

ANTHROPOLOGY

Atrocities Seen As Rites

In primitive societies, acts of cannibalism which seem atrocious to modern man are considered sacred rites that bring power to those who partake—By Barbara Tufty

News Dispatch—Travelers from Stanleyville believe thousands died in the three months of rebel rule when almost all educated or skilled Africans were slain, some in horrible ritualistic killings.

► ACTS of cutting out and eating parts of human and animal flesh are atrocities to many people but are considered sacred rites to others.

In primitive societies, man believes he can become powerful by ingesting the strength of his enemy. By eating the heart of the lion, he becomes as brave as the beast. By imitating the gestures of the antelope, wearing a robe made of skin, and feasting on the antelope's flesh, man takes to himself the fleetness of the deer. By devouring parts of a feared or hated human enemy, he acquires in his own body the strength and courage of his vanquished foe.

Recent reports of cannibalism of white and African hostages by Congolese rebels have stirred up abhorrence against this ancient custom that has been practiced in one form or another by human beings throughout history.

"It is a melancholy fact to record that all races from the beginning to the present have been cannibals," points out Dr. Lloyd B. Jensen, retired bacteriologist and author of the book, "Man's Foods."

The practice of cannibalism has existed for a number of reasons, among which are hunger in the face of famine, shipwreck or

some other tragedy, the ridding of primitive tribes of useless members or prisoners of war, or the desire to absorb the bravery of an enemy. In some areas, eating the flesh of a dead kinsman is a respectable method of disposing of the remains and incorporating the essence of the dead into the living.

Cannibalism is practiced for magical powers in three basic ways: 1. savages partake of mental or bodily peculiarities of man or beast by eating flesh; 2. a murderer eats a small portion of the murdered man so the ghost may not trouble the criminal; and 3. relatives of a murdered man may eat a portion of his flesh so as not to lose heart or weaken in the search for revenge.

Evidences of cannibalism have been found in archaeological deposits of the earliest human man, the Neanderthal. The Greeks reported evidences of the grisly custom, and in the Middle Ages, Marco Polo reported instances in the wild tribes of China and Tibet.

Stories of cannibalism have come from large parts of West and Central Africa, New Guinea, Melanesia, Australia, New Zealand, the Polynesian Islands, Sumatra and other East Indian islands, South America and North America. As late as the winter of 1846-47, an instance of cannibalism arose among pioneers in the Donner party in an effort to survive as they struggled in deep snow across the Sierra Nevada mountains.

• Science News Letter, 86:371 December 12, 1964

GENERAL SCIENCE

Eleven Scientists Named For 1964 National Medal

► ELEVEN MEN have been named by President Lyndon B. Johnson as recipients of the 1964 National Medal of Science for their "outstanding contributions" to scientific knowledge.

The medal, which was established by the 86th Congress, was first awarded in 1962 to Dr. Theodore von Karman. Last year five scientists received the award.

This year's award winners, selected from recommendations of a Presidential committee, will receive the medals in a White House ceremony early next year. They are:

Dr. Roger Adams, professor of chemistry, emeritus, University of Illinois, for his contributions in organic chemistry and his "devotion to science and scientists active in the field."

Dr. Othmar Herman Ammann, consulting engineer and partner in the firm Ammann and Whitney, New York, for "distinguished leadership in the design of great bridges, which combine beauty and utility."

Dr. Theodosius Dobzhansky, professor and member of the Rockefeller Institute, New York, for his "fundamental studies of the genetic determinants of organ evolution."

Dr. Charles Stark Draper, head of department of aeronautics and astronautics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for his "innumerable imaginative engineering achievements."

Dr. Solomon Lefschetz, professor emeritus of mathematics, Princeton University, for his "indomitable leadership in developing mathematics and training mathematicians," and "for stimulating research in non-linear control processes."

Dr. Neal Elgar Miller, Angell professor of psychology, Yale University, for his "sustained and imaginative research on principles of learning and motivation."

Dr. Marston Morse, professor at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., for "extraordinary achievement in creating analytic theories in the large and for statesmanship in the world of mathematics."

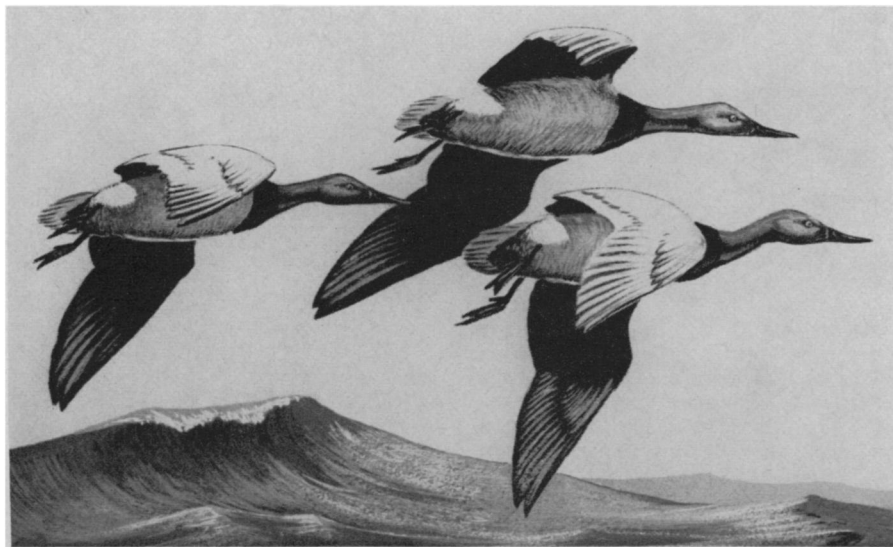
Dr. Marshall Warren Nirenberg, head of section of biochemical genetics in the laboratory of clinical biochemistry at the National Heart Institute, for "studies of the genetic control of protein synthesis."

Dr. Julian Schwinger, professor of physics, Harvard University, for "profound work on the fundamental problems of quantum field theory."

Dr. Harold Clayton Urey, professor-at-large, University of California, San Diego, for "outstanding contributions" to the understanding of the origin and evolution of the solar system and the origin of life on earth."

Dr. Robert Burns Woodward, Donner professor of science, Harvard University, for "an imaginative new approach to the synthesis of complex organic molecules and especially for brilliant synthesis of strychnine, reserpine, lysergic acid and chlorophyll."

• Science News Letter, 86:371 December 12, 1964



Department of Interior

"DUCK STAMP" WINNER—This wash drawing showing a trio of canvasback drakes flying over open water is the winning design for the 1965-66 Federal Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp. Ron Jenkins of Carlisle, Pa., who drew the design is the 32nd contest winner.