of Ithaca, and was therefore the object of the suitors whom Odysseus and his son eventually dispatch. This is a clear persistence of this pre-Greek positive attitude toward women, if not genuine matriliney (Atchity and Barber 1987). And the fact that Clytemnestra could even contemplate regicide, let alone accomplish it, is also redolent of the earlier “them” element in the mix.⁸

Cultural hybridization is also very much present in the Greek manifestation of the tripartite ideology. Some years ago, in a paper entitled “The Problem That Was Greece” (Littleton 1980), I addressed this matter in some detail, so I won’t rehash it here, save to point out that it is among the secondary divine figures that this ideology appears most

⁷For an excellent anthology of essays on Pausanias, see Alcock, et al. (2001).

⁸My good friend and longtime colleague, Elizabeth “Betchen” Barber, in a casual conversation on this subject, once remarked on the irony of otherwise secluded Greek women like Clytemnestra “tiptoeing” out of the palace harem to murder their husbands! See Atchity and Barber (1987), Barber and Barber (2005:140-142).

clearly.⁹ Examples can be seen in Herakles and Ares, and specific narratives, such as that surrounding the trifunctional nature of the otherwise “*mestiza*” goddess Athena, the roles played by her and the other two “*mestiza*” goddesses in the “Judgment of Paris” episode (Dumézil 1953), and the “war between the functions” theme. As I have suggested elsewhere (Littleton 1970a), is the overarching narrative of Homer’s *Iliad*, where Agamemnon, Nestor, Achilles, and the rest of the Greeks reflect the first two functions, while Hector, Paris, Helen (who has strong Dioscuric connections) and the Trojans reflect the third function.¹⁰ We will return to this most important IE theme shortly.

In any case, why the principal Greek deities do not clearly reflect the tripartite ideology involves more than the result of *mestizaje*. Unlike the situation in post-Conquest Mexico and early Aryan India, the proto-Greeks were profoundly influenced by more ancient and sophisticated *neighboring* civilizations, such as those of Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Anatolia, that were well outside the immediate “us-them” framework that surfaced early on in the Aegean region. To be sure, the later Greeks did develop an ethnocentric “us” is better than “them” attitude toward the simpler peoples they contemptuously referred to as *barbaroi*, but for the most part these lived well outside the primary zone of Greek settlement. But the Egyptians, Phoenicians, et al., were *not* conceived as

⁹The first to suggest this was Puhvel (1980); the unpublished ms. of his essay was the catalyst for my 1980 paper on this subject.

¹⁰As Ward (1968) and Baldick (1994) have shown, there is another meta-narrative in the *Iliad*, one that appears to be I-E, but is only tangentially related to the tripartite/quadripartite ideology: the “abducted bride theme,” which also appears in the ancient Indian *Ramāyana* and the Middle-High-German *Kurdrun Saga*. In it, a husband (Menelaus, Rama, and Herwig) successfully rescues his abducted bride (Helen, Sitā, Kurdrun) from the clutches of a demonic — or at least less than honorable — prince or ruler (Paris, Ravanna, Hartmut of Normandy), who is the embodiment of the fourth function, that is, prime manifestations of “otherness.” The husband is helped in this endeavor by his brother or brother-in-law (Agamemnon, Lakasmana, and Ortwein [Kurdrun’s brother]). Moreover, in two of the three versions, the rescuers are helped by a champion who leads a mighty war-band (Achilles and the Myrmidons, Hanuman and his monkeys). This theme cuts across the ideology, as the prime representative of the first function in the “war between the functions” aspect, Agamemnon, becomes, together with his twin brother Menelaus, what amounts to a representative of the third function, in the abducted bride aspect. It is another example of functional “slippage” in the Greek tradition (see below).

barbaroi, and their cultures, and especially their religious ideas, were drawn upon liberally. For example, the goddess Aphrodite was thus both a “*Mestiza*,” incorporating elements of the indigenous Aegean goddess worship, and, in a great many other respects, including her name, a Hellenized variant of Astarte and other similarly named West Semitic fertility goddesses.

This impact was, of course, not exclusively limited to the Greek goddesses; many of the major gods also reflect neighboring Near Eastern traits. For example, Zeus’s role as both the chief deity and the incarnation of weather, especially inclement weather, recalls the roles of Enlil, Marduk, and the Hittite god Teshub in their respective pantheons. Prometheus shares much in common, thematically, with the Biblical figure Lucifer; both defy their respective divine rulers in attempts to convey forbidden knowledge, respectively fire and self-awareness, to human beings and are subsequently punished for doing so. Apollo, especially in his solar aspect, exhibits traits associated with Near Eastern sun gods, and Adonis is etymologically related to the same Semitic root that produced Hebrew *Adonai*.

Indeed, the very origin of the Greek pantheon, as described by Hesiod and others, et al., is based on the Near Eastern/Anatolian “Kingship in Heaven” theme, in which three (or in some cases four) generations of divine beings successively usurp the divine kingship (Littleton 1970b). Thus, the sequence Ouranos-to-Kronos-to-Zeus is *not* IE but rather rooted in what I now strongly suspect was a Hurrian myth that spread widely across Anatolia and the Near East. It was adopted by the IE-speaking Hittites, and from the latter, and/or their successors, eventually reached the Greece (or at least the Ionian coast) sometime in the early 1st millennium B.C.E.

To be sure, the foregoing example of cultural hybridization is *not* in itself example of *mestizaje*, but rather of diffusion and reintegration. But it came to affect the course of *mestizaje* in Greece, especially during the Archaic and Classical eras.

I should add here that this Near Eastern impact is probably the primary reason why the fully evolved ancient Greek pantheon does not clearly reflect the tripartite ideology (see above), and why the functions have blurred—indeed, have “slipped downward,” as it were (Littleton 1980:146-

147)—so that Zeus has become a warlike, Near Eastern-type weather god (cf. Enlil, Teshub, et al.), as well as the sovereign deity,¹¹ and has effectively filled the second function slot, or at least the “lighter” aspect thereof (cf. Puhvel 1983:xiii) occupied by Indra in the Vedic tradition and Mars in that of ancient Rome. This left but one divine representative of the second function, the “dark” warrior deity Ares, who was clearly a secondary deity as far as the Greeks were concerned. The third function, which, as we have seen in the foregoing discussion of the Indian evidence, has clear *mestizaje* aspects, was represented by the *Dioscouri*, that is, the divine twins Kastor and Polydeukes. Although associated with elements that are, at the same time, more redolent of “them” than “us,” the *Dioscouroi* are paradoxically among the most “Indo-European” of the fully evolved members of the Greek pantheon and have clear functional counterparts in the Vedic Āsvins (or Nāsatya) (Littleton 1980:146-147). We shall return to this paradox shortly.

Mestizaje in Ancient Scandinavia.

Unlike the Greek tradition, Old Norse/Eddic mythology has provided one of the three anchors in Dumézil’s tripartite model, the others being the early Indic and the Roman. As in the Indian variant, the functional slots are almost all filled by distinct deities, at least at first glance: Odin and Tyr reflect, respectively, the magical and juridical aspects of sovereignty, that is, the “dark” and “light” elements thereof; Thor reflects the second function as a whole, although he does subsume both its “dark” and “light” aspects, that is, the recalcitrant, hammer-throwing, giant-bashing, Vāyu/Ares-like aspect as well as the more peaceful, fertility-oriented aspects as reflected, for example, in the Roman concept of the “agricultural Mars”; while the father-and-son pair, Njorðr and Freyr, together with

¹¹Another factor that appears to have affected the tripartite I-E component in the Greek pantheon was the collapse of the Santorini (or Thira) volcano ca. 1500 B.CE, which spread highly destructive tsunamis throughout the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean. This event seems to have elevated Poseidon, heretofore a relatively minor source-of-waters god (Littleton 1973), to the mighty “earth shaker from the sea,” that is, the source of the “rivers from the sea,” or tsunamis, that inundated Crete and parts of the mainland, to prominence in the pantheon. Indeed, no myth within the inherited I-E tradition could explain the calamity. For a discussion of this matter, see Littleton (1980:153).

the latter's sister Freyja, reflect the third function. What's more, all three deities belong to a distinct—and lesser—class of gods known as the Vanir, who, as we shall see, were conquered by the more powerful Aesir deities, the leading examples of which are the aforementioned Odin, Tyr, and Thor. (Like Ares in the Greek tradition, the Vanir, although fairly important in their own right, are clearly secondary figures in the overall divine scheme of things in ancient Scandinavia.)

The fertility (and social) aspects of the Thor cult,¹² which persisted well into the post-Christian era in Iceland and elsewhere in Scandinavia, are probably an example of *mestizaje*. As Davidson (1964:84) points out, "There was an undoubted link between Thor as the thunder god and the fertility of the earth, on which the lightning strikes and the rain fall, causing increase." She goes on to suggest (*ibid.*) that Thor's wife Sif, with her corn-like golden tresses, was probably a reflection of "an ancient fertility goddess," to which I would add that the ancient goddess in question was in all probability a pre-Germanic deity, and that Sif, as well as her divine husband, was a product of *mestizaje*.

More recently, Davidson (1998) has traced the evolution of what she calls the "northern goddesses" from Paleolithic female hunting deities to goddesses who, in later eras, were associated with animal husbandry, agricultural pursuits, and domestic activities. As in Greece, many of these goddesses long predate the arrival of IE speakers, and, like the cults of their "Old European" counterparts in Greece, their worship seems to have persisted at the local level until the end of the pagan period, or perhaps longer. And also as in Greece, elements of this *mestizaje* were present in the make-up of the more prominent Norse goddess, such as Frigg, Freyja, and Sif, all of whom had strong associations with plant, animal, and human fertility.

In short, these deities were at once reflections of "us," that is, the Germanic-speaking invaders—Thor was by all odds the most prominent son of the chief Norse god Odin (by Jord¹³), and, as a lightning-bolt hurler, had a host of IE

¹²For discussions of Thor and his cult, see Davidson (1964:73-88) and Puhvel (1989:201-204).

¹³Jord (or Gurd), who gave birth to Thor and whose name literally means "Earth," is frequently identified with Frigg. However, Jord originally seems to

counterparts elsewhere, from Indra to Zeus—and of “them,” that is, the indigenous, pre-IE population of Scandinavia ca. 2000 BCE.¹⁴

The Germanic conquest of northern Europe—which Snorri Sturluson, in his euhemeristic prologue to the *Prose Edda*, egregiously attributes to refugee Trojans¹⁵ (Young 1954:25) —is reflected in a variety of mythological contexts, from the primordial battle pitting Odin and his siblings against the autochthonous Frost Giants (Ymir, et al.) to the conflict between the Aesir and the Vanir, which the Aesir won handily, then incorporating their erstwhile third-function foes into a single divine order. Dumézil held, rightly so, in my opinion, that narratives relating to a war between representatives of the first two functions and the third, was part of the common IE ideological legacy, as it is also surfaces in the Roman pseudo-historical account of the Sabine War and, as we have just seen,

have had a separate identity—and one that is redolent of the indigenous culture; she is sometimes described as the granddaughter of a giant named Nervi. She was thus probably yet another hybridized, or “*mestiza*” goddess (see above), and this would reinforce her son Thor’s “*mestizo*” aspects and ergo his mass appeal. See Reaves, n.d.

¹⁴It can reasonably be suggested that one major element of this pre-IE population was almost certainly Finno-Ugrian, and that its speakers were probably the source of the non-I-E umlauting that became characteristic of the dialects spoken by many (but by no means all; Gothic was a major exception, as was Old Saxon) ancient Germanic speakers; this was (and still is) especially evident among the North Germanic speakers. As in analogous linguistic cases elsewhere—such as the clicks of the offspring of San women and Bantu men in 18th century southern Africa, which soon became a distinguishing feature of Southern Bantu; the “de” for “the” among the offspring of marriages among elite Dutch women and their English speaking counterparts in late 17th century New York, which persists to this day in the unique New York variant of American English; and white American offspring of well-to-do planters in Virginia, the Carolinas, and elsewhere in the antebellum South, who learned their native English from their West African slave nannies, and as a result came to mimic the women’s emphasis on bilabial consonants and heavily rounded vowels, which ultimately became the basis for the basic white American (as well as black) American Southern dialect—the conquering Germanic males brought conquered (or enslaved) Finno-Ugrian females into their households. As in the cases just mentioned, the speech of the offspring of these unions was heavily colored by the accents of their mothers, who, of course, were not native speakers of their husbands’—or rapists’, as the case may be—native language. This, of course, is well beyond the scope of this paper. However, I hope to explore it in more detail in the near future.

¹⁵E.g., “Trór,” a presumed grandson of King Priam, became in Snorri’s eyes the source of the divine name Thor.

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in Homer's *Iliad*. However, when it comes to the IE invasions, including the Germanic conquest of Northern Europe, there is more to it than that.

For many years, Dumézil engaged in a running debate, first with Hermann Güntert (1934) and subsequently with E. A. Philipsson (1953:19), over the nature of the Aesir-Vanir conflict (see Dumézil 1973:11-12). Güntert and Philipsson held that it reflected the Germanic subjugation of the settled, agricultural people of what later became the Germanic domain. The Vanir were thus the vanquished indigenes, the "them" to the IE "us." And the eventual cultural hybridization between these two unequal partners over previous two-plus millennia resulted in the Old Norse culture of the 12th and 13th centuries CE that produced the *Eddas* and sagas from which our knowledge of Germanic mythology is primarily derived. Once again, it is possible to discern *mestizaje*; Vanir deities such as Njorðr, Freyr, and Freyja were hybrid figures, in much the same way Juan Diego's Virgin of Guadalupe was a hybrid *mestiza* reflecting both Tonatzin and the Virgin, who was reputed to have appeared in the Extremadura in the 13th century. Their cult appears to have been thoroughly hybridized and to have emphasized fertility, both human and otherwise; it differed markedly from those devoted to Odin and Tyr. (As we have just seen, although Thor was a son of Odin (by Jord or Gurd) and thus very much a member of the Aesir, he was also "infected" with aspects of "them" and is yet another example of Scandinavian *mestizaje*.)

But as we indicated, Dumézil was also right. The war-between-the-functions theme, or "war of foundation," as he was wont to call it, wherever it appears, is at once an historical account of an IE invasion *and* an integral element of the common IE ideology that took shape in the *Urheimat*. And this brings us to the final section of this paper: the extent to which PIE culture itself, and especially its theology, was an example of *mestizaje*.¹⁶

¹⁶There is yet another possible dimension here. Several scholars, among them John Colarusso (personal communication), have recently suggested that there may have been an Alanic (that is, North Iranian) impact on southern Scandinavia in the latter centuries of the 1st millennium B.CE, and that the label "Aesir" comes from "As," an alternate ethnonym used by the ancient Alans (cf. the Sea of Azov, or the "Alan Sea"). The modern ethnonym Ossete (or Ossetian) is related to this label. If this is correct, and a contingent of ancient Alans did migrate to southern Sweden (in medieval times the region

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Some years ago, I speculated that the PIE culture may have resulted from the conquest, ca. 4-5000 B.C.E, of a simple, Neolithic steppe people who practiced mixed farming, that is, both agriculture and animal husbandry, by an even simpler, albeit much more warlike nomadic people who were either hunters and gatherers or herders, whose society possessed a clearly defined class of shamans as well as fielding a powerful warband (Littleton 1982:13). To be sure, there is no clear-cut archaeological or linguistic evidence to support this speculation.¹⁷ But in light of what has been discussed in this paper, it does help to make sense out of a number of things, including the roots of the “war of foundation.” Indeed, I am not the first to suggest that the Proto-Indo-Europeans may have been cultural and/or linguistic hybrids. Many years ago Trubetzkoy (1939) attempted to demonstrate that the PIE language was an amalgamation of several otherwise wholly distinct languages and that it served as a “bridge” between the Caucasian languages (Proto-Kartvelian, etc.) to the south and Proto-Finno-Ugrian to the north. While few if any modern linguists give much credence to this theory, it cannot, in my opinion, be totally ruled out.

In any case, if there is anything to my speculation, there should be discernable elements of *mestizaje* in PIE culture, to the extent that we are able to reconstruct it. As I’ve indicated, a key example here could be the war between the functions, which was almost certainly part of the PIE tradition and diffused, together with other aspects of the common ideology, that is, the three “inside” or “us” (at least at the time the migrations began) functions and the fourth, or “other” function, from Northern Europe to India. Although the war theme did not survive intact everywhere, in those areas where

was sometimes referred to as “Scythia Minor”), there would have been yet another level of *mestizaje* among the North Germanic speakers. It would also help explain some of the differences among the continental Germans, who lacked the Aesir-Vanir distinction, or myths about a war between two analogous sets of deities, and their northern linguistic cousins. However, I should emphasize that there is as yet no hard archaeological evidence that would support this assumption.

¹⁷For a comprehensive—and definitive!—overview of the archaeological evidence for the nature and location of PIE culture, see Mallory 1989. See also Day (2001).

it did—Greece, Rome, Scandinavia—it seems to have become a *template* for explaining the triumph of the invaders over the invaded. Thus, the Trojans, the prototypes of the Vanir, and, at Rome, the Sabines, were perhaps historical peoples who, after the fact, became identified in myth, saga, and pseudo-history with the hypothetical steppe agriculturalists who, millennia earlier, were conquered and then integrated into what we think of as PIE culture.

Finally, let me emphasize that the ideas expressed in this paper are still exploratory. Obviously, there are far more examples that could be cited. However, I do suggest that the presence of cultural hybridism and *mestizaje* in the three IE traditions considered here is very real, and that a more detailed analysis of both these traditions and the IE corpus as whole would bring to light a host of further examples.

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