

A NOTE ON COPALA TRIQUE INSECT-BIRD HOMONYMS  
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In at least four cases the same Copala Trique term is used both for an insect and a bird. This seems to be greater than chance frequency and may reflect some former ethnozoological classification system, perhaps associated with belief in a hierarchy of tonals. The four clear cases of homonymy are: rakuun<sup>3</sup> 'cockroach' (various insects of the family Blattidae) and 'laughing falcon' (Herpetotheres cachinnans); zhakaa<sup>34</sup> 'blister beetle' (various beetles of the family Meloidae) and 'raven' (Corvus corax), perhaps a fusion of zhukuu<sup>3</sup> akaa<sup>34</sup> 'animal that burns'; zhukuu<sup>3</sup> yaa<sup>34</sup> or zhugu<sup>3</sup>yaa<sup>34</sup> 'predatory wasp' (various solitary wasps, probably of the superfamilies Vespoidea, Scolioidea, and Sphecoidea) and 'roadrunner' (Geococcyx velox), literally 'tongue animal'; zhukuu<sup>3</sup> go<sup>oo</sup><sup>3</sup> 'antlion' (larval form of insects of the family Myrmeleontidae) and 'crested caracara' (Caracara cheriway, also called Polyborus plancus), literally 'bowl animal'.

It is difficult to find any physical or behavioral resemblance between the members of each pair, except that blister beetles are black like ravens. Of the three terms with recoverable etymologies, it is easy to understand why antlions are called 'bowl animals' because of the conical excavations they make, and why blister beetles are called 'animals that burn' because of the irritating liquid they exude. No such obvious explanation comes to mind for calling caracaras 'bowl animals', ravens 'animals that burn', or either predatory wasps or roadrunners 'tongue animals'. To date, native speakers have been unable to provide further explanations. The availability of explanations for 'bowl animal' and 'animal that burns' seems to present some slight evidence that the insect term is basic and the bird term derived, but the existence of a synonym for cockroach (though not for laughing falcon), gwananh<sup>3</sup>, may perhaps present some slight evidence that the bird term is basic.

A fifth term, gulii<sup>34</sup>, means 'great-tailed grackle' (Cassidix mexicanus) and for at least some speakers 'dung beetle' (various beetles of the family Copridae). Other speakers have guli<sup>oo</sup>ii<sup>34</sup> for 'dung beetle'. Both grackles and dung beetles are black. Note also guli<sup>3</sup>le<sup>34</sup> 'an unidentified cricket-like insect' (of the order Orthoptera, perhaps of the family Tettigoniidae), which may be a fused compound of gulii<sup>34</sup> plus some unidentified second constituent.

One further case shows an obvious connection between an insect name and a bird name: zha<sup>oo</sup>aa<sup>35</sup> 'hummingbird' (various members of the family Trochilidae), and zha<sup>oo</sup>aa<sup>35</sup> zhawii<sup>5</sup> 'sphinx moth' (various members of the family Sphingidae), literally 'butterfly-like hummingbird'. The comparison is undoubtedly based on the nectar-feeding habits and extremely rapid wingbeats shared by hummingbirds and sphinx moths. In this case the bird term is basic; there is even a

folk belief that sphinx moths turn into hummingbirds.

Three other cases in which pairs of unrelated animals have the same or related names have come to my attention. In one case a bird and a reptile are involved: zhukwaa<sup>21</sup> 'snake' (various members of the suborder Serpentes), and zhukwaa<sup>21</sup> ruwa<sup>5</sup> 'magpie jay' (Calocitta formosa), literally 'heart snake' or 'cacao-bean snake'. I know of no basis for the comparison. In two cases an insect (or other arthropod) and a mammal are involved: zhatah<sup>3</sup> or zhutah<sup>3</sup> 'billbug' (a weevil-like beetle that eats cornstalks, probably of the subfamily Rhynchophorinae) and 'white-tailed deer' (Odocoileus virginianus); rakunh<sup>21</sup> 'an unidentified caterpillar or millipede with cottony white hair on its back' (perhaps a millipede of the subclass Pselaphognatha) and 'an unidentified rodent' (perhaps Neotoma albigula). The rodent is also sometimes called zhituu<sup>34</sup> rakunh<sup>5</sup> 'rakunh<sup>21</sup>-like mouse'. The word rakunh<sup>21</sup> also refers to a kind of (real or imaginary) parasite that causes constant sleepiness, for which the rodent is considered a cure. It is skinned and stewed without salt or chile, and then the patient eats the meat and drinks the broth. He then suffers vomiting and diarrhea, which help him to expel the parasites, and he gets well.

A preliminary survey of other Mexican Indian languages has revealed to date only one other homonym for two animals in different phyla or classes: Tataltepec Chatino miñi<sup>7</sup> (tone omitted) 'puppy dog' and 'an unidentified animal about five cm. long that burrows in wet sand or mud' (perhaps the larval form of some insect). Tataltepec Chatino also has two homonyms relating fish with celestial bodies: kwalya 'fish' and 'star'; kwi· 'an unidentified kind of fish' and 'planet' (tone omitted from both examples). These Chatino data were provided by Kitty Pride.

#### ORTHOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In Copala Trique forms, a double vowel indicates a long vowel, n following the final vowel of a word indicates nasalization, and zh indicates a lenis alveopalatal sibilant.