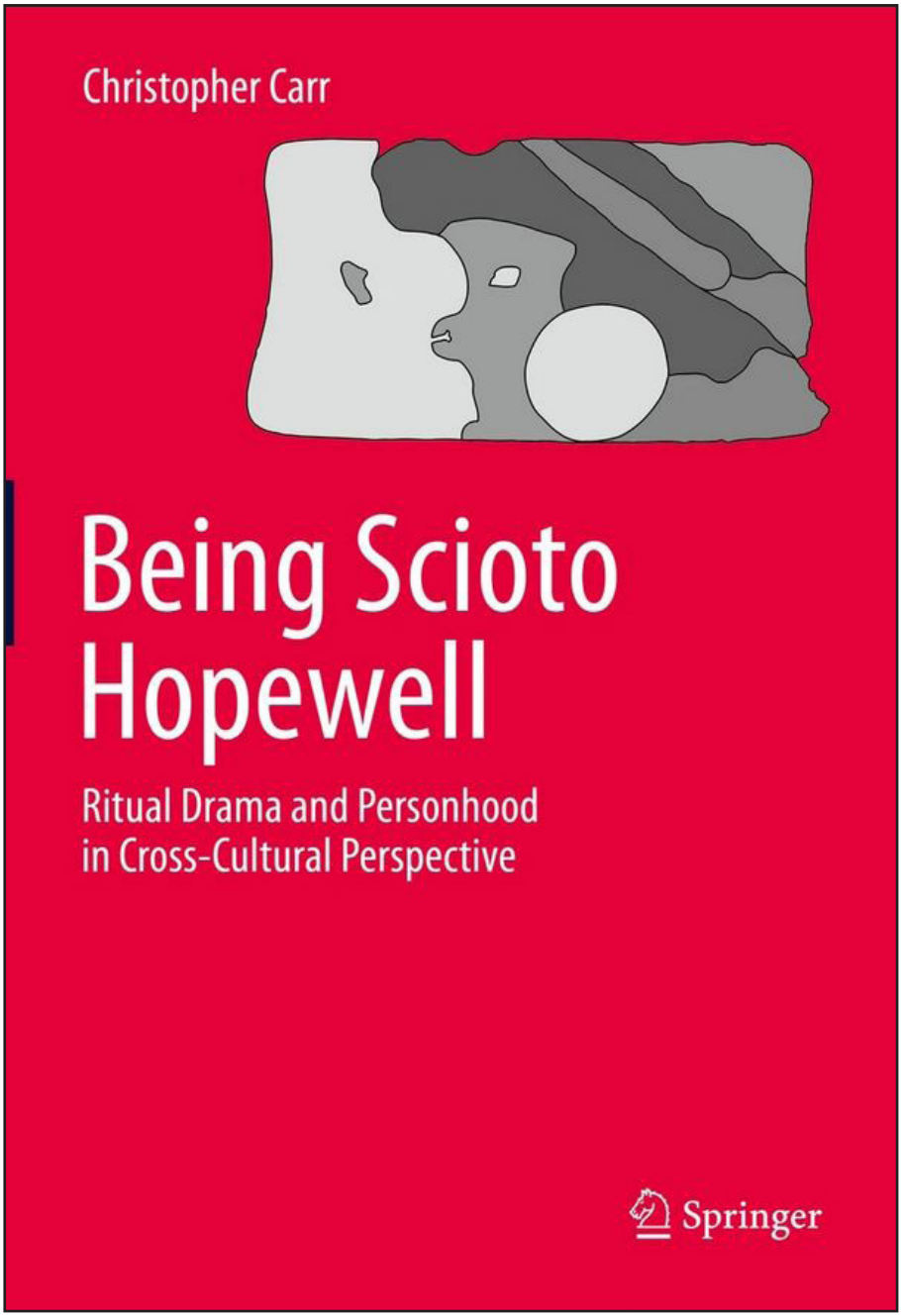

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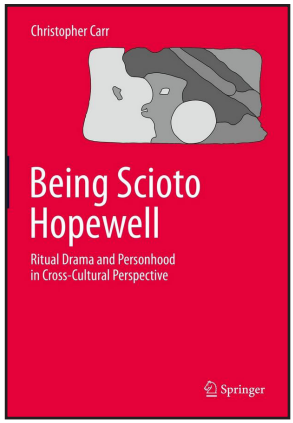

Being Scioto Hopewell: Ritual Drama and Personhood in Cross-Cultural Perspective. Volumes 1 & 2

Christopher Carr with contributions by Anna C. Novotny, William Rex Weeks, Jr., Christopher R. Caseldine, Brianna J. Rafidi, Heather L. Smyth, Mary F. Kupsch, and Samantha R. Feinberg. 2021 (January 2022). Springer, 1589 pp., 121 figures, 111 tables, 22 appendices, index, references. $219.99 (Hardcover), $169.00 (eBook).

Reviewed by Eve A. Hargrave and Kristin M. Hedman, University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

Being Scioto Hopewell: Ritual Drama and Personhood in Cross-Cultural Perspective is a two-volume work that provides a new theoretical and methodological approach to understanding the philosophical-religious knowledge and ritual practices of the Scioto Hopewell (50 BC to AD 350) people of central Ohio through the lens of Native American voices. Building upon much of their earlier research on Scioto Hopewell communities, the authors have enriched their methodologies and understanding of the diverse worlds of meanings within Hopewell mortuary ceremonies in Ohio and the Eastern Woodlands. They accomplish this by listening with intent and by incorporating indigenous voices in their interpretations of Hopewell peoples' past actions and motivations as evidenced by the archaeological record. This book focuses on two cornerstones of Scioto Hopewell life: dramatic performances within their charnel houses and notions and expressions of personhood. These foci intersect in the social category of the personnage—a social role and its associated features that are owned by a clan and retained in perpetuity within that clan through embodiment of an ancestral spirit during ceremonies.

The two volumes are divided into seven parts. In Part I, Christopher Carr and William Rex Weeks, Jr. present the theoretical and methodological foundations that are used to explore ritual drama and personhood. The authors are significantly influenced by A. Irving Hallowell's 'Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and Worldview' (1960). He emphasized that to understand a non-Western cultures, one must focus on the motivations of the people themselves which are determined by their world view and ontology—their notions of self in relation to other entities (both human and nonhuman) that constitute their world. The authors emphasize the importance of recognizing and avoiding interpretative biases that originate from one's personal worldview and western academic background by relying solely on native voices through oral histories, archaeology, and listening to living tribal members.

One major distinction between Western academic thought and many other cultures/settings is the view of religion as separate from everyday life and drawing a distinction between humans and the supernatural. Many indigenous peoples do not make such distinctions—their world includes both human and nonhuman beings, and their everyday life is imbued with a recognition of relationships among all beings. This insight is central to *Being Scioto Hopewell*.

The authors emphasize their reliance on 'thick prehistory'—an analytic approach inspired by Clifford Geertz's (1973) method of 'thick ethnographic description'—in order to identify how the mortuary ceremonies and sociability of Hopewell communities were guided by the unique worldviews of individual members and their social groups. Emphasis is placed on richly describing the ideas, actions, and material creations of actors within their particular social, cultural, natural, and historical contexts to provide the researcher insights into the actor's web of native cultural meanings and motivations for action. With this framework in mind, Carr and coauthors document ritual dramas and concepts of personhood among the Scioto Hopewell through the lens of three sources of Native voice: descendant post-contact historical Woodland Native American groups as recorded by ethnographers, travelers, and missionaries; the words of descendant contemporary Native Americans; and Ohio Hopewell peoples, themselves, as expressed in patterned contextual relations within the archaeological record.

The methodologies used throughout these volumes to interpret ritual drama and personhood are clearly identified by the authors. Of primary importance is the comprehensive documentary research of anthropological ethnographies and written descriptions gathered by travelers and missionaries in the 17th to 20th centuries from Native Americans in the Eastern Woodlands and Great Plains. Particular focus is placed on oral history descriptions of cosmology, the nature of souls, the souls' journeys to afterlives, definitions of personhood, and descriptions of the nonhuman persons (aboveground, underground-underwater) that they knew to inhabit their everyday world and the surrounding cosmos. The result is the compilation of a detailed systematized searchable database (provided as an online appendix) that includes all the data identified and used in the chapters. Exploratory data analysis is used to reveal inherent structures in the data that are most relevant to the topics of ritual drama and personhood.

The method of *Anthropologie de terrain* is used to aid in describing the potential interactions of individuals, material culture, and ceremonies within the archaeological context of Hopewell charnel houses and mounds. *Anthropologie de terrain* as defined by Duday (2006) focuses on the contextual relations present in the archaeological record between, on the one hand, the taphonomic and natural processes of burial and decom-position of the body and, on the other hand, the intentional ritual positioning and manipulation of bodies and objects or beings placed with or near them. Through detailed analysis, the observer seeks to objectively distinguish between natural processes that could lead to a particular burial position or artifact location versus clear manipulation of bodies and objects either at the time of burial or later. Such analysis provides critical insights into interactions between the living and the dead within the charnel houses.

Following Part I, the remainder of the two volumes is separated into two parts that explore ritual drama (Volume 1; Parts II, III, IV) and personhood (Volume 2; Parts V, VI, and VII). Carr (Part II, Chapter 4) begins the section on ritual drama with cross-cultural and historical definitions of ritual drama found in anthropology, history, and social sciences. For this study, Carr (precisely) defines ritual

drama as performance in a theatrical form with a mythic or historical plot that pertains to a society or social segment at large. Everyone within the collective either participates in the drama or is part of the audience. In North America, ritual dramas commonly include elements of the cosmos, and the characters participating in the dramas often assume or experientially become mythic beings, heroes, and/or spirit beings, including personnages.

Part III presents the bioarchaeological and ethnohistorical foundations used in reconstructing Hopewell ritual dramas: *L'Anthropologie de Terrain* for investigating mortuary records (Anna C. Novotny Chapter 5), and post-contact ethnohistorical narratives that describe a soul's journey to an afterlife [Christopher R. Caseldine, Christopher Carr and Samantha R. Feinberg (Chapter 6), Carr and Caseldine (Chapter 7), and Carr (Chapters 8, 9)]. The journey often includes interactions with underwater-underground creatures such as fish and rattlesnakes, and above ground creatures such as the Ferocious Dog, Brain-Taker, Keen-Eyed Owl and other non-human persons.

Part IV provides cross-cultural comparisons of ritual dramas among the Scioto Hopewell and roughly contemporaneous peoples from other regions of the Eastern Woodlands (Carr and Novotny, Chapter 10; Carr, Chapters 11–15). Fourteen ritual dramas related to journeys to the afterlife through the above and/or below realm(s) are identified through the lenses of Native voices, *Anthropologie de terrain* analysis, and archaeological contextual patterns. These dramas share many common themes (e.g., birds, flight, water), but differ by region and presumably the intent of the specific drama. Most Hopewellian communities emphasized soul flight associated with a bird, whereas a drama in southwestern Ohio referenced below realm creatures such as the horned serpent and composite creatures made of different combinations of fish, salamander, rattlesnake, or alligator. Variation in the ritual dramas is also attributed to ceremonies that focus on intercommunity relationships versus the individual family. The former ritual dramas served as a mechanism for communities to come together and create and recreate alliances with one another in the course of ensuring that the soul/s of deceased community members reached the afterlife. The geographical differences identified in these dramas suggest the absence of a pan-Hopewell worldview. Temporal differences are also identified when comparing archaeological manifestations of ritual drama across Early Woodland Adena, Late Woodland, and Mississippian contexts in the Eastern Woodlands. While a variety of kinds of birds are depicted throughout these time periods, during the Late Woodland and Mississippian they are of forms and in contexts that do not suggest ties to soul journeys.

Carr (Part V; Chapter 16) begins the section on personhood by summarizing cross-cultural ideas of personhood and being and constructing and/or critiquing 10 models of personhood. The understanding of personhood within historical contexts provides critical insights into the motivations for individual and group decisions and behaviors that determine the characteristics of Hopewellian ritual dramas and social interactions. In Part VI, Brianna J. Rafidi, Christopher Carr, and Mary F. Kupsch (Chapters 17, 18) document accounts of human beings as multiple soul-like essences as recorded in oral narratives of post-contact tribes of the Eastern Woodlands and

Great Plains. Results of the data analysis of the narratives provide the foundations for reconstructing Hopewellian concepts of personhood.

The remainder of the chapters (Carr, Chapters 19, 22; Carr and Heather L. Smyth Chapters 20, 21) focus on the nature and roles of personhood among the Scioto Hopewell. Emphasis is placed on how personhood is largely identified through the collective perception of self in relation to one's community and the world around them. Kinship—whether biological or nonbiological—played a critical role in maintaining one's perception of self. The authors first provide arguments against the prevailing western academic view that the elaborate mortuary practices and the inclusion of large quantities of unusual and exotic funerary objects reflect intense social competition among and within Hopewell communities. The alternative interpretation presented by the authors describes local communities that were closely knit through biological and fictive kinship, clans, sodalities, and their ceremonies. Multiple complementary leadership roles were present with the primary goal of meeting the needs of the community. No single person held controlling power over their community. Similarities in terms of material culture, mortuary treatment, charnel house construction, and lifestyle among Scioto communities suggest that these communities were not hierarchically organized but, rather, interconnected through a shared understanding of the cosmos that focused on one's personal relationships with the living, the dead, and other-than-human beings.

The final three chapters, by Carr and Smyth (Chapters 20, 21) and Carr (Chapter 22), focus on the relationships between souls, objects, and definitions of personhood. Certain types of objects defined as 'power artifacts' (e.g., mica mirrors, copper nose inserts, gem bifaces, modified animal elements, to name a few) served multiple functions including use as a portal to the afterlife, communication between the living and the dead or nonhuman spirits, shamanistic divination, healing souls, and acquiring or conveying the power of one's clan eponym or totem. Some of these mortuary activities are found to vary among age, sex, community, and regional categories of individuals. Building on this idea of interactions between soul(s) and objects, the final chapter identifies numerous similar yet different types of beings: 'fixed dividuals' composed of multiple soul-like essences, energies, and/or substances; and 'nested persons' where multiple souls (human, nonhuman, objects) can merge or metamorphosize outright, or where one soul takes possession of the other. The form that the nesting of souls takes is important because it expresses the kind of social relationships among individuals, the collective group, and nonhuman beings. As part of this discussion, Carr clarifies the importance of recognizing that, in many Native American cultures, certain objects such as masks have individual souls. Recognition of all these types of beings plays a critical role in interpreting the archaeological record and understanding the logic of Scioto Hopewellian culture. For example, dividuality and nesting as properties of persons expressed in burials and objects were also properties of the cosmos expressed in earthwork geometries; Hopewell people's inner world mirrored their outer universe. Evidence for multiple types of personhood and the recognition of nested beings can be found as far back as the Archaic-period Glacial Kame (3000 BC to 500 BC) and the Early Woodland Adena (800 BC to AD 1) in Ohio.

Carr and coauthors apply Hallowell's vision of anthropology authentic to Native thought and motivation to Hopewellian and other precontact peoples who left an archaeological record that is sufficiently rich materially and symbolically and whose post-contact descendants are sufficiently aligned culturally that the world views, ontologies and rituals of these ancient peoples can be gleaned, in part, today. Drawing on the above, the authors write a "thick prehistory" of Scioto Hopewell peoples—rich, ethnographic-like descriptions of a past society, its constituent social actors and groups, and their institutionalized and anomalous ideas, actions, and material productions within their specific regional, social, cultural, natural, and historical contexts.

Understanding non-Western peoples in general, and Hopewell peoples in particular from their own perspective, requires a change in current intellectual trajectories of mainstream anthropology and archaeology. Too often in anthropology, the motivations that we attribute to other people's ways are our own motivations, not theirs. Listening to others and hearing what they say from their perspective is a most basic form of respect. It is also the only pathway for one's own learning and experiencing to a greater degree the rich diversity of others' lives.

In *Being Scioto Hopewell*, Carr and colleagues provide an interpretation of Hopewellian ritual drama and concepts of personhood that is reflected in the archaeological record and is based upon sound theoretical foundations, well-defined terminology, a systematized and detailed review of ethnographic sources, and an intentional effort to understand indigenous worldviews. A critical theme that runs throughout both volumes is the importance of recognizing and resisting one's personal western-based biases when interpreting the motivations and meaning of past events by/within indigenous communities. The results of their extensive research on Native accounts of souls, nonhuman beings, paths to the afterlife, and cosmology are generously provided throughout the volumes and in the appendices to assist future researchers in this regard. Comparisons drawn between Scioto Hopewell and other contemporary Middle Woodland sites across geographical regions indicate that the ceremonies and community relationships of Scioto Hopewell peoples differed from those of other Hopewellian peoples. Temporal differences are also illustrated when compared to the later Wisconsin and Iowa Effigy Mound people, and particularly Mississippian peoples (e.g., Cahokia's Mound 72, Dickson Mounds).

The contributions Carr and colleagues bring to anthropology and the social sciences should be of interest to many researchers. The two volumes are an ambitious effort to address in detail the subtle nuances of archaeological interpretation by focusing on the complex interplay between researchers' background, native worldview, taphonomy, and archaeological context. Although some readers might find the redundancy of background information across chapters burdensome, we feel that the reiteration allows for a series of stand-alone chapters that fully address the focus of each chapter. The extensive databases compiled and provided on-line represent years of systematic surveys of ethnographic literature on Woodland and Plains Native American concepts of human soul-like essences, souls' journeys to afterlives, and nonhuman underwater-underground persons and other beings who inhabited their cosmos. The authors

offer substantial intellectual histories, critiques, empirical checks, and corrections of a number of theoretical concepts and models that have become popular in the literatures on personhood and on religion more generally. Importantly, the summaries, histories, and critiques of several topics—including ritual dramas, personhood, *Anthropologie de Terrain*, anthropology and archaeology of religion of non-Western peoples, Judeo-Christian notions of good and evil and their imposition on interpretations of historic Woodland and Plains Native American religious views, and the view of Scioto Hopewell as intensely competitive—enrich discussions in anthropology and the social sciences.

To archaeologists working in the Midwest, Middle Woodland and Mississippian comparisons are relevant; also, the rich dataset of ethnohistorical narratives from Indigenous tribes of the Eastern Woodland and Plains are particularly applicable to the people and regions we study. At this time of incredible change in how (and by whom) archaeology, bioarchaeology, and mortuary studies are conducted, Carr and colleagues do an admirable job of pointing out sources of cultural bias that may be very difficult to see as a non-indigenous researcher. This may be particularly relevant in recognizing the concept of souls, nonhuman beings, agency in objects, and ethical considerations in their study and understanding—concepts often foreign to or absent from western academic training but vital and relevant to the people and events we hope to understand.

Being Scioto Hopewell and the ideas it presents are timely. The ability to step back as a scholar and listen to another perspective—to acknowledge that world views markedly different from one's own are equally valid and motivating—can be difficult, but as Carr says, are essential to building authentic relationships with and understandings of peoples in the past and their descendants today. Self-reflection, intentional listening, and respect are critical to any endeavor that seeks to build richer, more accurate, and more respectful relationships and understanding with another.

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