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Comparing Indigenous Pilgrimages

Devotion, Identity, and Resistance in Mesoamerica and North America

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Abstract. – This article compares pilgrimage dynamics in two indigenous societies of the Americas: the Yucatec-Maya of Mexico and the Chipewyan of Canada. The same analytical framework is used to interpret the historical origins, social contexts, ceremonial climax, and backstage features of two annual socioreligious gatherings among these people. While their respective pilgrimages exhibit distinctly different approaches to accessing cosmological or sacred power and to resisting the hegemonies of colonial and state institutions, they follow similar paths as vehicles for expressing and renewing native identity. The ethnographic case materials are used to reassess Victor and Edith Turner's theoretical stance in light of other recent pilgrimage studies with divergent views. *[Mexico, Canada, Maya, Chipewyan, pilgrimage dynamics, controlled comparison, Turnerian paradigm]*

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1 Introduction

This article is a controlled comparison of pilgrimage dynamics in two indigenous societies of the Americas: the Yucatec-Maya of Mexico and the Chipewyan (Dene) of Canada. The same analytical framework is used to interpret the historical origins, social context, ceremonial climax, and backstage or latent features of two annual socioreligious gatherings among these people: the pilgrimages to Xokén and Patuanak, respectively. While both communities were subjected to intensive Catholic missionizing programs, they developed rather divergent understandings of and accommodations to Catholicism.

In turn, their respective pilgrimage forms have followed different trajectories in their manner of accessing cosmological or sacred power and in resisting the hegemonies of colonial and state institutions. As indigenous cultural performances, however, the Mayan and Chipewyan pilgrimages follow a similar path in using their dramatic presence as vehicles for expressing and renewing native identity. These dynamics are largely compatible with the process of liminality and communitas identified by Victor Turner. Accordingly, the ethnographic case materials are used to reassess Turner's theoretical stance in light of other recent pilgrimage studies which support or reject his views.

Massive pilgrimages of historical depth are well known in the traditions of Islam (Lewis 1966), Hinduism[1], Christianity (Jarett 1911; Turner and Turner 1978), and other world religions. These are

noteworthy for their enduring socioceremonial structures which provide an integrating force within and between societies of large scale and complexity. As nascent forms, however, pilgrimages offer unique opportunities for observing the rudiments of cultural syncretism or hybridity (Métraux 1959) and, perhaps, understanding the process by which people attempt to resolve a variety of structural dilemmas stemming from conflict between local and supralocal interests and polities.

2 Paradigms and Pilgrimages: Reassessing Turner

In part, our article is a response to Victor Turner's (1974: 227) appeal for more research on the conditions under which local devotional forms become established pilgrimages replete with authoritative legitimating structures. His theoretical approach to ritual and symbolism generally, and to pilgrimages particularly, has been compelling on several fronts. First, there is Turner's (1969: 94–97; 1974: 166–170, 202) notion of pilgrimages as *liminal* phenomena, extending Van Gennep's ([1909] 1960) idea of social and spatial separation in rites of passage. A major assumption is that pilgrimages nourish fellowship and openness, or a condition of *communitas*, and, thereby, become *anti-structural*, temporarily freeing individuals from the roles and hierarchies of their ordinary lives.[2] Secondly, Turner (1974: 174–177, 198–200) views the mutually reinforcing interaction of religious *obligation* and *voluntarism* as an additional manifestation of the ambiguity and liminality of the pilgrimage. Finally, Turner (1974: 171f., 203) offers intriguing thoughts on the apparently increasing popularity of pilgrimage forms in the contemporary world. They may represent quests for communitas in complex societies where the self has become alienated from meaningful community. More pointedly, perhaps, the pilgrimage may invoke or reactivate cultural forms traditionally associated with normative communitas during periods of rapid social change. Of no less relevance for our discussion is Turner's (1967: 272f.) recognition that ritual action is a process rather than something fixed or static in meaning.

A number of scholars have profitably employed Turner's concepts of liminality and communitas to shed light on a variety of pilgrimage and pilgrimage-like phenomena, including Crumrine's (1977) analysis of Mayo Indian religious revitalization, Hambrick's (1979) study of the World Messianity movement in Japan, Martin's (1982) discussion of Islamic Hajj, Swatos, Jr.'s (2002b) study of Our Lady of Clearwater pilgrimage in Florida, and with qualification, León's (2004) analysis of the pilgrimage to the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe, and Hiebert's (1990) interpretation of South Indian village goddess fairs.

Others have taken issue with Turner. Eade and Sallnow (1991: 4f.) contend that his notions of communitas and anti-structure inappropriately prejudge the pilgrimage as a subversion of the established social order. His framework, they suggest, simply inverts functionalist approaches wherein the pilgrimage preserves or legitimizes existing identities, interests, and inequalities in society. Eade and Sallnow offer an alternative perspective which views the pilgrimage as an arena of competing discourses. Thus, while Victor and Edith Turner (1978: 230) interpret Lourdes as an example of communitas in Christian pilgrimage life, Eade (1991: 52) argues that "the shrine actually demonstrates the co-existence of numerous oppositions."[3]

Eade and Sallnow's opposition to the Turners' interpretation, while vigorously expressed, may rest upon a false dichotomy. Their skepticism appears to be directed largely at the *existential* variety of communitas which, in theory, operates spontaneously in the absence of structure. Yet, the Turners' own characterizations of pilgrimages tend to emphasize the *normative* type of communitas whereby conventional social structure and power relations are not absent or eliminated but, rather, ameliorated in an effort to create feelings of brotherhood and harmony. It is likely that this dynamic, the normative rather than the existential, has been widespread in pilgrimage life historically and cross-culturally.

Oddly, a clear definition of what constitutes pilgrimage has not been offered by those contesting

1 Deleury (1960), Feldhaus (2003), Hiebert (1990), and Karve (1962).

2 Turner conceptualized several types of *communitas* (existential, normative, and ideological) to indicate a progression from spontaneous expressions of fellowship toward more ethically prescribed and utopian versions of spontaneous communality. Pilgrimages may evolve along this continuum, and they are part of the dialectical relationship binding structure and anti-structure. Moreover, as a momentary expression of tolerance and forgiveness, the pilgrimage may serve as a dynamic compromise between the polarities of *communitas* and conventional structure (Turner 1969: 131–133; 1974: 169).

3 Sallnow's (1981, 1991) work in the Peruvian Andes and Van der Veer's (1984) research in north India are among other ethnographic studies of pilgrimages which have not found empirical support for Turner's ideas.

Turner and Turner (1978). Stoddard (1997: 41), however, has called for acceptable definitions and classifications of pilgrimage-like behaviors in order to facilitate comparative studies. Accordingly, we offer the following as our own working definition:

> a multiday large-scale (by local standards) ceremonial event, often annual in occurrence, prescribed or not, enacted out of devotion with varied motives, consisting of nonlocal circulation by numerous individuals, to and from what may be considered socioreligious space.[4]

This characterization captures key similarities in the Mayan and Chipewyan pilgrimage data to be discussed below. We will revisit this definition later and consider its relevance for broader comparative analysis.

Swatos, Jr. (2002a: 92–94, 96) notes that while religious motivation should not be discounted neither should one assume that pilgrimage action must follow "historic *theological* categories," as if individuals were of like mind and devotion. One needs only to consider the everyday life of those practicing popular religion, to realize that its practitioners guide themselves by multiple feelings, rather than outright intellectual competition, which may not be mutually exclusive. Family and community life, which provide group bonding through repetitively recognized practice, then, are often the central focus of pilgrimage rather than individual concerns (see Voyé 2002: 115f., 124, 127f.). In this vein, Foard (1982: 235, 238–240, 247f.) finds that, as experienced by Japanese pilgrims, communitas is an expression of their social identity, whereby the pilgrims make Japanese traditions individually and collectively their own.

Considerable ethnographic evidence exists, then, to temper Eade and Sallnow's (1991: 5, 15, 26f.) assertions that pilgrimage sites are highly contested spaces that lack consensus of meaning. Sallnow (1991: 137) seems to overreach with his claim that "when people converge in pilgrimage, meanings collide." Other than assertions, he provides little convincing data or analysis to demonstrate how the different meanings add up to "the chronic cultural schizophrenia" he claims between Andean pilgrims. What Eade and Sallnow see as polar contradictions may not be viewed as such by the individuals in question. As they (1991: 21) admit, "pilgrims and priests project quite different, yet overlapping, understandings of the significance of the shrine."

In this regard, Badone (2004: 185–187) and Voyé (2002: 132) comment pointedly about the need to overcome reductionist Western binaries in analyzing pilgrimage. Turner and Turner (1978: 37) stated that religious activity is not exclusive of the secular, where shared fun and leisure extend a feeling of belonging. Indeed, it may be this very combination, as present in the sharing of hardship during pilgrimage, that offers renewed hope in relationships (also see Turner 1992: 37). While some pilgrims share an idealistic notion of camaraderie, clearly not all pilgrims need explicitly express this ideal for it to happen. All that is needed is a sensed inner feeling of benefit obtained (Coleman and Elsner 1995: 202; Iyer 1999: vii–xi). We suggest that it is these inner feelings of contentment that make pilgrimage communal bonding possible. While structural distinctions are not completely eliminated, their "sting" can be temporarily muted (Turner 1973, 1974, 1992). Turner and Turner (1978: 3, 32), then, preceded Eade and Sallnow in allowing that pilgrimage may be about potentiality and transition, where new ideas, being anarchical, populist, and/or anticlerical, may be put to the test.

Religions cannot operate in a completely homogenous manner because all religious action is based on daily practice and interpretation which can vary from person to person. As Eade and Sallnow (1991: 15) half admit, "the ideal – like Turner's goal of communitas – is impossible to achieve, but the resident devotees pursue it as far as the exigencies of life permit." Can religious behavior and communitas simply be that which gives individuals purpose and meaning in life? Preston (1990: 17) attempts to separate "secular" from "religious" pilgrimage, but such classifications may rely on unduly narrow conceptualizations. Kruse (2003), for example, demonstrates that he and many others share pilgrimage bonding, despite varied motivations, at John Lennon's Strawberry Fields memorial in New York's Central Park. Clearly, pilgrimage is an exceptionally complex, multifaceted institution. It is neither self-contained nor insulated, nor is it limited to religious motivation.

In light of the foregoing comments, we believe that Victor Turner (1974) and Victor and Edith Turner (1978) provided a paradigm, however subject to revision, still viable for pilgrimage study. As noted by Bhardwaj (1997: 18), the "time has now come to search for some cross-cultural comparisons of pilgrimage behavior." In our interpretation

4 We concur with Blasi's (2002: 159) view "that one or more people travel with the purpose in whole or in part of visiting, seeing, or touching a physical space or thing that is in some manner associated with ultimate or near ultimate concerns … concerns that can and often vary from individual to individual without contention."

of Mesoamerican and North American indigenous approaches to pilgrimage, we recommend cautious consideration, if not reconciliation, of the varied frameworks noted above. Following Eade and Sallnow, we might ask what are the multiple meanings and understandings, or indeed "mutual misunderstandings," by which various Maya and Chipewyan participants construct their pilgrimage experiences? However, heeding Turner we may also ask whether the Maya and Chipewyan situations represent restorations of cultural truths or harmonies which have been compromised? Are their pilgrimages a form of resistance to or management of further erosive changes? In this regard, Eade and Sallnow's (1991: 5) critique of Turner's work as "a particular discourse *about* pilgrimage rather than an empirical description *of* it," seems premature and warrants reexamination. To anticipate and look for opposition and competing discourses can also become, in the absence of rigorous ethnography, a self-fulfilling prejudgement rather than a meaningful assessment of on-the-ground realities.

Map: Locations of the Xokén and Patuanak pilgrimages.

3 Comparative Strategy

In order to assess the usefulness of the foregoing frameworks, we offer a comparison of two pilgrimages in indigenous communities in Mesoamerica and North America: the *gremio* or pilgrimage to Xokén, Yucatán, among the Quintana Roo Maya and the Patuanak pilgrimage or "Feast for Father Moraud" among the southern Chipewyan of Canada, respectively (see Map). The former are descendents of a class-stratified state level society with a hereditary elite, ranked lineages, and ritual specialists responsible for ceremonial affairs. The latter derive from egalitarian hunter-gatherer bands whose conceptions of power were (and are) based on individualized relationships with animal-spirit beings (similar power conceptions as the Maya but not in a stratified social context). While the Yucatec-Maya endured colonization by Spanish interests beginning in the early 16th century, the southern Chipewyan came under intensive English and French Canadian influence in the late 18th century. Despite their distinctive histories and divergent sociopolitical development, however, both groups experienced the common denominator of Roman Catholic missionization.

One of our goals is to understand how the foregoing cultural and historical differences and commonalities have played out in the devotional practices of pilgrimages in recent times. What is the nature of the pilgrimage experience among contemporary Maya and Chipewyan? Indeed, may such phenomena be regarded as pilgrimages "in the Christian tradition?" Or, are they fundamentally indigenous practices which have reworked the trappings of Catholic orthodoxy for local purposes? Do their ritual anatomies vary despite similar underlying meanings and processes? Or do similar surface forms of performance mask different social processes? Such issues will be addressed with fine-grained case materials from recent ethnographic fieldwork in the two societies. In turn, a comparison of these cases will serve as a means of assessing, if not reconciling, alternative models of and perspectives on pilgrimage life.

The two cases were not arbitrarily selected, therefore. Over several years of prior discussion about our ethnographic field experiences, we became aware of the range of comparable data we had been amassing on pilgrimage dynamics in two Native American communities. To facilitate comparison, we have employed the same analytical categories to distill the key features of pilgrimage practice and experience for the Maya and Chipewyan. In each case, the relevant behaviors and beliefs will be presented and discussed in terms of the following framework:

1. historical origins;
2. social context;
3. ceremonial climax;
4. backstage or latent dimensions.

Small-scale qualitative comparisons, even between disparate societies across the Americas and other regions, are often compelling because many subtleties of behavior and history for each community are well-known and can be useful in understanding general trends and patterns not always discernible from a single case.[5] First, however, the background on the Maya and Chipewyan communities will help situate the Xokén and Patuanak pilgrimages within their respective cultural and historical contexts.

3.1 Maya Historical and Cultural Context

During the Maya Postclassic era (A.D. 950 – Contact) the site of Xokén was a Kupul lineage village clustered around the preeminent politically dominant town of Sakíwal, now known as Valladolid, Yucatán, in the region between Chichén Itzá and Kobá (see Jones 1998: 13; Roys 1939: 5). Sakíwal drew tribute from its surrounding villages of which Xokén and its neighboring Chichimilá and Kanxoc were some of the most important (Roys 1939: 19f.). Today, the two villages of Chichimilá and Kanxoc are two of the most important communities that rotate pilgrimage sponsorship of Xokén's stela-cross (Astor-Aguilera 1998; Fernández Repetto 1984: 66–68). Further, Roys (1939: 21, 5) states that the above-mentioned villages, along with Sakíwal, were tributaries to Chichén Itzá and perhaps later to Mayapán.

The first known document that mentions a personalized *ciyum santa curus*, "Lord Holy Cross," is a land acknowledgment dated June 28th, 1814, in the Titles of Ebtun (Roys 1939: 361–365); and, significant in the above, is the close proximity of Ebtun to Sakíwal and Xokén. The widespread presence of pre-Columbian crosses was documented by several Spanish chroniclers.[6] Astor-Aguilera argues that his consultants' use of the communicating cross of Xokén is a transformation of pre-Columbian cosmology. For this reason, to the Maya, their communicating crosses rank in priority above the Catholic-Christian God (Astor-Aguilera 1998; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 110f., 139).

Through the colonial period, Maya ceremonies based on ancient commemorations were enacted in the vicinity of Sakíwal-Valladolid (Edmonson 1982: 39; 1986: 45f.), a mere 11 kilometers distance from Xokén and its stone cross. Other such Maya ceremonies were celebrated near Felipe Carrillo Puerto (Edmonson 1986: 45), the modern name given to the village where the "talking cross" supposedly "appeared" in 1850 (see Reed 1964). Burns (1983: 6) has noted that Chilam Balam-type books, native manuscripts that contain indigenous history and knowledge, are still kept and read in the village of Tixkakal Guardia, Quintana Roo. The above continues to the present day not only at Tixkakal Guardia but at other cross shrines as well. For example, the shrine at Chúumuk Lu'um, "center of the earth," is rumored to have once held a Chilam Balam-style book that told the history of the stone cross (Astor-Aguilera 2004: 169). The ceremonial circuit celebrating Maya commemorations mentioned above has been linked to Sakíwal and is also linked to the site of Kochilla. Roys (1967: 73) mentions that Kochilla is just north of the Yaxuná-Kobá causeway, and the following stop, after Kochilla, on the circuit is the site of Ix Xokén (Edmonson 1986: 88), otherwise known as Tix Xokén or Xokén (see Roys 1967: 73). The name of Xokén, according to one of Astor-Aguilera's consultants, stems from Xok K'in, which means "to count and read the days," as the village is considered the center of the Maya world where Itzamná, their ancient patron of religious specialists, counts the days and years.

The rebellion known as the Caste War of Yucatán, which encompassed most of the Yucatán peninsula, is considered one of the most significant indigenous uprisings in the history of Mesoamerica.[7] After northern Yucatán was "conquered" by the Spanish in 1546 there continued to be revolts and skirmishes throughout the peninsula (Scholes and Adams 1991: 1), with the last independent Maya city of Tah Itzá, Tayasal, not succumbing to the Spanish until 1697 (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983). The "Caste War" began in July 1847 under the direction of several *batabo'ob*, indigenous Maya leaders, who, after finding themselves ignored politically, sought to free their people from oppression (Rugeley 1996: 185). There were many factors which led to the revolt of 1847. Though the intentions of the *batabs* can only be analyzed and not thoroughly known (Reed 1964: 55), letters from the various Maya factions suggest that the war

5 The scale and logic of our analysis owe a debt to earlier efforts in small-scale, qualitative comparison. These include Murphy and Steward's (1956) classic comparison of "parallel acculturation" among the Mundurucú of Brazil and the Montagnais of Canada, as well as Eggan's (1954) pioneering notion of "controlled comparison."

6 Burgoa (1934), Cervantes de Salazar (1971: 195f.), Díaz del Castillo ([1632] 1956: 9f.), Herrera (1601), Landa (in Tozzer 1941: 207f.), Las Casas (1967: 648), Lizana ([1633] 1893: 36–39), López de Cogolludo (1688: 359), López de Gómara (1552), and Torquemada ([1615] 1971).

7 Dumond (1977), Patch (1991: 51), Reed (1964), and Rugeley (1996).

began with the coalescence of a series of local insurrections and micro revolts (Rugeley 1997b: 43). While the material motives for the war remain obscure, the abuses the Maya endured at the hands of Catholic priests, and others in position of power, are well documented (Press 1975: 38f.). The causes, then, leading to the outbreak of the war apparently derive from pent-up rage against colonial rule (Chuchiak 1997: 34).

The Social War of Yucatán officially lasted from 1847 to 1910. History, whether written or oral, has political spin and the literature concerning the so-called "Caste War of Yucatán" is no exception. For the Maya, the war had virtually nothing to do with caste: the term "Caste War" has generally been used by politicians in reference to any indigenous uprising throughout Mexico and Central America.[8] The Caste War, to the Maya, was not about race but about social justice and religious autonomy; indeed, for this reason, Bergunza-Pinto (1997) has opted, apparently following how the Yucatec-Maya see it, to use the more apt term of "Social War" instead of "Caste War" and from here onward I will follow suit. This war, then, was in part a cosmologically inspired rebellion by which the Maya sought to unshackle themselves from further sociopolitical subjugation and humiliation (Escamilla Mora 1980: 11). While the war officially ended in 1910, to the Maya the struggle is far from over. However, the battles are now fought in terms of wanting a certain amount of control concerning their traditions, language, and way of life.

The stone cross of Xokén, the focus of a pilgrimage discussed in detail below, is but a facet representing the Yucatec-Maya's political fight seeking self-determination. Between 1997 and 1998 Astor-Aguilera conducted several visits to Xokén and its neighboring villages. His deep ethnographic field research in Xokén and other "talking cross" communities began in 1999 (Astor-Aguilera 2004). He has observed, documented, and participated in the Kruz Tun pilgrimage on various occasions from 1999 to the present. The data from that fieldwork constitute a small part of the material presented here.

3.2 Chipewyan Historical and Cultural Context

In the period between the 1770s and the 1790s, posts of independent pedlars and those of the major fur trading companies were situated near the headwaters of the Churchill River in what is now northwestern Saskatchewan, Canada (Tyrrell 1934: 122, 356–367, 472–476). The region soon became part of the contact zone between the Dene or Athapaskan-speaking Chipewyan and the Algonquian-speaking Western Woods Cree. A rivalry between Montreal-based companies and the English-controlled Hudson's Bay Company (hereafter HBC) was responsible for drawing some Chipewyan groups from their forest-tundra environment southward into the full boreal forest (Gillespie 1975: 368–374; Smith 1975: 413). Some of these southern Chipewyan became known as "Kesyehot'ine," or "Aspen House People," in reference to their major trading fort at Île-à-la-Crosse.

Through the 19th century, both the Chipewyan and Cree developed intimate economic relations with a growing class of Eurocanadian fur trade personnel at the HBC's Île-à-la-Crosse fort and its network of secondary outposts. While the nomadic, bush-oriented bands of Chipewyan and Cree served as the hunters or "primary producers" of the mercantile system, an increasingly visible mixed blood or Métis population was occupying a niche as fur company servants and laborers. These Métis were largely descendants of unions between French-Canadian voyageurs and local Cree women (Jarvenpa and Brumbach 1985).

The complexity of social life increased in the last half of the 19th century with the arrival of French-speaking priests, of the Roman Catholic order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who established a mission at Île-à-la-Crosse in 1846 (Morice 1912: 301f.). The impact of the church on the Indians was initially negligible. By the 1890s, however, the Chipewyan regularly appeared in Île-à-la-Crosse for the Catholic mission's Christmas and Easter services, as well as summer religious instructional gatherings. The fact that their important trading-provisioning periods at the HBC post were in September and June, therefore, meant that the Chipewyan had to stage at least four major annual gatherings in Île-à-la-Crosse. This was possible only by withdrawing southward from the winter range of the Barren-ground caribou, a major food resource, and by shortening their annual travel circuits (Brumbach and Jarvenpa 1989: 61–67).

By the last decade of the 19th century the HBC was enmeshed in a tangle of economic adversities that complicated its relationship with the Chipewyan, the Métis, and the Catholic Church. Traders in the Île-à-la-Crosse district began strongly advocating treaty negotiations between local natives and the federal government. Although Treaty No. 10 was not implemented until 1906, the HBC was

8 Careaga Viliesid (1998: 20f.), Rugeley (1997a), and Rus (1996: 45).

hopeful that the potential cash flow from treaty payments to Indians and scrip payments to Métis would revitalize its sagging trade and reduce indebtedness among its clientele.[9] This turbulent period set the stage for a growing conflict between the HBC and the Catholic priests at Île-à-la-Crosse regarding their relationship with and control over the Indians, particularly the Chipewyan. Throughout the 1890s and into the 1900s, HBC staff believed the Mission was conducting a successful sub rosa fur trade in addition to its ecclesiastical functions, while church officials believed HBC trade policies were jeopardizing the physical and spiritual health of the Chipewyan.[10]

Île-à-la-Crosse's importance declined in the early 1900s as both the HBC and the Catholic mission began decentralizing their operations. In the period approaching World War One, the combined factors of field-oriented missionization, seasonal trading outposts, dispensation of treaty rights, and an embryonic commercial fishing industry spurred aggregations of Chipewyan families into tent and log cabin communities of gradually increasing size and permanence. One of these was the Chipewyan reserve at Patuanak, situated at an old summer fishing site and HBC outpost 60 kilometers north of Île-à-la-Crosse. Patuanak would become one of the major strongholds of the Kesyehot'ine (Jarvenpa 1980).

Between 1971 and 1992 Jarvenpa conducted several years of ethnographic field research on ecological and social change in Patuanak and the allied communities of Cree Lake, Dipper Lake, Knee Lake, and Primeau Lake (Jarvenpa 1977, 1980, 1982a, 1982b, 1987). He observed and participated in the Patuanak pilgrimage on four separate occasions in 1975, 1977, 1979, and 1980, and the materials from that fieldwork constitute the bulk of the data for analysis here.

4 Yucatec-Maya: Pilgrimage to Xokén

4.1 Historical Origins

The pilgrimage, which focuses on the village of Xokén in Yucatán, corresponds to a set of festivities called by the Spanish term of *gremio* (guild) by the local Maya. This Spanish usage is somewhat misleading and requires explanation. Indeed, the very ambiguity of what the Yucatec-Maya constitute as *gremio* was responsible, in part, for spurring Astor-Aguilera's initial interest in the pilgrimage proceedings at Xokén.

The Maya of Xokén are members of neither a fraternity nor guild comprised of tradesmen or shopkeepers based on the same social class or profession. Rather, *gremio* is used liberally to denote a body of faithful worshippers, Catholic or otherwise, who take on a rotating burden of service to a particular saint and/or deity (Fernández Repetto 1988: 68–70; Fernández Repetto and Negroe Sierra 1997: 4f.). Local Maya adopted the term *gremio*, as utilized by Catholic friars during the colonial period, to indicate the body or congregation of the church and applied it to loosely organized village acts of devotion through village and intervillage festivals (Fernández Repetto 1988: 65–67). Although their structure varies somewhat from community to community, in contemporary context, *gremios*, or *gremio* pilgrimages, are integral to Yucatec popular folk religion as practiced by Maya villagers.

The *gremio* pilgrimages may be viewed, in part, as vehicles for symbolic cultural resistance by a group of subaltern Maya. This is evidenced, somewhat, by local peoples' statements regarding the considerable antiquity of the pilgrimage to Xokén; indeed, they claim their ancient ancestors, who occupied this region preceding the arrival of the Spanish, instituted the pilgrimage. Perhaps corroborating these "myth histories," several of the 16th-century Maya chronicles written by native ritual specialists refer to pilgrimages in and around the village of Xokén, which is mentioned by name, and additionally link these pilgrimages to several late Postclassic Itzá-Maya centers (Roys 1967: 73; Edmonson 1986: 47, 82–84, 88). It is interesting to note, however, in an apparent paradox emanating from colonial oppression, that these same Maya do not claim, or appear to have knowledge, that they themselves may be descendants of the pre-Columbian peoples who built the ancient cities that surround them.

Astor-Aguilera suggests, however, that the foregoing patterns are not a coincidence, especially when one notes that the focus of the pilgrimage to Xokén is a large monolith roughly hacked into the form of a "cross." Interestingly, this monolith is eerily much reminiscent of the symbolically planted, erected that is, stelae by the ancient Maya. Furthermore, the stela-cross is apparently situated at the end of an ancient Maya causeway that linked several of the ancient Postclassic cities. Of major note here is that these same ancient centers were near or at major sites of rebellion during the Social

9 HBCA (1888–1890: fol. 127; 1897; 1899–1902: fol. 214).
10 HBCA (1891–1893: fols. 135–137; 1899–1902: fols. 60–62, 227–283); Jarvenpa (1987).

War of Yucatán. At what point in history, however, the communities in this study began actively participating in the pilgrimage to the stela-cross is unclear and requires further research.

4.2 Social Context

From a broader perspective, there is a vibrant pilgrimage tradition throughout Yucatán, much of it tied to important Catholic celebrations devoted to the Three Magi and an assortment of Virgins. Such journeys can be undertaken by lone individuals or organized groups and can be made on foot or by vehicle. One may also make a pilgrimage in spirit by donating money, food, or material goods to the actual participants; and those contributing in this manner can later expect to have their names read in front of the object of their veneration (Astor-Aguilera 2004). Pilgrimages can be made to and from adjacent villages in Yucatán, Campeche, and Quintana Roo, or with pilgrims originating from distant Maya villages in Belize, Central America, at the southern end of the peninsula proper.

There are also pilgrimages nested within another pilgrimage, whereby the venerated object is taken on a circuit to other shrine centers, and this activity generates smaller festivities within the larger pilgrimage festival. As alluded to above, the *gremio* pilgrimage of interest in this analysis is only loosely or informally connected to Catholicism. Indeed, its festivities, dances, and processions have a rather ambiguous Catholic origin (Fernández Repetto and Negroe Sierra 1997: 6f.). Accordingly, a Catholic priest is not present at the offerings and rituals conducted in the Maya shrine; indeed, these particular festivities are not only not sanctioned by the Catholic Church but, in the case presented here, key activities are regarded by some clergy as outright heretical.

The *gremio* pilgrimage discussed here was made from the village of X-Kabil, Quintana Roo, to the village of Xokén, Yucatán, and has been participated in and observed in the field by Astor-Aguilera since 1999 to the present. This pilgrimage is made annually by many villagers in the surrounding region to venerate the *Kruz Tun*, "Lord Stone," which is the name given the stone cross discussed in the preceding section. Due to the veneration and manipulation of ecological beings, as conducted by the Maya in relation to this stone, this monolith may be symbolically interpreted as a communicating object that anchors the Maya's quadripartitioned world; indeed, the presence of this ancient monolith is why the shrine site is referred to as *u chukukil yok'ol kaab* – "the earth's center."

Prior to departing on this pilgrimage, one of Astor-Aguilera's consultants usually places conch shells directly in front of X-Kabil's main entrance crosses. Placing the conchs by these icons is meant to encourage invisible beings associated with the these crosses to blow and trumpet the shells, and thereby alerting the *cháako'ob* forest dwelling entities who function as the Maya's rain patrons. According to Schele and Miller (1986: 303), the trumpeting of conch shells by the ancient Maya alluded to dream-like states and in contemporary Yucatán dreams conch shells are associated with ancestors, communicating crosses, the male-likened clouds and their rain, and, notably here, the onset of this pilgrimage (Astor-Aguilera 2004).

Ostensibly, the *gremio* pilgrimage serves at least three functions by: 1) creating in practice a solidarity among villagers as it unifies them through a ritualization bond as they prepare for and enact the event, 2) fostering intervillage solidarity through combined efforts to annually congregate and venerate a stela-cross that symbolizes the Maya themselves, and 3) establishing lasting friendships from previous generations and extending them to present offspring and their succeeding descendants. Specifically, then, this pilgrimage represents the Maya as a people, who in venerating their ancient rain and forest patrons, continue to uphold their indigenous traditions. Indeed, some of Astor-Aguilera's consultants note that they participate in the event in order to keep the earth and sky in balance and in this sense the pilgrimage is foremost an indigenous world renewal rite.

This pilgrimage, moreover, embodies the social fact of the necessity of sustenance and the social context that extends honor and prestige to those who engage in its rituals, even an outsider such as an anthropologist.[11] By participating in the pilgrimage to Xokén, and the ritualization activities at the stela-cross, symbolic capital and social prestige is garnered, legitimated, and expressed simultaneously (see Bell 1992: 221f.; Bourdieu 1977: 171). In these Maya villages, prestige equals social respect and symbolic power based on debt and merit; and, for this reason, the duty and privilege of pil-

11 Astor-Aguilera's standing in both the X-Kabil and Xokén communities changed dramatically after repeated participation in the pilgrimage to the stone cross (Astor-Aguilera 2004). As of this writing Astor-Aguilera recently took on the *kuch*, cargo or burden, never before offered to a non-Maya outsider, of helping to cosponsor and coorganize the February 2008 X-Kabil pilgrimage to the Kruz Tun of Chúumuk Lu'um.

grimage sponsorship is rotated among the various communities via their corresponding ritual specialists. In effect, this rotation further binds the villages and their native "priests" in the annual renewing of their quadripartitioned world.

The contemporary pilgrimage appears to serve a similar function as the upright stones documented in the colonial period (see Landa in Tozzer 1941: 168f.) as well as the ancient practice of dividing the sky from the earth and the quadripartite ordering of the Maya landscape (Roys 1933: 99f.). Indeed, Landa (in Tozzer 1941: 136f.) documented that rain beings as well as other nonhuman entities, that held up the quadripartitioned Maya world, were oriented to different world directions and were each associated with different colors. Furthermore, Taube (1992: 92–99) associates rain entities with Bacab sky holders, in relation to a quadripartite nonhuman, which in turn is associated with clefts, conch shells, and tortoise shells – this entity being designated by Schellhas (1904: 37f.) as the so-called "God N." In a similar vein, Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934: 111–115) noted that Maya quadripartitioning was related to cross icons and rain. As discussed below, the stone cross which is the focus of the contemporary pilgrimage is regarded as the center of the Maya quadripartite world where the rain entities converge.[12]

4.3 Ceremonial Climax

The *gremio* pilgrimage, held annually in anticipation of each year's rainy season, ends after four days of constant activity. Each day is latently dedicated to a different world direction associated with a particular Chak rain patron. Furthermore, with each ritual day the four respective rain patrons converge at, over, and under the stela-cross. Accordingly, some of the local Maya maintain that the stela-cross grows from the center of the earth and extends symbolically upward into the sky while branching into the four world directions (Astor-Aguilera 2004). Newsome (2001: 169) suggests that Classic Maya period stelae also recorded the "location where the directional oppositions of the world converge: the crossroads of the earth, sky, and four directions." To reiterate, then, some of the contemporary Yucatec-Maya regard the monolith at Chúumuk Lu'um as having a very similar function in that this site is where the rain patrons converge and disperse (Astor-Aguilera 2000).

Each of the four pilgrimage days is sponsored by one specific village whose duty rotates on a three-year basis. That village is in charge of their specific day's offerings as constituted by prayers, food, music, and dance – all provided free of charge to anyone attending – while ostensibly done in honor of the monolith cross. Since all food and drink is financially backed by each of the four villages on their respective assigned days, there is minimal barter or other economic transactions during pilgrimage time. At the same time, each village contingent hauls its own foodstuffs, props, sleeping gear, and other possessions on the trek to Chúumuk Lu'um. This pilgrimage, once at the site, involves continuous offerings to the stela-cross each day and night, with each new day beginning at *chúumuk k'in*, mid-day, when the sun is at zenith. Live animal sacrifice, according to Gann (1918: 4), was offered to communicating crosses during the Social War of Yucatán and on some days of the contemporary pilgrimage the ritual killing of pigs does occur. Ordinarily, pigs destined for food alone are killed on the ground during daylight hours. However, sacrificial animals are handled as a proxy-like offering by throwing them on their backs (see Konrad 1991: 133), just before dawn breaks, and ritually killed on a raised stone altar in honor of the monolithic cross (Astor-Aguilera 2004).

Each day's rituals and prayers are concluded, approximately before the sun sets, with the "Dance of the Pig's Head."[13] Performed in honor of the stone cross, Maya men dance with one, two, or three pigs' heads while splashing *báalche'*, a ritual mead-like drink of low alcohol content, toward the women at the gathering. The dance involves a movement of thirteen counter-clockwise turns and, then, a precise clockwise repetition of the same turns. Indeed, the clockwise movement must be performed at an instant in order to "unwind" the energy being fed to the cross. Some local Maya believe that the ritual of the pig dance "feeds" the monolith and, if not unwound, makes the stela-cross much more powerful than it is already. Related to this is the belief that while the monolith can be benevolent, it can also act harshly toward people if displeased for some reason or another. Displeasure of the stela-cross is evidenced, for example, by past droughts or widespread illness in the villages who attend to it (Astor-Aguilera 2000).

12 Paxton (2001: 96f.) projects a center zenith point for the Yucatán peninsula, although her interest pertains to the ancient site of Chichen Itzá, at approximately the same latitude as the Xokén stone cross.

13 Astor-Aguilera (1998), Fernández Repetto (1984: 83), and Fernández Repetto and Negroe Sierra (1997: 8).

4.4 Backstage or Latent Dimensions

More than 70 years ago Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934: 111) stated in their classic monograph, "Chan Kom. A Maya Village," that the Yucatec-Maya of that time saw crosses everywhere in their natural surroundings. The same holds true for the people of the present study, even though Maya culture is clearly changing under the impact of North American influence and globalization. This change brings considerable uncertainty. Arguably, the Quintana Roo-Maya continue practicing their forefathers' religion, albeit transformed, because not only is the future uncertain but the present as well. The reduction of Maya power by the Spanish led to various revitalization movements with the Social War of 1847 being the most prominent. These political struggles have continued in relation to the Mexican nation-state; indeed, the ritualization activities of the *gremio* pilgrimage serve to mediate anxieties generated in the clash between local and global interests. "Ritualization," as used by Astor-Aguilera, incorporates a sense of nonroutine solidarity production, situational to specific circumstances, that relate personal experiences through cultural activities as manifest in individual agency, practice, and symbolic interpretation that seek to transform and thus generate specific outcomes.[14] Ritual production, in this manner, then, is capable of generating the kind of experience which Murphy (1971) said bridges "the contradiction between norm and action and mediate[s] the alienation of man from his fellow man."

The pervasiveness of indigenous Maya cosmology in this *gremio* pilgrimage is readily apparent to Catholic priests in this region of Yucatán, some of whom have confided to Astor-Aguilera that they would rather the "pagan" Maya crosses go away. The condemning view of one priest was expressed as follows: "These Maya seem to be chained to ancient customs and those that do not demonstrate that tendency upfront do the same once the back is turned." Despite their generally censorious attitudes, some clergy acknowledge that perhaps non-Catholic traditional Maya customs serve as a form of cultural coherence or resistance and, for this reason, they will often look away and ignore those practices with which they disagree. Another reason the Catholic priests tend to ignore what they perceive as pagan Indian religious practice is that the Maya are many and the clergy are few. Furthermore, the Catholic priests are well aware that the outbreak of the Social War of Yucatán occurred in and around these same Maya communities. At a latent or unconscious level, then, *gremios* oppose the hegemony of the dominant Mexican society; however, opposition, or what scholars often term "resistance," is usually a culturally coherent practical logic based on the quotidian concerns of the day (Fernández Repetto 1984: 84f., 1988: 37–48).

Several key social dynamics characterize the Maya participants in the pilgrimage to Xokén: 1) despite their proximity to urban towns, they are not passive recipients of state, national, or global influences but rather selectively accept or reject external ideas and technologies; 2) rather than disintegrating through complete assimilation into Mexican society, they conduct their daily existence by what they consider their traditional mode of life (anthropological debate of the term "traditional" notwithstanding); and 3) wage work often fuels rather than diminishes the prominence of Maya festivals by providing increasingly larger funds than were previously available. While the above dynamics do not go entirely unnoticed by casual observers in nearby towns like Valladolid, the complexity of the pilgrimage experience is best understood through direct participation in its rituals and deep immersion in the daily lives of those involved in the event.

Values placed upon pilgrimage practice are dichotomized by mainstream Mexican society into what is "good" and what is "bad" for the Maya, with the latter implying social-psychological barriers to change. Yet, these processes have inherent paradoxes in that external influences may be accepted through a process of internalization and domestication, that is, making another's symbol one's own. Some traditional practices are not easily eradicated because the Catholic clergy historically "allowed" them in order to facilitate conversion. In this regard, an interesting parallel exists between Maya and Andean crosses. As with the Maya, Andean pre-Columbian cosmologies were subtly integrated within the context of Roman Catholic religious expression. According to Urton (1990: 97–104), the colonial Catholic clergy's own limited interest and presence in some communities allowed central Andean elements to be retained and, therefore, are presently visible in rain-bringing festival ritual cycles. In the Andean communities, social cooperation is essential not only for communal water management practices supporting agriculture but also for the ritual-symbolic movement of agriculture-linked crosses which represent rain and hail through a linking of the cruciform icon with

14 See Bell (1992: 92, 140f.), Klass (1995: 32), and Monaghan (1998).

intersecting axes of the heavens (Urton 1981: 129–150; 1990: 107).

The Andean crosses are strikingly similar in function to Maya crosses used for rain petitions. Moreover, and paralleling the social cooperation in indigenous Andean communities, *gremios* in Yucatán are used by the Maya for their own purposes rather than those intended by the Catholic Church (Fernández Repetto and Negroe Sierra 1997: 5). Maya pilgrimages may not be employed consciously to defuse Catholic, state, and federal hegemonies. However, resistance occurs nonetheless through sheer persistence of certain ritual forms and practices. As Bonfil Batalla (1996: 10) has commented regarding Mexico's indigenous peoples' way of life:

> We constantly have in front of us a material vestige, a way of feeling and doing certain things, a name, a food, a face. All of these things reiterate the dynamic continuity of what has been created here over many centuries.

Resistance at this level, then, is a matter of people living as their parents have lived. Today's young Maya, however, are likely to become more formally educated about their past and present history and status. As more Maya become educated, engage in wage work, and are exposed to other religions, their futures are not as clear.[15]

5 Southern Chipewyan: The Patuanak Pilgrimage

5.1 Historical Origins

The Catholic mission in northern Saskatchewan decentralized its operations in the early 20th century, and personnel based at Île-à-la-Crosse began ministering to groups of Chipewyan, Cree, and Métis in far-flung locales creating a network of small churches staffed with itinerant priests.[16] Among several small villages occupied by the English River Band of Chipewyan, Patuanak received the forceful attention of the Oblate missionary Father Louis Moraud. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1913 and arrived in northern Saskatchewan in 1915. Much of Moraud's career over the next 50 years would be spent working and living among the English River Chipewyan.

As a priest, Moraud was widely admired by his fellow clergy and his congregation for his single-minded devotion to ecclesiastical work and for his ascetic life. However, his vigilant suppression of native magico-religious practices, coupled with a vigorous monitoring of Christian vices such as gambling and drinking, alienated some parishioners. The conflict was most profoundly felt in the negative sanctions he applied to traditional rituals of respect for slain animals. Violations of the delicate material-spiritual reciprocity between humans and caribou or moose were always a serious matter, and such violations could be exacerbated by priestly interference. After Moraud's death, these negative feelings were largely overshadowed by reverential feelings and the development of a lore that romanticizes the priest's life of hardships, mishaps, and alleged "miraculous" powers.[17]

The Chipewyan were touched by Moraud's desire to be buried on Patuanak church property adjacent to their reserve. After his death on July 29, 1965 the priest's grave became something of a shrine, its physical presence symbolizing the man's continuing relationship with the community. The people began observing the anniversary of Moraud's death, but what had been ostensibly a simple commemoration quickly evolved, by the mid-1970s, into a rather complex ceremonial occasion known colloquially as the "feast for Father Moraud" or the "Patuanak pilgrimage."

Father Moraud's death marked an important transition in the community. The late 1960s and early 1970s were a time when many Chipewyan families abandoned small outlying villages and gravitated toward new houses, a school, and other services emerging in Patuanak. Such changes were fueled primarily by a dramatic rise in transfer payments from the federal government (Indian Affairs Branch) to the English River Band (currently known as the English River First Nation). Gravel road access to the settlement was provided in the late 1970s paralleling the appearance of new uranium mining developments in northern Saskatchewan. Young Chipewyan are part of the commuter labor pool in this industry, which is changing the complexion of consumer habits and general social life in northern Saskatchewan. The historically familiar subsistence-commercial econ-

15 Significant social and economic changes are now affecting the nearby town of Felipe Carillo Puerto where the so-called "talking cross" supposedly first appeared.

16 Some of the material in this section appeared in preliminary form in Jarvenpa (1990). The present version has been updated and reorganized for comparative purposes.

17 Ironically, Moraud is fondly remembered for his ability in "talking" to birds, perhaps striking responsive chords in the Chipewyan's conception of animals as spiritual allies. Accounts of his traversing perilously thin ice or plummeting through treacherous rapids unscathed, among other feats, have achieved epic status.

omy, based upon seasonally nomadic teams of hunter-fishermen, persists but in a less pervasive fashion.[18]

5.2 Social Context

The Patuanak pilgrimage is one of several annual festivals which have emerged in Upper Churchill communities and serve to integrate people from an extensive region. Most of these occur during the summer months when economic activity is at low ebb. At that time many families find themselves in a state of perpetual travel by skiff, bush plane, and truck to various recreational festivals and religious pilgrimages.

By the end of the third week of July, Patuanak residents are well primed for the pilgrimage experience since many of them participate in an annual trek to Lac Sainte Anne in the neighboring province of Alberta, the site of a Roman Catholic mission since 1843 (Simon 1995: 10–12). For many decades it has been the locus of miracles. The summer pilgrimage there draws thousands of people from a large catchment area including much of Alberta and Saskatchewan but also extending to the Northwest Territories, Manitoba, and beyond. Nearly 20% of Patuanak's residents may travel to Lac Sainte Anne in some years. A long, tiring journey by bus caravan is simultaneously penitential and celebratory and is part of the attraction. Typically, these pilgrims are middle-aged or elderly Chipewyan. However, they are becoming disillusioned about a perceived decline in healing "miracles" and an increasing secularization and tawdriness in behavior.

The relative novelty, isolation, and small scale of the Patuanak pilgrimage contrast sharply with Lac Sainte Anne and make it particularly attractive to its adherents. While the climax of this event generally falls on July 29th, the pilgrimage proceedings begin three to five days earlier with the return of local residents from Lac Sainte Anne and the arrival of visiting pilgrims from native communities throughout northern Saskatchewan. Especially prominent are Chipewyan from nearby communities such as Dillon who travel by motorized skiff and, in recent years, by truck. Chipewyan from more distant settlements, such as Portage La Loche, Turnor Lake, Black Lake, and Wollaston Lake, are also heavily represented. These people most often journey by chartered bush planes. Also, there is a sizeable contingent of Cree and Métis-Cree pilgrims traveling by skiff and truck from the nearby Churchill River communities of Île-à-la-Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, Beauval, and Pinehouse Lake.

The arrival process itself is a significant, albeit informal part of pilgrimage drama. The bustle of converging bush planes, skiffs, and pickup trucks creates an air of excitement and tension. Patuanak residents greet relatives and friends they have not seen in years or, in some instances, decades. A sense of spectacle emerges as the waterfront and center of the settlement are inundated with vehicles. Some visitors are given lodging in the houses of local acquaintances, but most pilgrims are equipped with tents, bedrolls, and cooking paraphernalia. A sprawling tent village soon encircles the church grounds and adjacent areas of the Patuanak reserve easily doubling the local population, from about 600 to 1,200 people, for example, in the late 1970s.

Before the culminating day of the pilgrimage there is little sense of urgency or formality. Individuals and family groups sporadically walk to the church grounds where they pray for Father Moraud's guidance and assistance at the latter's grave. Occasionally, groups of elderly pilgrims meet at the grave site for evening prayer and hymn sessions. Nonetheless, the bulk of each day is spent in rather restrained but pervasive socializing on the church grounds or near the Hudson's Bay Company store. Middle aged and elderly pilgrims often seek each other out in the shaded sides of houses and tents to relive past experiences and to share the news and gossip of recent times. Where such gatherings are culturally mixed, conversation tends to be conducted in the common medium of Cree, historically a lingua franca between Indians in this area.

A few entrepreneurial individuals from Patuanak have attempted to capitalize on the population influx with food concessions. These have involved picnic-style lunches on a back stoop, a makeshift hamburger stand, soda sold from the back of a pickup truck, and similar operations. Although fairs and markets have been conspicuous elements of Catholic-oriented pilgrimages since the Middle Ages (Turner 1974: 187f.), the ephemeral business efforts of Patuanak residents do not constitute a bazaar or well-organized arena of native exchange. Instead, the church itself maintains control in this area. The most prominent and well-managed pilgrimage concession is a booth on church grounds selling Catholic religious paraphernalia. This stand

18 Presently Patuanak contains over 800 Chipewyan residents, and nearly three-quarters of them have federal Treaty status. A somewhat transient "service-oriented" class of about a dozen White residents is associated with a Hudson's Bay Company store (bought out by Northern Stores Ltd. in the late 1980s), a government-supported school, the Catholic Church, and a health clinic.

does a brisk business in medallions, pendants, buttons, necklaces, bracelets, and framed photographs of the Pope. Catalog mail orders are taken for more exotic wares.

Pilgrims consciously recognize and endorse a heightened sense of communion. Echoing the comments of many of his companions during the 1975 pilgrimage, a Chipewyan visitor from the village of Dillon observed: "Here people treat you right. You can go in anybody's house, ask for anything. They give it to you. Share everything." The clergy holds similar views, and while pleased by the increased visibility and involvement of the church at this time, it underplays its own role while emphasizing grassroots forces. For example, during the 1980 pilgrimage one of several visiting priests commented:

> This pilgrimage is the peoples' idea. Yes, they started this for Father Moraud. Look at all the people gathered here. They love to gather together like this. It is their greatest hallmark, their hospitality. When they get together like this, it doesn't matter who you are, where you are from. You are welcome. You are welcome in any house, in any tent. The people really enjoy this.

Arguably, the camaraderie and mildly festive atmosphere, which pervade the Patuanak pilgrimage, comprise a kind of spontaneous communitas in the sense meant by Turner (1974: 169). Perhaps this has not been fully or successfully transformed into a more socially organized normative communitas. Of relevance here is an element of generational conflict regarding the kinds of social activity appropriate during pilgrimage time. In the interethnic universe of the Upper Churchill region, Patuanak Chipewyan are known as rather conservative rustic "bush" Indians and as hardworking churchgoing people (Jarvenpa 1982a: 294). Patuanak elders, for example, have a reputation for strictness regarding alcohol use, at least in official contexts. Their views can take on the character of a general proscription on drinking during the days of the pilgrimage.[19]

Drinking still occurs, however, particularly among parties of young men. Yet, it is highly covert. Some adolescents and young adults may attempt to organize evening dances as a way of heightening the festive atmosphere in Patuanak, but such plans are often thwarted by elders and band officials who often receive support from the clergy. Recalling their own personal experiences with Father Moraud and his restraints on behavioral excess, Chipewyan elders want to promote an air of somberness in keeping with these memories.

Given the foregoing account, it might appear that Patuanak pilgrims are journeying toward the sacral and away from the secular. This is expressed as an ideal, but it is selectively applied. There is no attempt to abstain from one of the esteemed pastimes of the middle aged and elderly, bingo. Boisterous, celebratory sessions of bingo attract hundreds of pilgrims during the evening hours. Such activity is tolerantly condoned by the priests who comment jokingly about having to compete with "high bingo." Sacral and secular elements are indeed intertwined, but not in an atmosphere devoid of dissension. Following Eade and Sallnow (1991), such conflict might be seen as different visions of or "competing discourses" about the pilgrimage. While this interpretation has merit, debates about festivity and levity also reflect a growing generational divide within the Chipewyan community generally.

Other developments suggest movement toward a more structured and harmonious normative communitas. As with other Upper Churchill recreational festivals, the Patuanak pilgrimage is a form of mass social contact between Chipewyan and Cree. These mass visitations are significant because they occur during periods of publicly sanctioned good will and, thereby, provide a likely context within which specific kinds of Chipewyan-Cree cooperative relations play out. This is the case regarding magico-medicinal curing services. The Patuanak pilgrimage has become a recognized stopping place for at least one Cree "medicine man" (*manitukasiu* in Cree), and the Chipewyan eagerly await his arrival. They openly express what they feel is Cree superiority in magical and medicinal knowledge. Accordingly, a beneficial patron-client system has developed with itinerant Cree curers receiving payment from Chipewyan patients for the treatment of illness (Jarvenpa 1982a: 291–293). These transactions are part of a larger system of interethnic exchange and identity maintenance which depends upon the complementarity of cultural differences, in the sense meant by Barth (1969: 15–19).

Despite the Catholic clergy's censorious attitude toward other areas of native religion, they tolerate the institution of medicine men, curers, and diviners. In part, this may be because the Indian people themselves do not view "Cree medicine" or "old Indian medicine" (*nedi* in Chipewyan), as it is sometimes called, as something incompatible with or mutually exclusive of other kinds of health care. They readily avail themselves of Western medicine, surgery, and medical facilities and, of course, make

19 In recent years members of Alcoholics Anonymous have organized meetings, with mixed success, during the pilgrimage in order to disseminate their message to a large audience.

annual pilgrimages to the sites of healing miracles. Moreover, the church's reputation is usually enhanced by the modality of the miraculous. During the 1979 pilgrimage an elderly blind Chipewyan woman from Wollaston Lake had her sight restored after assembled pilgrims prayed and sang in her behalf for a full day at the Moraud grave site. Emotionally moved pilgrims quickly spread the news throughout the community, prefaced by the announcement: "It's a miracle! It's a miracle!" The episode served to confirm the efficacy and sanctity of Father Moraud, Moraud's grave, the church property, and the pilgrimage in general.

5.3 Ceremonial Climax

Catholic clergymen are present throughout the pilgrimage, but they maintain a relatively low profile for the first few days, conducting rosaries and evening masses in the church. They become more visible on the final and climactic day, July 29th, when a large outdoor mass conducted at Father Moraud's grave site becomes the focal point and culmination of the event. On this significant and solemn day, the local resident priest who normally services the Patuanak congregation will be assisted by other priests from the region and the bishop of the district, centered in The Pas, Manitoba. Notably, the bishop adopts a somewhat proprietary attitude toward the proceedings, perhaps understanding and hoping to foster the kind of intense relationship that wedded Moraud and his followers.

The bustle of the promenade ceases on this final day. By noon many pilgrims begin assembling on the church grounds where they talk quietly in small groups. A long queue forms outside the nearby priests' house to present confessions prior to receiving Communion at the mass. Many pilgrims have forsaken everyday work clothes and arrive for the final mass in formal attire reserved for such occasions. Middle aged and elderly people wear beaded moosehide jackets and vests, Siwash sweaters, old wool suits, cotton print dresses, and the like. Younger pilgrims prefer stylish jeans, dress slacks, western shirts and boots, and full-skirted pastel dresses.

Ushers and their assistants begin hauling pews outside the church near the rear of the building where a large log canopy covers Father Moraud's grave. A few pews are placed directly under the canopy to accommodate an organist, a small group of Chipewyan hymn singers, elderly and enfeebled pilgrims, and the clergy. Remaining pews are situated outside the canopy, but most pilgrims sit contentedly on the ground in a large semicircle oriented toward the grave. By midafternoon hundreds of people have amassed at the grave site. This is a visually dramatic formation in local terms. The spectacle adds to the momentousness of the occasion. The atmosphere is latent with expectation.

At this point it is customary for a bishop, assisted by two or three priests, to initiate the mass with an opening prayer and announcements delivered in Chipewyan, Cree, and English. An opening hymn follows, sung in Chipewyan and enthusiastically led by elders of the Patuanak church. Hymn singing is, perhaps, among the most pleasurable aspect of church and pilgrimage life for many Chipewyan and Cree alike. It is an omnipresent feature of the caravans journeying toward Patuanak and other pilgrimage sites. The often repeated refrain, "Ave, Ave, Ave Maria!," has a euphoric effect on the large crowd. Following in quick succession are two sets of scripture readings. One is offered by a priest and the other by a local resident, and these are punctuated by hymns.

The drama of the mass is heightened with the delivery of the bishop's sermon. During the 1980 pilgrimage, in an effort to crystallize the meaning of the moment, he appealed to analogies about memorialism:

> We go to the grave of the Unknown Soldier because the brave fighting men gave their lives in the war so we can be free. People gather at the grave of President John F. Kennedy because he was a great leader, and he stood for peace and dignity. And today we gather at the grave of Father Moraud because he stands for God and he stood for you! His life he gave for you. When he was alive all his thoughts were of you, his people. At night he dreamed of you because that's how much he loved you . . . Because you are a creation of God. This is a miracle. You are a miracle! . . . So you must believe in miracles, and you are here today to give praise to the miracle of Father Moraud's love for you and God's love of you.

The attending priests offer additional messages, sometimes insightfully codifying universal themes about the relationship between sacrifice and communitas. During the 1979 pilgrimage, for example, one of the priests observed:

> Getting together this way is good and beautiful! Throughout history pilgrimages have been important in Christian life, and it's good because it gives us a feeling of brotherhood and a new awareness of God and Jesus Christ. And traveling a long way to come here is a good thing too. It would not be a real pilgrimage if we did not feel tired and hungry, eh? If it was something easy to do, it would not be a real pilgrimage.

After such messages are delivered in the three local languages, additional prayers and hymns follow, interrupted momentarily by the collection of offerings. Four ushers, prominent Chipewyan men in the Patuanak church, distribute the collection baskets. These men also serve as general crowd control specialists throughout the ceremony, directing pilgrims to appropriate seats, rounding up stray dogs, and subduing boisterous children. Moreover, these same individuals assist the bishop and his assistants in the final ritual of the mass, the receiving of Communion. Under ordinary circumstances the people here are eager to receive the sacrament. However, hundreds of anxious pilgrims can create a logistical bottleneck. To accommodate this Communion rush, several parallel queues are arranged before a phalanx of priests who simultaneously administer the sacramental wafers.

The conclusion of the mass is only a prelude to the most profound moment of the pilgrimage. The climax arrives as people crowd into the back of the log canopy to be near Father Moraud. His grave and its immediate environs constitute the sacred epicenter of the Patuanak pilgrimage. The grave is an unprepossessing site marked by a tubular steel, railing and surrounded by glistening white sand hauled from a nearby lakeshore. More pointedly, the focus of attention is a large commemorative plaque replete with a bas-relief likeness of Father Moraud. Even though most pilgrims have visited the shrine every day, this last visit is filled with emotional intensity. Normal reserve and reticence are dropped as people approach the figure of Moraud. They lay their hands upon the bronzed hands of the plaque. In this manner each pilgrim leans against Father Moraud's image and, with eyes closed tightly in concentration, whispers a quick prayer. Some achieve an ecstatic state by this tangible grasping of Moraud's essence or power. The transmission is completed in a few seconds. Each person crosses himself before relinquishing the spot to others.

The final encounter with Father Moraud signals the end of the pilgrimage for many people. Others continue to crowd about the grave site and observe the devotions of fellow pilgrims. Yet others focus their attention on a portable feature of the grave shrine, a small table displaying some of Moraud's personal effects: eyeglasses, hymnbook, and bible, among others. These relics are gently touched and held while immersed intensely in prayer. Another significant feature of the grave site, and perhaps sanctified by sheer context, are large washtubs filled with holy water. An assortment of canning jars, plastic bottles, thermos jugs, and other vessels are filled by pilgrims who later use the water in their homes for healing and good fortune.

As people depart the grave site the pilgrimage is effectively at an end. The pilgrims feel renewed, and their exodus from Patuanak is rapid and dramatic. Tents are quickly collapsed, and the community is enveloped in dust and clamor as trucks, skiffs, and bush planes simultaneously move out. The feast for Father Moraud is over for another year.

5.4 Backstage or Latent Dimensions

However imperfectly or incompletely, the Patuanak pilgrimage exhibits both *liminality* and communitas in the broad sense meant by Turner. Interethnic tensions and intercommunity rivalries are suspended during a sacred time of fellowship. Pilgrims leave behind a secular world of travails and sinfulness and, by approaching Moraud's center of power, move toward a state of at least temporary redemption and renewal. Patuanak's peripherality, far removed from Canadian centers of political power and ecclesiastical authority, is characteristic of pilgrimage loci in other areas, including Xokén in Yucatán, Mexico. Such peripherality is a spatial dimension of the liminality found in rites of passage (Turner 1974: 192, 197). Even in the context of northwestern Saskatchewan, Patuanak is a remote and somewhat obscure destination. Thus, Indian pilgrims deriving from elsewhere may be seen as journeying toward a sort of "limen" or "threshold."

Nonetheless, the pilgrimage can become an arena in which intracommunity schism is expressed. This tendency may explain why a transition from a spontaneous toward a more socially organized normative communitas is not easily achieved. On the one hand, there is a desire to avoid the secularity of larger, more established pilgrimages or, more specifically, to eliminate those secular elements associated with social disintegration, such as excessive drinking and violence. On the other hand, the development of ethical codes and legal rules for furthering social control is not readily attained in a community with diffuse leadership. Despite the presence of elected governments in both Treaty and non-Treaty segments of the community, a strong tradition of Chipewyan consensuality and independence prevails in the decision making of adults.

Rather than directly controlling the pilgrimage community, therefore, elders, band officials, and other parties attempt to enlist the influence of church officials. In this manner, the clergy has gained de facto authority over many aspects of

the pilgrimage. This might seem logically consistent for all concerned since the event's overt *raison d'être*, Moraud himself, was of the Church. However, as we have seen, the clergy is caught between pressures for expanding its control and its own characterization of the pilgrimage as a native product created by and for local people. This contradiction may be appropriately symbolic of a large share of Indian-Eurocanadian relations.

While more systematic information is needed regarding the social composition and conscious motives of participants, the Patuanak pilgrimage supports some of Turner's ideas about the tension between obligation and choice, and its connection to liminality, in "pre-state" or "pre-industrial" society. The latter must be broadly conceived here, of course, to encompass subarctic hunting bands that have been more or less integrated into an industrial state organization in recent history. On the surface, the Patuanak pilgrimage is a voluntaristic experience. Individuals choose to make the journey or refrain in any given year. Although Patuanak residents are already in situ they may decide as individuals to expand or contract their involvement in the proceedings. In view of the event's short history, it is not surprising that an obligatory sense of pilgrimage is weakly developed. Yet, voluntarism of this kind does not mean that individual salvation is the only or even the primary motivating factor for participation.

Many pilgrims are indeed seeking personal redemption or relief from illness and other problems. However, many also pray in behalf of relatives and acquaintances. There is also an implicit understanding that the pilgrimage is a collection of "families" rather than individuals. Nuclear and extended family units, especially from nearby settlements, travel and camp together thereby reconstituting, if not renewing, their social existence. Indeed, the positioning of tents often reflects the arrangement of households in encampments or villages from which pilgrims derive. An important social matrix is maintained in the midst of an otherwise fluid, ephemeral aggregation. Divisive elements that may exist under ordinary circumstances are suppressed so that the nurturing propensities of families are emphasized. The good will of such families is transferred to the pilgrimage community at large, metaphorically the "big family" within which one expects to give and receive support. Of course, these forces are tempered by the special tension between the clergy and laity. As we have seen, the former quietly promotes the pilgrimage as an extension of its own interests but not to the extent of formally prescribing modes of participation. The latter, as ongoing creators of a novel devotional form, are establishing their own tradition of attendance and participation which follows some Church protocol but ultimately depends upon the proclivities and social chemistry of dozens of Chipewyan, Cree, and Métis families. Stated another way, the Patuanak pilgrimage operates at an intersection of voluntary and obligatory principles.

The arguments assembled thus far also lend support to Turner's conception of pilgrimages as quests for communitas in situations where the self has become alienated from community. The recent and relatively rapid transition from self-employed commercial and subsistence hunting families to individualized contractual wage labor in road construction and mining is having a profound impact upon the social and ethical constitution of the southern Chipewyan, especially the younger generation. Commitments to one extended family, or to the larger universe of one's bilateral kindred or *silot'ine*, may seem nebulous and less binding than the rewards for maximizing one's own prestige and economic security in the regional labor market (Jarvenpa 2004). Seen in this light, the pilgrimage becomes a form of collective resistance to the fragmenting forces of economic change and a celebration of the solidarity of families, kindreds, villages, and larger networks of people.

There is a compelling ingenuity in this quest. Its cultural creativity may be seen, for example, in the way that the pilgrimage reactivates and combines structural forms from the recent historical past. As a bustling summer tent community, the pilgrimage site physically and kinetically resurrects sights, sounds, and aromas associated with three familiar socio-settlement forms:

1) Regional band aggregations of Chipewyan and Cree at summer fishing stations. This was the primary means, for example, by which southern Chipewyan families, kindreds, and local bands reaffirmed themselves as a collectivity, as Kesyehot'ine.

2) Annual trade gatherings of native families at the HBC headquarters in Île-à-la-Crosse. Through most of the 19th century this cosmopolitan trading post community accommodated hundreds of Chipewyan and Cree during the summer months.

3) Religious education meetings at the Roman Catholic mission in Île-à-la-Crosse. For the last half of the 19th century, Chipewyan, Cree, and Métis alike assembled in large summer tent encampments for eight days of devotional instruction by priests.

These aggregations were not always spatially or temporally discrete. As the fur trade declined in the 20th century, and as both mission and trading institutions decentralized their operations, In-

dian groups became less mobile and the massive summer tent encampments withered. Older people fondly recall these encampment experiences, however, and they see their positive qualities recast in the pilgrimage: scores of tents situated on a good fishing lake, family hearths abounding with cooking game and a perpetual supply of tea, the luxury of leisure and unhurried conversation with friends, the spectacle of seldom-seen travelers from distant territories, and the expectation of novel encounters with whites.

The pilgrimage is, therefore, culturally syncretic or hybridic. It resonates with the three historically familiar socio-settlement forms and, in effect, promotes three common types of liminal disengagement: festivity, trade, and solemnity (Turner 1974: 221). The festive and trade aspects have been rather weakly developed thus far. It remains to be seen if a balance in these three foci emerges in the future.

6 Discussion

The following table provides a tabular comparison of the key dynamics of the Maya and Chipewyan pilgrimages. Ensuing discussion highlights major differences and similarities as a means of drawing broad implications about pilgrimages as social processes.

6.1 Developmental Trajectories

Immediately apparent is the immense difference in time depth. The Maya pilgrimage to Xokén appears to have it roots in communicating cross rituals at Chúumuk Lu'um sometime in the late Postclassic period (i.e., A.D. 1200–1530). Whether or not it was reconfigured in a more contemporary form during the Social War of 1847 is an open question.

Table: Comparison of Maya and Chipewyan Pilgrimage Dynamics.

Yucatec-Maya	Southern Chipewyan
Historical Origins	**Historical Origins**
Postclassic Ixta Maya pilgrimages to ancient stela-cross at site of Chúumuk Lu'um	1965 commemoration of Catholic missionary's death at Patuanak
Social Context	**Social Context**
4-day February gathering of Quintana Roo Maya at Xokén, Yucatán	3-to 5-day July gathering of Chipewyan, Cree, and Métis at village of Patuanak
Sponsorship of festival days rotated among participating communities	Pilgrimage hosted by Patuanak Chipewyan community
Maintenance of regional intervillage solidarity and friendships	Renewal of regional intervillage and interethnic ties and relationships
Performance of world renewal rite focused on rain patron entities, via veneration of the Kruz Tun or stela-cross	Arena for Chipewyan-Cree magico-medicinal services, praying for Father Moraud's assistance, anticipation of miraculous cures
Catholic clergy often condemnatory of pilgrimage proceedings	Presence of Catholic clergy low-key but strongly supportive of proceedings
Ceremonial Climax	**Ceremonial Climax**
Dance of the Pig's Head to feed and unwind energy fed to stone cross	Final mass and receipt of Father Moraud's power at latter's grave
Backstage or Latent Dimensions	**Backstage or Latent Dimensions**
Cultural resistance to Catholic church, state and national interests	Resistance to socially fragmenting effects of recent economic change
Legitimation and expression of social capital and prestige	Resurrection of historical socio-settlement forms and syncretism of Catholic orthodoxy with indigenous cultural themes
Expression of Maya identity	Reassessment of foundations of Chipewyan identity

Even so, this pilgrimage, or its antecedent form, has no less than 500 years of historical development. Its longevity and pronounced evocation of indigenous cosmology and religious practice make the Xokén experience an emphatically Maya performance. Aside from the usage "gremio," and the staging of some rituals in church facilities, the Xokén pilgrimage seems to operate with the very thinnest veneer of Catholicism. The fact that this veneer exists, however, including the occasional disparaging commentary of Catholic priests, is a significant oppositional dynamic.

By contrast, the Patuanak pilgrimage has less than 50 years of development. Indeed, it honors a missionary who was known personally by most middle-aged and elderly participants in the proceedings. Many of the overt trappings of the event, such as Father Moraud's grave shrine, prayer and hymn sessions, rosaries, and masses held in the local church, coupled with the approving presence of visiting priests, exemplify an essentially Roman Catholic event which happens to serve a subarctic Indian audience. The clergy itself has gained de facto control over many facets of the event despite its own characterization of the pilgrimage as an indigenous product, created by and for local people. Here Catholicism is more than a veneer. It is a significant part of daily religious practice woven into the tapestry of contemporary Chipewyan culture. Nonetheless, it would be erroneous to conclude that the Chipewyan are passive recipients of official Catholic doctrine or interests.

6.2 Accessing Power

For the Maya, the "Dance of the Pig's Head" is the culminating moment of their pilgrimage, when energy is cautiously fed to and then unwound from the stone cross to ensure cosmological balance at the point of intersection where the rain patron entities converge. This world renewal ceremony is profoundly social in context, whereby the community of pilgrims is investing in its own survival as a people by restoring and adjusting the forces of nature and the cosmos.

For the Chipewyan, the final encounter with Father Moraud is the climactic episode of their pilgrimage. While the social context involves hundreds of assembled guest-witnesses, the encounter at Moraud's grave becomes an individual quest as each pilgrim enters the priest's orbit of power to receive healing, redemption, or fortune. The physical suffering of the sick, individual quests for healing, and expectations of the miraculous are prominent themes at many Christian pilgrimage shrines, albeit not well studied (Eade and Sallnow 1991: 16f.). These themes are evident in the Patuanak pilgrimage as well, particularly at Moraud's grave shrine, but they occur in a backdrop of indigenous magico-medicinal curing services. Given Moraud's vigorous suppression of indigenous spirituality during his lifetime, this parallel discourse and practice of native healing becomes a counterpoint to and critique of the Catholic Church's heavy-handed missionizing history.

6.3 Identity Dynamics

The Xokén pilgrimage draws together Maya villagers from an extensive catchment area in eastern Yucatán and neighboring Quintana Roo and, thereby, reestablishes social ties between these people while reinforcing their regional identity as a Maya people. Identity in a larger pan-Maya sense is also expressed by participation in the world renewal rites centered upon the Kruz Tun or stone cross.

Similarly, the Patuanak pilgrimage socially integrates people from a large catchment area of indigenous communities in northwestern Saskatchewan. Here, however, expression of identity operates in a more complex or nuanced fashion. The Chipewyan people of Patuanak are hosting a multitribal or multiethnic assemblage with guests deriving from various Chipewyan, Cree, and Métis communities. In this context, identity as "Chipewyan" or "Cree" is underlined by sheer mass social contact and juxtaposition of locals and outsiders, of us and others, and, more emphatically, by the complementarity of difference manifested in magico-medicinal curing services.

The massive summer tent encampment, although an historically familiar socio-settlement form, has also become in recent times a primordial characteristic of Chipewyan and Upper Churchill pan-Indian identity. Recreating the summer gathering fundamentally distinguishes the "Chipewyan" or the "Indian" from all others and is, thereby, a uniquely cultural interpretation of identity. However, these cultural meanings were generated in response to radical shifts in local social and economic circumstances produced by the fur trade, missionization, government regulation of Indian affairs, and industrial development. As the realities of everyday life change, Upper Churchill natives are reassessing the cultural foundation of their identity, and this reassessment is being achieved, in part, through the encampment symbols and experiences of the Patuanak pilgrimage.

6.4 Modes of Resistance

In both cases, resistance to the hegemonies of colonial institutions and the state are subtle, if not latent, aspects of the pilgrimage experience. For the Maya, co-option or "domestication" of key Catholic symbols, such as the cross, facilitates the world renewal rite which underscores their very identity as a people, as Maya. In this sense, the pilgrimage to Xokén is more resistance to than accommodation of Catholicism.

By the same token, increased wage labor employment by some Maya provides the capital to infuse the pilgrimage with more elaborate foodstuffs and materiel. In this manner, economic change is harnessed by the pilgrimage as a means of resisting or ameliorating the impact of that very change.

By comparison, the Patuanak pilgrimage is a more syncretic or hybrid melding of indigenous and colonial European cultural traditions. Clearly, the Chipewyan have accommodated and embraced rather than resisted Catholicism. Resistance may be operating on another level, however. The sheer physical layout of the pilgrimage presents an inescapable symbolism with its masses of Indian tents wedged between the Catholic church and the Hudson's Bay Company post. Inadvertent or otherwise, this "sandwiching" of Indian between trader and missionary visually captures a fundamental dilemma of subarctic colonialism. For the Chipewyan, it is a less than subtle reminder of their unenviable history within HBC-Catholic Mission struggles in the Île-à-la-Crosse district. Viewed in general structural terms (Lévi-Strauss 1967), the pilgrimage symbolically recognizes and rejects the demoralizing legacy of colonialism and, thereby, is a conceptual means of coping with that dilemma.

7 Conclusion

We acknowledge that Turner and Turner's (1978) ideas do not apply to all pilgrimage action. However, their pioneering framework remains among the most viable and broad-ranged for its study. Clearly, ritual process, including communitas, is not a thing of harmonious perfection. Predating and anticipating practice theories, Turner (1967: 271 f.) recognized that "society is a process" where certain behaviors seldom observed or repeated may nevertheless be highly significant. Ultimately, then, notions of liminality, communitas, and anti-structure may serve the analysis of pilgrimage better when seen as a process. In working through our own ethnographic materials we take this position. The Xokén and Patuanak pilgrimages are best viewed as an unfolding process rather than something fixed, arrived at, or completed.

In a reflexive vein, yet compatible with the integrative position we are advocating, Dubisch (2004: 113) reports that she experienced firsthand the emotional aspects of pilgrimage, liminality, and communitas, that she had previously only observed in others. It is worth emphasizing here that Dubisch (2004: 117) recognizes the foregoing dynamics while not discounting the presence of "tensions and conflicts." Tanaka (1988: 21) also interprets pilgrimage as an assuring behavior that alleviates common human anxieties by strengthening cultural bonds and accepted behaviors within particular groups. And, in a related vein, Feldhaus (2003: 71) notes that some pilgrimages in India are life festivals providing geographical areas with an internal identification, as well as a bringing together of their villages, and that whatever rivalry exists still "expresses the unity, however, contentious," of the greater region.

Keeping the foregoing insights in mind, tempered by our understanding of the Xokén and Patuanak cases, we can return to our working definition of pilgrimage offered earlier in the article: "a multiday large-scale (by local standards) ceremonial event, often annual in occurrence, prescribed or not, enacted out of devotion with varied motives, consisting of nonlocal circulation by numerous individuals, to and from what may be considered socioreligious space." Our concern with circulation "to and from" is meant to counter the notion that pilgrimage ends once the pilgrims arrive at their geographic goal. We have yet to examine systematically the return journeys of Xokén and Patuanak pilgrims to their diverse home communities, or their varied preparations during the long interludes between pilgrimages. However, the issue deserves attention here as an important problem for future pilgrimage research at large.[20]

At the same time, many researchers, ourselves included, are aware of the multiplicity of responses and experiences unfolding among individual pilgrims. Some pilgrims experience profound personal change while others do not. Some may renew or express their faith. Some may strengthen

20 See Frey's (2004: 95–99) argument for studying pilgrims' preparations before initial departure as well as their return or homeward trips. Since individual pilgrims will not share a common home, of course, they cannot be studied en masse. In a related vein, Coleman and Eade (2004) develop a "cultures in motion" approach to pilgrimage life which focuses pointedly upon the behavior and conventions of traveling rather than upon the pilgrimage sites themselves.

their identity, and yet others may simply exhibit gratitude for renewing or creating friendships. As one of Astor-Aguilera's consultants has confided in discussing this anthropologist's pilgrimage participation and recently, as of this writing, as cosponsor, "We don't fool ourselves that all interpersonal strife is eliminated. Our joy in coming here and celebrating together is fleeting and sometimes superficial; however this the case may be, what you witness and feel is very important to us, working towards a common goal in bringing music and food to the Kruz Tun makes us, including you, feel like family." In the end, it may be the shared communal experience, per Turner and Turner's (1978: 3–7, 250) most significant aspect of liminality, its capacity to generate *communitas*, and not so much religious incentives, which emerges as the primary motivational factor promoting pilgrimage. Nonetheless, the sheer complexity and richness of pilgrimage life offer abundant theoretical space for the coexistence of Turnerian communitas and Eade and Sallnow's "competing discourses." These will be employed most effectively as complementary rather than competing or contradictory frameworks.

A departing thought, then, concerns the more encompassing manifestations of liminality. Is the pilgrimage part of an era of symbolic enrichment which aids in the historical transformation from one state of society to another – from semiautonomous band enclave to ethnic group and frontier working class, for example? Crumrine (1977: 151–156) suggests such a process for the elaborate ritual drama of Mayo Indian religious ceremonialism, interpreting it as part of the Mayo's liminal transition from a tribal society toward a rural peasantry. Tentatively, we believe similar dynamics are operating in Upper Churchill society. Clearly, the Patuanak pilgrimage does not embody the millenarian or messianic qualities that might presage cultural revitalization. Rather, it renews elements of Catholic religious orthodoxy and creatively combines them with significant themes and symbols from historical Chipewyan and Upper Churchill native culture. This creative tension undoubtedly will be played out over years and decades to come, since the industrialization of the Canadian Northlands and the pilgrimage itself are both in their infancy. In the case of the Maya, however, the long-lived Xokén pilgrimage exemplifies continuity more than transformation. While the scale and elaborateness of its festivities may expand, such change is directed toward retaining fundamental elements of Maya cosmology and identity.

Differences in time depth also raise questions about the longer-run viability of pilgrimages. With only 50 years of history, fueled by passionate involvement of older Chipewyan who personally knew Father Moraud, the Patuanak pilgrimage might seem like a transitory phenomenon, destined to wither with the passing of the oldest generation of pilgrims. Yet, this does not appear to be happening. The event has increased gradually in size and elaborateness, embracing new third and fourth generations of pilgrims who had no direct experience *with* Moraud in the flesh but who, nonetheless, now fully experience and partake *of* Moraud's spiritual power and who renew the community's fund of knowledge about the man through the telling and retelling of his epic life story.[21] Arguably, there are lessons to be learned about ancient gatherings, such as Xokén, by examining the dynamics of nascent pilgrimages like Patuanak. In this regard, the cultural particularities of the starting point may be of less interest than the sociopolitical conditions which allowed the devotional form to "take-off," gain momentum, and sustain itself as a multigenerational historical force transcending, at least periodically, divisions of age, gender, class, community, and ethnotribal status. Modeling such processes of pilgrimage birth and development will benefit by further comparative ethnographic and ethnohistorical research.

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21 Father Moraud's grave site and shrine have been upgraded in size and adornment recently with the addition of a grotto. Perhaps partly related to increased pilgrimage traffic, there are tentative plans to construct a new, larger Catholic church on the site of the present church built under Moraud's direction in 1937.

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