

Shamanism and Hegemony: A Gramscian Approach to the Chavin Staff God

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Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.

Karl Marx

The art of the past no longer exists as it once did. Its authority is lost. In its place there is a language of images. What matters is who uses that language and for what purpose.

John Berger

Around 500 BC a staff-bearing feline anthropomorph arrives on the archaeological terrain at Chavin de Huanter, an Early Horizon ceremonial site located in the central Andes and type site for the Chavin Horizon. Designated the Staff God, this icon is found on ceramics, textiles, and sculpture throughout lowland, highland, and coastal zones. Its diffusion over such a vast area is generally attributed to a peaceful feline cult whose rituals centered on the shaman's transformation into an animal spirit. Early theories that the Staff God was this cult's *supreme* or *chief deity* whose staffs balanced the universe and whose rituals helped to unify diverse peoples around shared beliefs and practices continue to appear in Chavin studies (Rowe 1967:86, 1992:196, 199). Lacking evidence of large-scale warfare and fortifications, Andeanists describe the Staff God's rituals as noncoercive and its culture as a harmonious and tranquil one. This emphasis on the Chavin as a religious polity and not a political one, which was pioneered in the 1940's, continues to inform interpretations of Chavin rituals and iconography (Rowe 1967:86, Lumbreras 1974:70, Moseley 1992:159, Burger and Miller 1988:111, Willey 1948:10,15, in Keatinge 1988).

Ritual studies scholars, however, challenge traditional structural-functional theories that separate religious and political practices. For many, religious rituals are nuanced political practices that socialize individuals to arbitrary social orders. Ritual studies scholars address the noncoercive and indirect nature of power. They define power as organized behavior that indirectly influences actions (Michel Foucault); as

"what can be said and thought, a people's reality by which every social order naturalizes its arbitrariness," as masquerading as something not normally associated with force such as religious rituals and other public ceremonies (Pierre Bourdieu) (in Bell 1992:199). For Antonio Gramsci, power is maintained not by force or by monopolizing the modes of production, but "through a subtle process of winning the consent of all other groups to its ideology" (Salamini 1981:35). In his theory of historical processes, religious traditions and specialists play vital roles in helping individuals to emotionally accept a dominating ideology and its social inequities and economic practices. These definitions of power indicate a need for new theories of religious ritual and iconography that address underlying political motivations. Whereas the spread of the Chavin Staff God icon is generally attributed to diverse peoples embracing a noncoercive feline cult, Gramsci attributes the diffusion of any standardized image or ideology to a political strategy whose aim is to gain support for a new set of beliefs that are tied to the new social order. Vital to this process is an intellectual class, which is drawn from a variety of sources including religious and charged with articulating and diffusing this new ideology throughout all levels of society. Gramsci views religious traditions as legitimizing the social practices of former hegemonies. For Gramsci, human activity is "always imbedded in and an expression of a given conception of the world" (Salamini 1981:34). This ideology, moreover, is expressed materially throughout a society in social relationships, institutions, production practices, monumental buildings and other symbols of the social order. Central to Gramscian theory is that this standardized belief system explains collective social behaviors and causes historical change, not mechanistic economic forces as proposed by Marx. According to his analysis of European historical changes, the diffusion of any standardized ideology is the product of ideological, economic, and political phases that are designed to gain compliance for inequities. As each of these phases involves social behaviors that should be evident in the archaeological record, Gramscian theory offers a cohesive approach for conjecturing the Chavin Staff God's meanings that are ignored or minimized in Chavin studies. This paper tests Gramsci's theory of the hegemonic process by examining how the archaeological record at Chavin de Huantar and ethnographic and ethnohistoric texts on South Amerindian shamanic rituals support viewing the Chavin Staff God as a protagonist in a dynamic political drama.

Although ritual studies scholars define *ritual* in various ways, this paper limits its meaning to staged performances that draw on texts and images found in the dominating lineage's origin myths, which are repeated throughout a society. Comparative studies of the South Amerindian shamanic tradition demonstrate that these creation myths both encode indigenous ideology and explain cultural behaviors (Sullivan 1988: 17). Consequently, they provide an invaluable source of emic beliefs that can help in the process of reconstructing prehistoric social life.

In Gramscian theory, before a group can dominate politically it must first demonstrate moral and intellectual leadership by projecting the concept of shared ideas and values (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:66, 67). Moral authority is gained in the first ideological phase of the hegemonic process, in which the dominating group affirms and aligns itself with traditions that are rooted in historical sources such as religion and folklore. For Gramsci, these traditions are the source of powerful feelings that encode a homogenized ideology that sanctioned the social, political and economic practices of former dominating groups. The truth of this history, however, "resides in political praxis of the present" (Salamini 1981:74), or in how the past is presented in accordance with the dominating group's interests. In the succeeding economic phase, the dominating group transforms the modes of production, which creates shifts from traditional economic practices to new ones. The success of this phase resides in the perception of shared economic interests and the belief that any sign of prosperity is due to the prestige of the dominating group. In the final political phase, the group distinguishes itself from its rivals by disseminating and enforcing its new ideology about the world and the dominating class. Gramsci's critical analysis of the vital political role religions and religious practitioners have played in this process by both legitimizing or opposing hegemony is considered a major contribution to political theory (Salamini 1981). Full hegemony or political dominance is achieved when individuals throughout the society internalize this new concept of shared destiny and values and believe that their labor serves the common good.

Central to Gramsci's concept of hegemony is the diffusion of a new, unifying ideology. G. Williams explains Gramscian *hegemony* as the following:

...an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations. (in Salamini 1981:136)

For Gramsci, social cohesion is achieved through this diffusion of shared values and concepts about reality. Whereas structural-functional views of the Chavin Staff God's rituals assume a coherent set of shared beliefs and a consensus of ideology (Burger 1992), Gramsci believes ideology is neither cohesive nor culturally shared. Rather, each social class possesses its own ideology, which is represented as "a mosaic of inchoate notions about the moral and social order that is historically rooted in sources like religion and folklore" (Salamini 1981:74). Everything depends, however, on how this ideology is conceived and embodied in institutions, public works and power relationships throughout the system (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:67). For Gramsci, "social reality is essentially political reality" (Salamini 1981:73). The

premise of this paper is that a diffused Staff God icon represents a hegemonic process. Consequently, if multi-generations of elite groups that directed temple activities at Chavin de Huantar were involved in proclaiming its moral leadership in an ideological phase, the Staff God icon should be associated with ample imagery that could be traced to earlier periods.

Andeanists confirm that the walled temple complex of Chavin de Huantar was the product of hundreds of years of building programs that integrated architectural features and iconography that are traced to earlier Preceramic and Initial Period sites.¹ Chavin de Huantar is dominated by two platform pyramids, the Old Temple and the New Temple or Castillo, which are associated with subterranean chambers and duct systems, sunken pits and courtyards (Fig. 1). Founded around 1000 BC, the Old Temple's U-shape design; eastern orientation; pyramids with summit shrines; central sunken pits with hearths, vents, and niches; and ensemble of shamanic imagery that includes felines, reptiles, raptors, disembodied heads, and feline anthropomorphs all have documented earlier sources (Burger 1992:128-143). The Old Temple's central subterranean chamber, whose walls have been established by Rick's research as the oldest walls at Chavin de Huantar, still houses the free-standing stela that Andeanists have designated as the Lanzon oracle figure (personal communication, Hastorf) (Fig. 2). Built hundreds of years later, The New Temple integrates and expands Old Temple zoomorphic and anthropomorphic imagery and architectural features. The central passageway of the New Temple that leads directly to the chamber housing the Lanzon stela symbolizes an undeniable link to the past and its traditional beliefs and practices.

The imagery that is associated with this Lanzon icon integrates a cluster of shamanic imagery that has earlier sources. Its feline anthropomorphic form with reptile or raptor details is similar to the Kuntar Wasi stela that was found standing in a windowless, enclosed chamber of a highland ceremonial site that predates Chavin de Huantar (Burger 1992:105). John Rowe's (1967:84-85) theory that this Lanzon figure was the *supreme* or *chief* deity of the Old Temple period whose power was eclipsed by the icon he named the Staff God appears generally accepted in Chavin studies (Burger 1992: 149, 177). This interpretation of succession is based primarily on the size and quality of craftsmanship of one large sculpture that depicts feline anthropomorphs carrying staffs, which is named the Raimondi Stone and which was not excavated *in situ* (Rowe 1967:82). Another front-faced feline anthropomorph, which was excavated standing in front of a small courtyard in front of the New Temple and named the Smiling God, is similar to the Raimondi Stela; however, it clasps Spondylus and Strombus shells against its chest (Figs. 3 & 4). Similar front-

¹ Dates for the building sequence at Chavin de Huantar are currently being challenged by John Rick's 1998 research at the site. Since new dates have not yet been published, this paper uses those established by Richard Burger that are generally accepted in Chavin studies.

faced supernaturals that were painted on textiles that were excavated at coeval coastal Paracas sites are used as evidence of the diffusion of the Chavin cult (Fig. 5). Antecedents for the Staff God icon are believed to be feline anthropomorphic figures portrayed carrying clubs that are found in Initial Period sites such as Serro Cechin (Moseley 1992).

The similarities between the Lanzon and Staff God figures demonstrate multi-generations of temple elite that were concerned with maintaining traditional styles of iconic representation. Each figure has a feline head with reptile details, a wide fanged mouth-band, and dramatically treated eyes; each has a human torso with limbs ending in claws or talons. Each wears a decorated tunic. Only their facial expressions, power emblems, and poses differ. The Lanzon appears as if it is captured in a freeze-frame of an activity, whereas the Staff God appears poised and balanced. The Lanzon's right arm is raised to ear-level and its left is lowered. Both hands are empty. The striking physical resemblance between the Lanzon and Staff God indicates that they were intended to be perceived as the same immutable figure of a single ideological and cultural tradition. In addition, such a preponderance of traditional features at Chavin de Huantar suggests the Staff God's religion was an adaptation of a viable religious system rather than a new and alien one, as proposed by some Andeanists (Burger 1992:192).

Whereas antecedents at Chavin de Huantar indicate an ideological phase, the shamanic beliefs encoding the Staff God must be inferred from ethnographic and ethnohistoric texts on South Amerindian shamanism. Functional-structural interpretations that limit meaning to positive attributes, which are found throughout Chavin studies, do not explain why individuals participated in the Chavin system or how the Staff God's ideology influenced the changes that have left archaeological imprints. These idealizing theories of indigenous religious beliefs and rituals are faulted by some ethnographers of shamanism for not only ignoring socio-political contexts, but for abstracting religious figures from the creation myth narratives where their roles are described as equivocal and contentious (Urton 1985:4; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975; Hill 1988:2). Indigenous ideology is encoded in these myths that describe a succession of creations and destructions and are remarkably similar throughout South Amerindian societies (Sullivan 1988:23). A brief summary of Lawrence Sullivan's (1988: 24-75) synthesis of this creation myth cycle follows in order to illuminate indigenous ideology and the roles staff-bearing feline anthropomorphs play.

Indigenous cosmologies involve a series of creations and destructions. The first stage of existence is created out of chaos by a primordial god or goddess. During this stage, the proto-animals (supernatural felines, raptors, and reptiles) and the proto-shaman are created. The primordial deity, however, destroys this primordium (including the proto-shaman and proto-animals) because of internal fighting and

disobedience, and withdraws to a far corner of the cosmos. In the second stage of creation, the ancestors, and approximations of the primordial animal supernaturals and the shaman emerge (generally from waterways located under mountains). They battle each other for supremacy and journey to predetermined territories where they establish order and culture. The succeeding human age repeats this motif of creation, internal conflict, disobedience and potential destruction; the myth cycle concludes with the possibility of the soul's resurrection in the last stage of creation. Some themes in this myth cycle are the destruction of order through internal conflict, the inevitability of change and cultural transformation, and the shaman's function as a redemptive figure.

Referring the to the Lanzon or Staff God as *supreme* or *chief* deity is not supported by the creation myth cycle or comparative shamanic studies. The concept of supreme being is generally limited to the creator deity who withdraws after initiating existence. Sullivan writes,

The supreme being is not the kind of divinity most frequently met with in South American myth; nor are supreme beings the divinities most regularly celebrated in ritual. In fact, there are many societies that either maintain no tradition of belief in a supreme being or have adapted (or even adopted) their beliefs in a supreme being only in response to contact with historical monotheism. (1988:31)

The primordial creator's role in creating the cosmos, however, is suggested indirectly by other supernaturally-charged animate or inanimate objects such as the sun, the color gold, gourds, crystals, a musical instrument, or the shaman and his/her interchangeable animal supernatural forms. All these symbols of the creator deity are found throughout Chavin de Huantar, suggesting similar iconographic practices and ideology.

The Lanzon and Staff God have irrefutable shamanic characteristics. The shaman's *raison d'etre* is to metamorphose into any one of the feline, raptor, or reptile animal spirits that is represented on the icons (but most frequently the feline), and journey to the celestial or chthonic/underworld realms where it communicates with the spirits. The shaman's return with prophecies and demand for tribute in return for spiritual clemency is believed to restore order by offering individual and cultural redemption. The Lanzon's pose is suggestive of a shaman in a drug-induced trance. Its Kuntar Wasi antecedent, which is also a feline-anthropomorph with raptor or reptile details, is portrayed with mucous strands streaming from its nose that are known to be symptomatic of ingesting a lowland drug to induce a shamanic trance. The coils beneath the Lanzon's feet are described in creation myths as vine ropes connecting the earthly and spiritual realms and guiding the shaman's journey (Hugh-Jones 1994:68; Sullivan 1988:410-411). Similar vines are found on winged

anthropomorphs with feline and raptor details on another principle Chavin sculpture, the Cayman stela, which suggest the shaman's transformation into a raptor and celestial journey. The Staff God, however, appears static and balanced. The physical resemblance between a shaman figure and these two principle icons, in addition to their association at Chavin de Huanter with items that are known to comprise the shaman's toolkit, such as gourds, snuff spoons, rattles, the color yellow, and quartz support calling the Lanzon and Staff God shamans. Similar staff-carrying feline anthropomorphs in Moche state iconography are interpreted as shamans who were connected to secular and religious activities (Donnan 1976:135). This paper uses the name Shaman/Staff God to highlight the shaman's well-documented political and economic roles within South Amerindian societies.

Generally ignored in discussions of Chavin ideology or social system, the shaman is central to understanding indigenous ideology and cultural behavior. As a religious figure who helps to socialize individuals to inequities, the shaman is also a potent political figure. The mythic shaman appears during each stage of creation and is believed to be the only human link to the primordial creator and to the first creation before the existence of suffering. The human shaman is believed to be an approximation of this primordial figure that was destroyed by the creator deity. Ethnographic and ethnohistoric examples confirm that the first stage of creation continues to be evoked in all indigenous cultural practices, such as those involving political succession, warfare, agriculture, building a house, creating a weaving, or rituals that mark the agricultural or human life cycle (Sullivan 1988:17).

Ethnographers of the South Amerindian shamanic tradition confirm that the human shaman is a potent indigenous figure imbued with enormous power that serves the status quo (Sullivan 1988, Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975). The creation myths of even relatively egalitarian societies encode social hierarchy. Power relationships are symbolized by descriptions of which group emerges first to transform social disorder into harmony, and which group receives the emblems of power from the primordial or supreme deity. In one version of the Inka creation myth, for example, the Inka ancestors emerge first on the Anaconda canoe and are followed by three shaman and all other subordinated groups. Before their journey, however, the Inka were given the *suntur paucar* (staff) and mace by the creator God, which symbolized their divinely acquired power and territorial rights and their distinction from rival ethnic groups (Molina 1943:11 in Sherbondy 1992:55). As witness to cosmic events and divinely-sanctioned social orderings, the shaman affirms the dominating group's sacred power and is charged with keeping its sacred symbols of power safe from rivals. In addition, the shaman validates a viable economic system that is based on reciprocity principles, which involve exchanging goods or labor for spiritual clemency. This religio-economic system is indicated at Chavin de Huanter by the rich *tribute* items that were found carefully classified and stored in the Gallery of *Offerings* and characterized Inka administrative practices.

According to Gramsci's analysis of the mechanism for social change, a group can lead but not dominate politically until it establishes an economic phase (Salamini 1981:57-58). During this stage, the dominating group develops new modes of production that necessitate the abandonment of some but not all traditional economic practices. In Gramscian theory, all individuals are associated with a form of economic behavior that is determined by the belief system. During this economic phase a form of class consciousness emerges that involves groups perceiving themselves to be corporate entities linked to the economic interests of the dominating group (Salamini 1981:57). This perception of common economic interests is viewed as the mechanism for cultural change. If an economic phase were initiated at Chavin de Huantar, the Shaman/Staff God should be associated with shifts in modes of production.

The Shaman/Staff God's appearance coincides with "striking economic and social differences" (Moseley 1992; Burger 1992:171). These changes are attributed to revolutions in metallurgy and textile technologies, intensification of agricultural practices, increased stratification, and increased long-distance trade – all of which are markers for an economic phase at Chavin de Huantar. A dramatic increase in population around the temple complex during this period indicates individuals were disrupted from traditional practices and were drawn into the Chavin economic orbit. Images of the Shaman/Staff God, which were hammered into gold sheets or painted onto exquisitely woven textiles that involved the new technologies, would communicate the perception of common economic interests within a prosperous new social order.

An economic phase is also indicated by evidence of full-time specialists and an emerging class system. Michael Moseley (1992:156) claims that the "The stonework at Chavin de Huantar was unquestionably the product of master crafts people and the Castillo reflects not only substantial corporate labor, but professional engineering." The excavation of mounds of *Spondylus* and *Strombus* shell fragments, which have been traced to the Ecuadorian coast, in Sector D suggests only this household was crafting jewelry and had access to the trade network (Burger 1992:171). Andeanists also believe that the priest/shamans were full-time specialists who might have also controlled labor connected to irrigation and cultivation (Lumbreras 1974:71; Burger 1992:166). While the archaeological record indicates that not all traditional economic practices were abandoned, Burger (1992:166) claims the Shaman/Staff God period coincides with major shifts from self-sufficiency in food production and centralized control of surrounding corporate farms and irrigation projects. Evidence of a dramatic increase in llama caravans on the coast, the introduction of llama hair into textiles, and wide appeal of dried camelid meat in highland and lowland sites during the Shaman/Staff God period indicate increased production pressures in the *puna* region where llama are herded. Status differentials are also indicated by faunal evidence that suggests those individuals who lived in

Sector D had access to the most tender meat from young camelids (Burger 1995:447). This household also held the largest number of weaving tools, indicating some craft production of probably the labor-intensive, finely woven textiles that Paracas tombs indicate were valued by the elite during the Shaman/Staff God period. The only gold item that was excavated *in situ* was also found in this household, indicating its high-status.

In Gramscian theory, this economic phase does not automatically evolve into full hegemony unless the dominating group grafts a new ideology involving new concepts of the world onto traditional ideology and disseminates this belief system throughout the society. For Gramsci, a given social class maintains its power by employing "a well-organized system of control to assure the maintenance of its ideological front" (Salamini 1981:34). In the final political phase, then, the fundamental group expands its political base by attracting the elite from other groups and distinguishes itself from rivals by exercising power and enforcing its ideology and associated economic practices throughout all levels of society (Salamini 1981:36). This new redemptive ideology, which ties community well-being to the prestige of the dominating group, helps individuals who are ruptured from traditional ways of life to adjust to the new social system (Salamini 1981:36). The diffused ideology is viewed as the glue that creates social cohesion. The Shaman/Staff God icon should be associated with imagery that suggests the emergence of a new ideology that builds on traditional ones.

In addition to the uneven diffusion of the Shaman/Staff God over a wide area, the emergence of a new set of beliefs and a political phase at Chavin de Huantar can be inferred from the differences between the Shaman/Staff God icon and its Lanzon antecedent. Archaeologists attribute departures from traditional iconographic representation as evidence of changes in a communal belief system. Significant iconographic changes center on the Shaman/Staff God's human accessibility, association with gold, and static pose with staffs or other traditional emblems of power. The Lanzon's chamber resembles the windowless Inka Pachacamac oracle sanctum that written texts describe as being open to only a few of the highest ranking priests (Burger 1992:191). The Lanzon's chamber symbolizes controlled access, as only by following a long, circuitous passageway that terminates at a single, narrow doorway could it be entered. By remaining in enclosed and restricted spaces, this icon retains an aura of inscrutable mystery and human inaccessibility. The Shaman/Staff God, on the other hand, stands in the sunlight of expanded public spaces. The Smiling God variant was found in a corner of a small patio located in front of the New Temple where any visitor could see it (Rowe 1967:85). Its back, which is not visible to viewers, remains uncarved. The similar uncarved back of the Raimondi version of the Shaman/Staff God indicates it also originally stood in a wall of a public space where it could be easily viewed (Rowe 1967:85).

The Shaman/Staff God's association with gold is also a new configuration that survives as tradition in succeeding complex societies to the Inka. The sudden appearance during the Chavin period of exquisitely crafted gold sheets hammered into pectorals, crowns, and other high-status items, which frequently carried the Shaman/Staff God image, establishes a clear link between traditional ideology and practices and those imposed by the new social order. It also suggests a link to the primordial sun god that elevated the political status of the Inka dynasty centuries later (Zuidema 1992:38). Although traditional interpretations focus on the relative rank of principle icons, it is noteworthy that this golden version of the Shaman/Staff God figure coexisted with the sequestered Lanzon icon in the same way that the Inka Sun God, which symbolized Inka hegemony, coexisted with the older Pachacamac oracle (Huaman Poma 1978 [c.1613]:24-25). These reconfigured traditional and multiple images of the Lanzon image very likely symbolized different facets and meanings just as a shepherd, fisherman, carpenter, babe in arms, or a resplendent king sitting on a jewel-encrusted throne illuminate different characteristics and socio-political meanings of the equally resilient and paradoxical Christ icon.

The Shaman/Staff God's poised appearance with staffs or other power emblems is also a departure from traditions. The Lanzon oracle's eyes and twisted feet suggest a shaman fully engaged in a metamorphosing trance and spiraling down into or from the underworld. The Staff God's feet, however, appear balanced, a pose suggesting earthly associations and territorial claims. In the South Amerindian creation myths, staff-bearing figures play significant political roles as creator gods, shamans, or ancestors linked to land and territory (Urton 1985:4; Hill 1988:2). In some creation myths the primordial god creates life by penetrating the earth with his penis/staff. In others, ancestors mark their territory and legitimacy to dominate with staffs. Contemporary Andean groups continue to use these emblems of power in staff-refreshing rituals that center on social relationships and territorial rights. The Yura trace their staff of authority to the one carried by the Inka king, Tyusninchis, who was subdued by the Spanish (Rasnake 1988:146). For the Paez, however, golden staffs symbolize the shaman's power (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975:53).

The Kuntar Wasi stela, described earlier as a Lanzon antecedent, provides archaeological support for associating the shaman with staffs. One side of this figure portrays the anthropomorph poised to thrust a staff-like object firmly into the earth. Early and Intermediate Period coastal Moche excavations reveal images of similar staff-bearing anthropomorphs and well-preserved, exquisitely carved staffs, which Christopher Donnan (1976:173) speculates were used in shamanic rituals that had religio-political significance. In a study of a contemporary curing ceremony conducted with Douglas Sharon, Donnan (1976:98) describes the shaman using staffs that appear identical to those depicted in Moche and Chavin iconography. This archaeological and documentary evidence supports the assumption that the Shaman/Staff God was associated with a similar ideology about power relationships.

A newly configured staff-bearing feline anthropomorph very likely promoted the lineage of the dominating elite and its social system just as gold and sun imagery promoted the Inka dynasty.

Traditional interpretations that describe the Shaman/Staff God's rituals as noncoercive and embraced by diverse peoples fail to adequately explain why groups participated in the Chavin hierarchical system. By understanding more Andean belief systems, however, we can begin to understand their persuasive value. In Andean societies, individuals are expected to engage in numerous daily private and public rituals. Any omission of sacred obligation is believed to invite personal and community calamity from avenging ancestors or dark shamans. Written documentation on shamanism suggests that fear and uncertainty, which render individuals especially vulnerable to coercion, are dominating mythic and ritual themes. In Gramscian theory, human subjectivity is "crucially important" for understanding why individuals comply in dominating systems and why cultures change (Salamini 1981:44, 66).

The mythic shaman and associated animal supernaturals are described as frightening, equivocal figures that destroy and create. Battles and other acts of violence dominate the creation myth cycle. The primordial beings and ancestors battle each other and rivals for power, and in the succeeding human stage of existence leaders restore or destroy social order through battles. The creation narratives graphically describe a range of terrifying acts humans perpetrate on one another in the real world such as infanticide, matricide, fratricide, cannibalizing, decapitating, and raping. They also dramatize the horrifying punishments that happen with no opportunity for mercy or appeal following any disobedience of authority, such as violating a food or sex taboo. Because each stage of creation is destroyed as a direct consequence of disobedience and internal conflicts, the creation myths are cautionary tales that describe the consequences, for the innocent as well as the transgressor, of failing to obey traditional authority. On the other hand, themes that center on how leaders restore social order through ritualized violence or wars of conquest suggest that the myths sanction organized violence.

Explicit and implicit appeals to fear have also been recorded in accounts of shamanic rituals, which usually occur at night. Anxiety and vulnerability are induced by any number of activities that precede the ritual, such as ingesting potentially lethal psychotropic substances, fasting, enduring physical isolation, and inflicting pain on oneself. Both rituals and pilgrimages are considered liminal experiences that separate individuals from familiar ways of being. Participants are frequently described as anxious during and after the rituals when they wait to hear the supernatural messages and demands for *tribute*. Those facing life-threatening events of a physical, spiritual, or social nature, moreover, would bring their anxieties and fears to the ritual. Otherworldly sounds, sights, and smells that accompany shamanic performances

would exacerbate these feelings. The human shaman is also frequently perceived as an object of fear and dread throughout the Andes and lowlands. Ethnographers report the most powerful are the most feared (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975:80). Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff describes an account of a shaman who, during a drug-induced trance, dreams of having sexual intercourse and cannibalizing a woman (1975:80). Upon awakening, the shaman discovers he actually committed this act of violence. Moche art depicting scenes of shaman-like figures involved in sexual intercourse and dismemberment provides archaeological support for a long tradition of associating the shaman with terrifying acts.

Traditional theories of the shamanic rituals edit this element of human subjectivity that helps to explain social behaviors. In proposing an Inka Pachacamac model for the Chavin pilgrimage system, Burger (1992:191) assumes a spirit of religious freedom and peaceful coexistence of local and state idols and rituals. Huaman Poma, however, describes those who failed to worship at Inka shrines, to offer the mandated tribute, or who blasphemed the Inka gods lost their lives (1978 [1613]:86). Inka documents describe shamans who failed to cure high-status individuals being beaten or stoned to death as punishment (Calancha 1976 [1638]:556; Donnan 1978). In his studies of Amazonian shamanism, Michael Taussig (1987:168) writes that fear of spiritual and social reprisals was and continues to be manipulated in colonial and post-colonial hegemonies to appropriate indigenous labor. Since Gramsci's political phase requires enforcing laws and suppressing all opposition, one would expect to see mythic reminders of the traditional consequences of disobedience at Chavin de Huantar.

Andeanists describe Chavin de Huantar's windowless subterranean spaces as tortuous, disorienting, surreal and its imagery as terrifying, awesome, monstrous (Lumbreras 1974:60; Burger 1992:181). Burger (1992) imagines that pilgrims traveling to Chavin de Huantar were probably fearful when they approached the temple wall and saw the larger than life-size sculptures of heads that would have appeared to hover above them. Inside the temple precinct, images of bleeding and decapitated heads, predatory felines, raptors, reptiles, and disembodied heads with contorted facial expressions very likely served as mythic reminders of the spiritual consequences of disobedience. The human remains that were found near the Lanzon oracle chamber suggest ritual dismemberment and cannibalism rites that are graphically described in the creation myth narratives and painted on Moche ceramics. The 233 human bones found mixed in with abundant food waste represent the body parts of twenty-one adults, juveniles, and children who were probably offered to the gods in exchange for harmony and order (Burger 1992:138). Such a preponderance of fear-evoking imagery at Chavin de Huantar and documentary evidence on the shamanic tradition challenge the claim repeated in Chavin studies that the Shaman/Staff God's rituals were noncoercive.

For Gramsci, a new set of laws and punishments grafted onto a traditional economic system persuades individuals to comply. Gramsci attributes the success of this final political phase of the hegemonic process to individuals he names intellectuals who are drawn from a variety of sources, including religious and technological. These intellectuals are charged with disseminating and enforcing the new ideology throughout the society (Salamini 1981:61, 103). Full hegemony depends on these individuals who come from various groups and are both dependent on and restrained by the dominant class that controls access to knowledge (Salamini 1981:108). According to Gramsci's analysis, after winning over its political rivals, the dominating group identifies these individuals and recruits them to elaborate and articulate the elite ideology. This class of educators comprises two groups: organic intellectuals who belong to the dominant group, and traditional intellectuals who belong to other groups whose values oppose hierarchical ones. As organic intellectuals come from the dominant class and enjoy the privileges of hierarchy, they are "relatively easy to absorb" (Salamini 1981:62). However, traditional intellectuals offer "formidable resistance" and must be assimilated and conquered "ideologically" (Salamini 1981:62). One strategy to neutralize their threat is to expand the organic group by absorbing the most powerful traditional intellectuals (Salamini 1981:62). These traditional intellectuals serve as links between traditional ideology and practices and those of the new order. For Gramsci, they are crucial to winning individual consent throughout the society for the new dominating social system.

Ethnographic and ethnohistoric examples confirm that shaman/priests have been and continue to be recruited to promulgate a dominating ideology. Huaman Poma describes the Inka's three-tiered priestly hierarchy headed by priest/shamans, who except for a few powerful shamans from subordinated groups, were drawn from the Inka elite (1978[1613]:75-76). He writes that the most powerful shaman/priests were appointed by the Inka nobility and served the most important and richest shrines like that of Pachacamac. A second level of lower-status priests officiated at less important man-made and natural, poorer shrines; a third level of even lower-status priests acted as guardians at local places of worship where they were instructed to persuade local people that the idols could eat, drink, and speak. A survival of this hierarchical system and the role of lower-status priests in disseminating the dominating ideology as well as enforcing its laws is satirized in an Andean song recorded by Denise Arnold called "The Inka priest will come." The lyrics describe this weary and lowly priest "...coming on his long journey by foot from waystation to waystation—from tambo to tambo, and from league to league, to the new reduction town of Qaqachaka ... in order to marry more new couples there and extract tribute from them" (1991:39).

Ethnographic studies also confirm the existence of hierarchical and egalitarian shamans and their rivalries, especially within colonial and post-colonial hegemonies (Hugh-Jones 1994:32). Hugh-Jones's study of Amazonian shamans

confirms the uneasy symbiosis between hierarchical and egalitarian intellectuals in communicating an elite ideology (Hugh-Jones 1994:33). He describes hierarchical shamans limited to a few powerful men of elite lineages who reinforce the status quo by drawing on complex ancestor rituals and who officiate at life-crisis ceremonies. Egalitarian shamans, however, are of low status and perform rituals on an *ad hoc* basis. These less socially powerful shamans are perceived as potential threats to the status quo, and are therefore equivocal. Ethnographic and ethnohistoric texts confirm that leaders of resistance movements opposing hegemony frequently come from this egalitarian group and are perceived as threats to the status quo (Taussig 1987:180; Hugh-Jones 1994:48-49). Huaman Poma describes shamans opposing Inka rule who were punished by being quartered and thrown from a cliff (1978 [1613]:51). Michael Taussig's analysis of the economic interdependence and mistrust between highland and lowland shamans provides an ethnohistorical analogy for assuming similar tensions and unequal relationships within the Chavin priestly class (1987:152-154).

For Gramsci and other ritual studies scholars, individuals are not politically passive within systems of domination. Rather, they are actively integrated into hierarchical activities due to ideological conjunctions (Salamini 1981:36). Catherine Bell (1992:84) uses the term *redemptive hegemony* to describe a tactic of offering individuals "a strategic and practical orientation for acting." Mirroring is one strategy of including local groups into a larger social system. Elite rituals *mirror* when they include local images, mythic texts, gestures, and ranking systems. A survival of mirroring is described in Gary Urton's (1985) study of the social organization and cosmology of Pacariqtambo, a peasant village in the Peruvian Andes. This community strictly adheres to ritualized ranking systems even when not appearing to do so. For example, when eating their noon meal, the men forming an *ayllu* (kin- or community-based work group) sit on the ground in a U-shape arrangement they call *kuskan tiy* ("to sit together"). The headman sits at the apex or upper central portion of the U-shape, and elders, in declining rank, sit at his right and left facing forward. Urton describes those low-status men, (generally boys or young married men who take the place of their fathers) sitting at the farthest ends of the U-shape where they are forced to twist their bodies around or look over their shoulders in order to speak. Urton describes this seating arrangement as a reflection of cosmological ranking systems that structure hierarchical relationships within these relatively egalitarian Quechua groups and which can be traced to Inka practices. Catherine Allen's study of a contemporary Quechua coca leaf chewing ritual or *hallpay* confirms a similar adherence to protocol. Allen (1995:392-393) describes high-status individuals sitting in a ranked position and receiving the *k'intus* (coca leaves) before low status individuals.

A survival for the diffusion of Inka ideology is indicated in Denise Arnold's (1991:38-44) study of a modern Andean household. Arnold writes that the Andean home's eastern orientation, central pole *axis mundi*, female and male spaces, and

foundation burials mirror Inka cosmological principles. In addition, she uses the metaphor *nesting* to visualize how egalitarian and hierarchical relationships are integrated throughout a political system. She describes the Andean house's female interior space contained by male extended household space and courtyard space; this family space is contained by the *ayllu* that contains the larger community. The state encloses all like a nest of Chinese boxes or Russian dolls. In Gramscian theory this nesting of smaller social systems into larger ones symbolizes the moment of full hegemony when the dominating group's ideology and practices are integrated throughout all levels of society.

The expanded public spaces at Chavin de Huantar indicate a need to include more individuals into temple activities. Burger (1992) notes that the enlarged summit spaces of the Old Temple, where elite rituals were probably carried out, are visible from the center's many plazas and terraces. More individuals would witness these activities, providing the illusion of support for the status quo. The 20 meter square semi-subterranean courtyard surrounded by a 105 x 85 meter rectangular plaza would have allowed individuals to participate in a variety of both egalitarian and hierarchical activities. Research on Inka pilgrimage networks provides a way of imagining how individuals might have actively used the expanded spaces at Chavin de Huantar.

Perhaps individuals throughout the Chavin sphere of influence traveled with their lineage idols and set them up in the New Temple's expanded plazas to carry out private rituals. Perhaps the highest ranking lineages or clans used the benched private chambers with niches for their ancestral idols to conduct initiation ceremonies that would link their progeny with the dominating elite; perhaps some of their children were secluded in subterranean chambers, training to be shamans who would later propagate and enforce Chavin ideology and economic practices. Those pilgrims involved in egalitarian and traditional activities would witness hierarchical rankings reflecting the status quo. They would note who had access to the oracle's words, who left the most valuable tribute, or who left an ancestral idol in a temple niche or offered a family member to the temple bureaucracy as a symbol of their alliance. Some would have arrived as merchant chiefs from the coast or tropical lowlands, trading the valued *Spondylus* and *Strombus* shells and lowland psychotropic substances and shamanic ritual items for Chavin pottery, gold ornaments, and textiles. Some pilgrims might have returned to their villages with items that were produced in the temple's domestic sectors, which bolstered or maintained their status within their own village and helped to diffuse Chavin iconography and ideology. Perhaps others went through ritual motions because failure to do so would have created devastating repercussions. Studies on pilgrimage networks support this view of multiple transactions and motivations (Eade and Sallnow 1990) and support Gramsci's observation that a hegemonic system depends on willing compliance and suppression of opposition.

Andeanists concur that the Chavin art style and Shaman/Staff God draws on imagery from the coastal, highland, and lowland regions that were integrated into the Chavin system. The uneven diffusion of this icon indicates Chavin hegemony was not fully established. For those who did embrace its ideology, however, a Shaman/Staff God icon integrating a cluster of images that are drawn from all production zones would function as a visual *lingua franca* helping them to internalize the new ideology and its economic practices. In Gramscian theory, the moment of full hegemony arrives when individuals throughout the society emotionally accept the new ideology. Internalization of a new consciousness of the world, however, is as impossible to measure as it is to verify archaeologically. Therefore, Gramsci acknowledges that power relationships are dynamic and that resistance and rebellion characterize hegemony. Those who cannot accept its precepts but do not directly oppose the status quo continuously threaten its equilibrium (Salamini 1981:59). Individuals frequently participate in hierarchical rituals, while privately repudiating the status quo. Those same forces that were responsible for creating a dominating system, Gramsci observes, are also potential catalysts for power reversals. These occur internally when contradictions accumulate to such a degree that they threaten the status quo, as when wars are lost, or when subordinated groups are politicized around an opposing ideology that is articulated by those who were absorbed into the system but who do not internalize the new ideology (Salamini 1981:59). Ethnographic and ethnohistoric examples confirm that in Inka and post-conquest hegemonies traditional shamans have led resistance and millenarian movements (Hill 1988; Taussig 1987).

Around 200 BC a series of mudslides led to the abandonment of Chavin de Huantar; the simultaneous disappearance of the Chavin art style and Shaman/Staff God from the archaeological record signals the end of Chavin religious influence and a breakdown of those political practices that contributed to its development. A few hundred years following the collapse of the Chavin system, a newly configured Shaman/Staff God appearing in the iconography of the Moche and succeeding Andean states to the Inka dramatizes this icon's metamorphosis into a potent *traditional* image.

The archaeological and documentary records provide compelling support for viewing the Shaman/Staff God and its rituals through a Gramscian lens. This perspective addresses the complex roles that human subjectivity, social behaviors, and ideology play within hierarchical systems, thereby helping to align interpretive theory with the Chavin archaeological record and documentary records on the shamanic tradition in more satisfying ways than structural-functional approaches. Gramscian theory, however, demands abandoning idealized notions about the religious behavior of those who have not left a written record. While his theory of the hegemonic process provides a way to reconstruct Chavin social life, it is as tentative as competing theories that focus on individuals and their daily practices. When

sanctifying icons like the Shaman/Staff God and the equally enduring Christ figure are approached as protagonists in contested and fluid systems of power, they symbolize not only the irrepressible theme of hope for individual and cultural transcendence, but also the inevitable rise and fall of dominating systems.

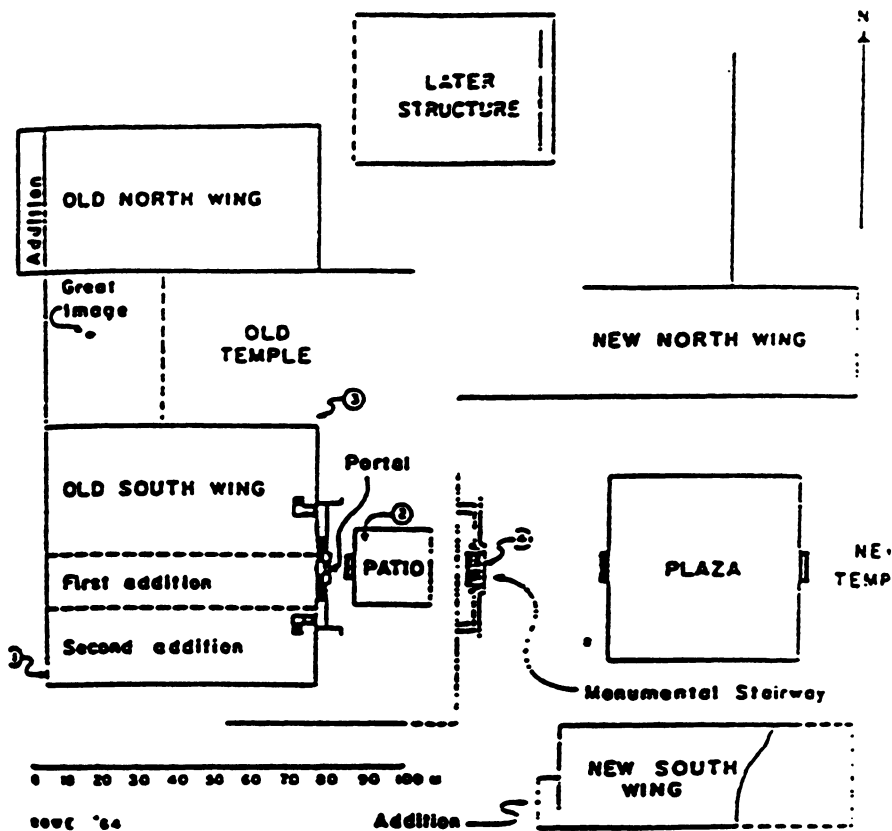


Figure 1: Diagram of Chavin de Huantar (Rowe 1967).

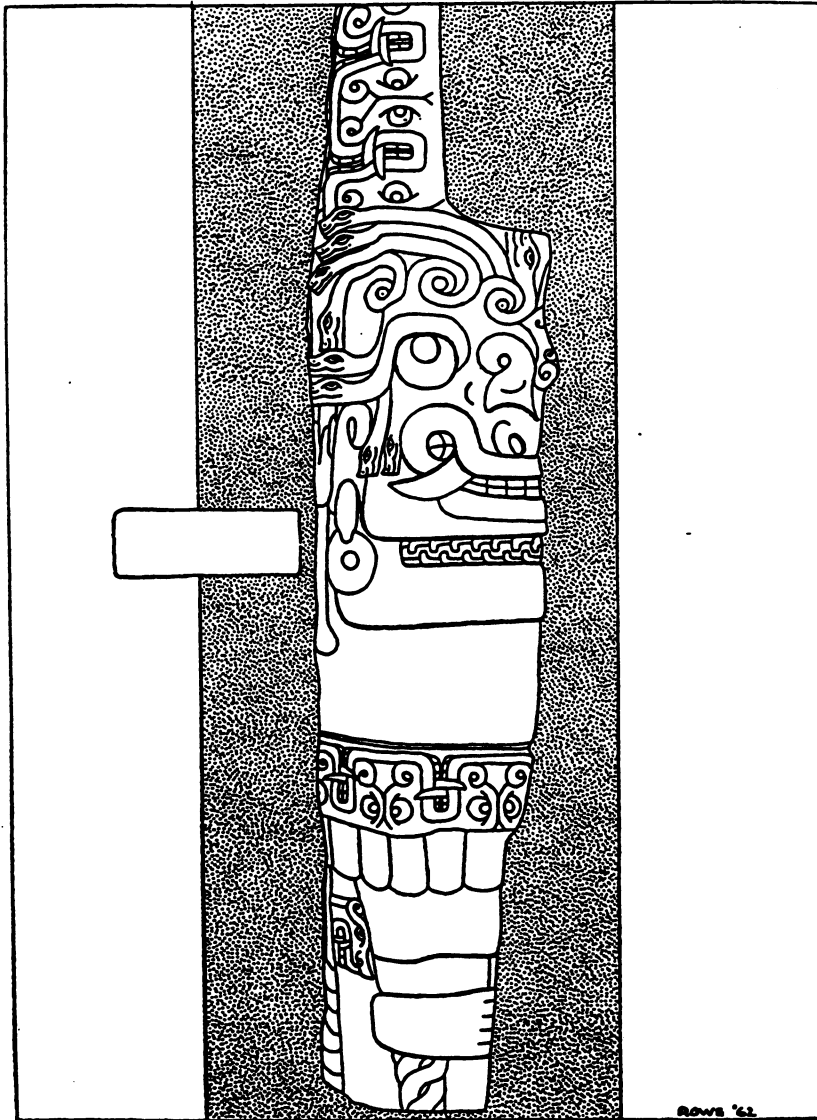


Figure 2: Diagram of 2.52 meter tall Lanson Stela (Rowe 1967)

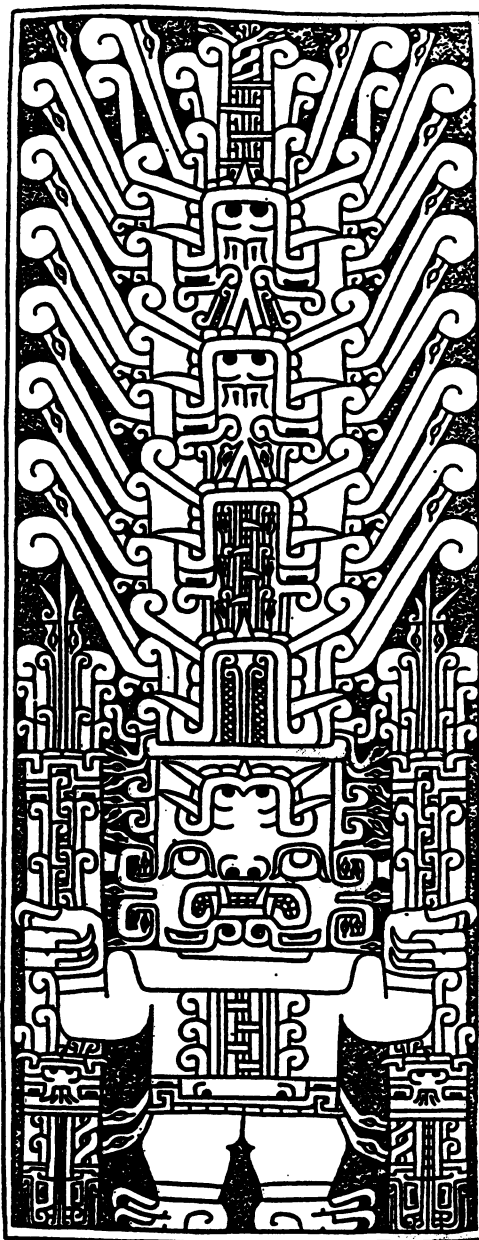


Figure 3: The Raimondi Stela Staff God Variant of the Staff God (Rowe 1967).



Figure 4: Staff God Icon holding Spondylus and Stombus Shells (Rowe 1967).

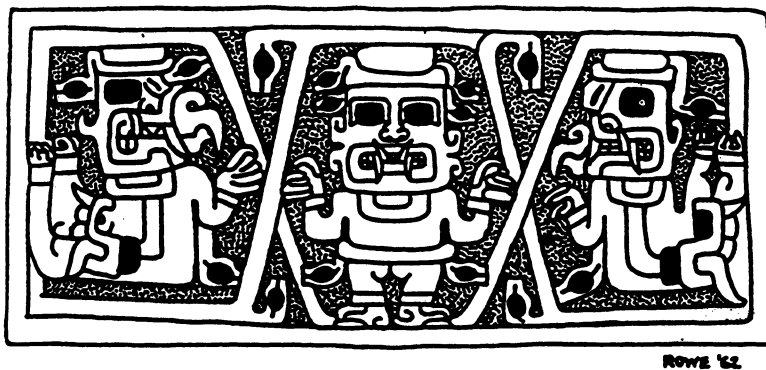


Figure 5: Paracas textile Staff God Icons (Rowe 1967).

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