

Text 17. Religion and divine judgment

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Note: We have replaced terms such as 'us man', 'us plant', 'us woman' with 'holy man', 'holy plant', 'holy woman'... because the digital translation program does not know how to translate these words. The term 'holy' is then not used in its high and ethical biblical sense, but rather as the possession of much occult, subtle power. We could also speak, respectively, of a sorcerer, a magical plant, a witch...

17.1. The Judgment of God

17.1.1. The Labyrinth of the Gods

Library st. :

- Th. Van Baaren , *Labyrinth of the Gods*, Amsterdam, 1960, 195v
- J. Lantier, *La cité magique* , Paris, 1972, 126/128. -

Pre-setup:

“An act that attempts to elicit a direct decision from the deity in jurisprudence”. The definition of Baaren , like the entire work, emphasizes “the deity”. The event must be spectacular and miraculous so that the power of the deity leaves no doubt. Let us test this against a model.

The indictment. -

The very accusation transports us into the sacred, or rather the occult, sphere. Lantier provides models: spitting three times in the direction of the sick person's hut, uttering threats with ominous gestures, entering the forest alone at night to dig up animal carcasses, assuming the form of a dog to bark at the hut. To us, moderns and postmoderns, these accusations sound absurd, but in a culture still bathed in the sacred, such accusations are perfectly logical.

Judgment by God.

The trial is set in motion. The tribal magician prepares a mixture or syrup of various plants—logonias or euphorbias —and pours it into an earthenware vessel . The people gather. The accused is compelled to drink the drug.

The magician doses it in such a way that the effect is fatal in only one out of three cases. The accused, struck by general paralysis, collapses; his head swells, his eyes bulge, and his tongue, turning thick and white, emerges from his mouth.

Selection. -

If the accused urinates and gets a nosebleed, he is innocent. If he dies, he is guilty.

Note. - Lantier 's description remains limited to the externally observable. Whether a deity controls that sifting process is not apparent. However, it is clear from the context that Lantier posits either the spirit or spirits of the plants or the fetish—e.g., the earthenware vase—which does not exist without

the ancestral spirits (in particular the primordial father), as a 'cause' of a supernatural nature. It is established that both are often distinguished from deities in the strict sense. Consequence: Van 's definition. Baaren needs to be updated: instead of “the deity” comes “a higher being” (which could be a deity, of course).

Note. - Lantier emphasizes the many abuses that occur either on the part of the magician or the accusers. The magician, in particular, succumbs to those who possess many assets.

Note. - The Islamized cultures. - For example, in Nigeria. The social upper class is Islamic (white but heavily mixed with black blood). This class subjugates the animistic (meaning: believing in the existence of souls, spirits, and deities) and fetishistic populations of Negro -African origin. - For this upper class, divine judgment is the best means of eliminating members of the black population who cause trouble. The Islamic village chief, for example, has supporters or paid 'agents' within the local black clan to betray and denounce the troublemaker. In such cases, the magician plays a dubious role, potentially driving an accused person to their death.

Note. - The author, oc, 128ss., sees a kind of evolution at work. What the plants (and the higher beings connected to them) were in the previous case, shifts—according to Lantier—to a fetish. Thus in Haute-Volta, the ' tinsé '. This is a clay jug marked with signs applied by the fetishist during a traditional rite. According to the author, the archaic signs are an agreed-upon language that reaches out to the other world: they appeal to the ancestors so that they endow the fetish with the ability to “see into the invisible”. Once the signs are there, the magician smears the jug with his hands with a mixture of the blood of a chicken, a goat, and a chameleon. That gesture with the sacrificial blood—according to the author—is an appeal to sacred beings. Once the necessary and sufficient rites have been performed, the population is convinced that the spirits are obliged to respond to the proposals of the people. The tinsé can then be used to determine guilt or innocence, reconciliation or judgment, just as we saw shortly with the plant mixture.

17.1.2. The judgment of the dead.

Library st . :

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique* , Paris, 1972, 130/132. -

The body of a murdered young man was found in the wilderness. The

culprit was not found. Therefore, the village chief ordered an investigation by means of questioning the spirits.

The villagers gathered in a circle around a carefully cleansed room. A jar containing the bones of ancestors as a fetish stood ready. The village chief, surrounded by his servants, sat down in a wooden chair beside the sacred jar. Masked men brought the corpse into the circle and placed it on a mat not far from the jar.

The magician in his regalia began dancing, summoning the spirits with cries. The ringing of bells echoed mightily with every dance step. The head ordered the dance to end. The corpse was rolled into the mat and bound, but with the head outside the mat.

Six men who had taken drugs lifted the dead man onto their shoulders. Jumping to the rhythm of the drums, they carried him around the circle. An unbearable smell spread. At the command of the leader, the procession stopped.

The magician approached the dead man. In a solemn voice, he asked the deceased if he was being punished for violating tribal rules. Whereupon the bearers began to walk a few meters, only to stop suddenly: the corpse nearly fell to the left but was caught in time. - The spirit of the dead revealed itself: by falling to the left, he meant that he had broken no rule. - The magician then asked if he had been murdered by someone from the village. The corpse fell to the right. Which was a confirmation. - The village chief presented a list of suspects. To the first two names, the dead man answered in the negative; to the third, the corpse fell to the right.

“The crowd then raised a long howl, modulated in such a strangely strange way that it made me shiver. I still hear this immeasurable outburst (...)” (oc, 131). The circle of villagers suddenly closed around the unfortunate accused. At a gesture by the village head, the circle opened. The accused—although greatly distressed—ran away as fast as possible to disappear into the tall grass, uttering cries of terror.

The author. -

The Congolese man who accompanied me said: “He has gone to die in the wilderness.” “I do not understand you,” I said incredulously. “The old times are past. If no one pursues him to catch him, he can reach the city and find work there.” “No,” replied my companion. “It serves no purpose. The spirits

have now chopped something out of his head. Look, the vultures are already flying above him. Such a thing is a sign that does not lie. In a few hours he will stop walking. He will lie down with his nose to the ground. He will let himself die. The vultures are the messengers of our ancestors: they will crush his skull and eat his soul” (oc, 132).

Note. - The author, oc, 126. - Primitive society knows peace only if the entire group very scrupulously observes the customs, i.e., the rules of conduct that are 'sanctified' by tradition. This is the expression of the order that regulates things. In matters of justice, archaic society knows only two judgments: either the death penalty or banishment. The latter is a worse punishment, for it is the condemnation to a slow and terrifying death. Since, in his eyes, the punishment is imposed by an invisible and mysterious power, the condemned man knows that he is necessarily banished from this world. And this even by, for example, his own children, who live through an unspeakable fear.

Note. - The role of the fetish. - The fetish - in the case mentioned above, a consecrated jar - possesses a power that is judicial. The sacred jar establishes contact with the world of the ancestors, especially the first ancestors. Often, the sacred jar displays signs containing an appeal to those high spirits. The fetish comes into being on the basis of a consecration by a fetish man or fetish woman who, through sacrifices of all kinds, elicits the favor of the ancestors, indeed, immortalizes it in such a way that the group can fall back on it time and again through the many circumstances. - The fact that deceit and the like are committed in the process does not violate that sacred core.

17.1.3. Erotic religion among the Kikuyu (Mau-Mau).

Library st. :

-- J.Lantier , *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972,273/286 (Une civilisation de la masturbation).

- - *J Kenyatta* (1893/1978), the first president of Kenya in 1964, wrote a book, * *Au pied du mont Kenya**, Paris, 1967, in which, according to Lantier, he describes quite a few mysterious customs of the Kikuyu , but which must be tested against the observations of serious observers, especially the missionaries. - Remarkably: the book is dedicated to “all disinherited African youth to perpetuate contact with the ancestral spirits”.

Incidentally: the Mau Mau became notorious for their uprising (1952/1956) which the British bloodily suppressed.

Myth. -

A myth is a sacred origin or future story upon which a 'mythical' culture falls to solve problems. - The progenitor of the Kikuyu is Lord Mumbere , the son of the Orgasm. Without the intervention of a woman, the first human, Kikuyu , was created by his sperm. As soon as he was on earth, he made a statue out of clay in which he provided a cavity for his penis. A magical event follows: the statue came to life and became the first woman, Moombi ("the one who screams with happiness"). From the sexual unions of Kikuyu and Moombi arose nine girls who, in turn, became the ancestresses of the nine clans that still make up the Kikuyu tribe .

Mythical sex culture.

In that mythical framework, the woman's duties are in the kitchen and in love. This leads to what follows. Politeness requires that the man lend his wife to the guest after a meal. If he has more than one, it is the first one who sleeps with the guest. However, she often abuses her position of first rank and offers herself. This is because she is generally neglected by her husband, notwithstanding the sacred 'custom' that the man is obliged to take turns with all the women. As a deterrent to her abuse, several clans have adopted the custom that the first wife has no right to sexual hospitality. Sometimes a man buys a young woman who is to fulfill such hospitality. He chooses with great preference a woman with large buttocks and thighs, something the Kikuyu greatly appreciate.

The real reason. -

The preference for the said female abdomens is not motivated by the union very frequent in Africa in the manner of apes. Here, the only manner of union is face to face. If a man were to treat his wife differently, he would be accused either by his wife or by the inevitable peepers to whom one must get used: with sticks and stones he would be driven out of the village, to wander around afterwards and finally die.

Ngweko . -

This term can be translated as "ritual masturbation." This reveals the myth, the basis of the religion. Every village possesses a ' thingira ', a large hut dedicated to love. In this sacred hut—built according to local rules—all sexual acts, whether between couples or in groups, are recommended, except for the full penetration of the penis. Young men enter the thringa with the practical certainty of meeting numerous partners there, day and night. It is packed, especially at nightfall. Everyone is expected to bring food and drink,

which is consumed communally. The young men strip completely naked, while the girls put on a protective loincloth made of goatskin to prevent penetration of the erect penis. The girl may indulge in all forms her imagination dictates, except for penetration: the young man who commits this offense is expelled from the clan.

obliged to show respect towards the girls during the Ngweko .

Thus, they may only sleep facing each other. The young man may lie on top of the girl, but the reverse is forbidden. - The fundamental insight is the virginity of the unmarried woman as an absolute duty: her womb is the shrine in which the primordial father deposits his sperm while lovemaking is taking place.

17.1.4. Control of the soul.

Library st. :

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique* , Paris, 1972, 87ss ..-

The author found himself in Cameroon, among what the Islamized Fulani call ' Kirdi ' ('naked ones'). A healer claims that he can 'draw' the soul out of the body. The author is granted the privilege of witnessing the procedure. He follows him into his ' saré ', where he sends two women and children to their huts. The room is square, and the floor is leveled with cow dung and shea oil.

"I will extract the soul from a little boy who is about to die. When his soul departs, you will see a bird on the hut (...). It will be his soul. You yourself will test it. It will not take long, otherwise I would no longer be able to retrieve his soul. (...)". The father asked for a thousand francs, and the healer did the same. The author agreed.

The holy man (the one leading the ceremony) gave orders outside: a boy of about twelve years old presented himself. He had to lie down undressed on a mat. The man went into the nearest hut and returned a good fifteen minutes later with a flushed body. He squats down on the mat to the boy's right with a basket full of objects, stretches his arms over him, and begins to murmur a series of rapid formulas. With a kind of white paste, he draws a circle on the skin in the stomach area. In the middle of it, he places a berry, which he crushes. With a knife, he makes a cut at that spot. The boy lets out a loud cry and jumps up. But the man forces him to lie down again. A little blood appears, which mixes with the juice of the berry.

The man stretches out his arms again and utters incantations in a solemn tone. Suddenly he stops: "He is dead." The author expresses his disbelief. Whereupon the man takes a small whip and strikes the boy violently with it: the boy does not move. The author stands up: the boy's hands are cold and limp. He opens the eyelids: the eyes are dead. No breath comes from his mouth or nose. The heart—the author listens—is no longer beating.

"His soul is gone. I will show it to you." The author follows outside: on the ridge of the hut, a bird flies away and circles above. "It is the soul of the boy." The author, believing he has been deceived, asks: "And if someone kills that bird, what then?" "No one can kill such birds. Have you ever seen any like them? If they are black, then they are sorcerers. One would indeed want to kill them because they cause harm, but those who dared to do so died a repulsive death."

They go back into the hut. The boy still shows all the signs of death. The healer squats down, draws eerie lines on the body with a reddish substance, stretches out his arms, and resumes his invocations. He brings out an antelope horn and, through the scorn, speaks in a secret language. He places the boy's hand on his forehead: he gradually regains consciousness, sits up, and leaves the hut as if nothing had happened. The man pulls the author outside with him: "You see it: there is no bird left."

Note. Oc, 86s.. - A man hunting in the wilderness gets a long, black thorn in his buttock. Upon returning home, he attempts to remove it, but it penetrates even deeper, resulting in a very painful inflammation. The man comes from a village in the mountains to Mora, a small town in Cameroon, to consult a healer. The buttock and leg are swollen. Apparently, he is in severe pain. The healer asks him to stand upright against a tree and runs his hands over the leg from top to bottom in a smooth and light gesture.

After about ten minutes, he begins to utter incantations in an extremely guttural secret language. Thereupon he places his lips on the patient's buttock and performs movements with his arms as if he wanted to fly. He resumes his downward and upward movements of his hands over the leg for a few minutes, claps his hands, and spits three times on the earth. "To my great surprise, I see the thorn come out all by itself and fall to the ground as if an invisible pair of pliers were pulling it out. The healer seizes the thorn and, without saying a word, gives it to the patient from whom he asks his fee. The man takes the thorn, walks a few steps, bends the leg, checks if everything is in order again, and pays. I confess that I was rooted to the spot, but I did not want to show

it” (oc, 87). Indeed: the author is a convinced skeptic.

17.1.5. Secret society.

A society is 'secret' not because it is unknown, but because secrecy prevails within it. *Th. van Baaren* , **Doolhof der goden **, Amsterdam, 1960, 81 ff., states that secret societies play a role in many religions.

J. Lantier , *La cité magique* , Paris, 1972, 109/122 (*Les sociétés secrètes de magie*), devotes an emotional chapter to it—emotional because he brings up the criminal forms, specifically as forms of madness.

Myth. -

He cites *A.-M. Vergiat* , **Les rites secrets des primitifs de l'Oubangui** , Paris, 1951, who recounts the myth of the Manja society (in the northwest of Belgian Congo). – The members center on a powerful spirit, Ngakola , a mythical creature that, when fed by the villagers, revealed a wondrous secret to them: “My power is great: I can kill a man, cut his body into small pieces, and then assemble all those formless fragments into a new man to whom I breathe life. I return him improved and cured of all his ailments. – So send people to me, and I will devour them and hand them over renewed.” – Vergiat notes that such belief in a man-eater who swallows a boy to hand him over as an initiate can be found in the course of initiations among primitive populations around the globe.

Note. - *B. Tanghe* , **De slang bij de Ngbandi **, Brussels, 1919, 53ff., states the following. - Tribes in the northwest of Belgian Congo (Ubangi), such as the Mbanza and the Nbugbu, worship a supreme spirit, namely Ngakola . The Banziri worship the Hippopotamus as a supreme spirit that is hermaphroditic: the male is called Ngakola. and the woman Ngeseme . The myth says: when the Hippopotamus comes out of the water, a storm rages. Wherever that supreme spirit rages past, the plants, trees, and fruits tremble. Among the Mbanza , Yagpa , Furu , and Nbugbu, a kind of monstrosity is worshipped as the supreme spirit, which they call Ngakola .

Myth. –

Ngakola lives by a spring deep in the forest. Those who wish to become his 'children' seek him out there. They stay there for a very long time and learn the dance and songs of Ngakola . - Secret society. - Tanghe , a missionary in Ubangi , establishes that the members belong to the most prominent among the population. The initiates tell the uninitiated that, when they arrive at

Ngakola , he strikes the earth, causing the ground to instantly open up so that all who wish to be initiated are swallowed up into that abyss. When they are then completely rotten, Ngakola raises them and gives them a new name (understand: a new essence).

Note. – We recognize in the myth (in its plural of variants) the progression of initiation into the underworld reality. Whoever wishes to reach the – new – life must cast off the old and die. That is the general idea. – But here a distinct progression is revealed: the monstrosity, epitome of the initiates, swallows up, in other words, devours people, thereby providing them with a new way of existence. The initiates, with “within them” those who were 'eaten,' are 'new' thanks to the victims of the secret society that, by ritually consuming people, both robs them of their life force and subjugates them in the other world. These perform tasks in and from the underworld, united with their 'murderers.' Thus, two kinds of new people are created: the members of the society who are one with the life force and the servitude of those who have 'devoured' people, and also those who were devoured, who indeed, as if deprived of their life force, lead a 'new' existence in the underworld and 'live' from that underworld in unity with the members of the society. Seen in this light, there is indeed a twofold initiation.

Demonic.

WB Kristensen , **Collected Contributions to the Knowledge of Ancient Religions **, Amsterdam, 1947, defines 'demonic' in the religious-scientific sense as “harmony of opposites”. He is demonic who afflicts both good and evil, both health and sickness, both happiness and miscalculation. Lantier , in an indignant style, spews out his aversion on the basis of a kind of psychological explanation for the criminality of secret societies. One can understand that. But the 'mystery' of the underworld spirits controlling earthly people is not done justice in this way.

17.1.6. Leopard people .

Library st. :

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique* , Paris,1972, 117ss.

The Leopard People are members of secret societies in Africa that maintained themselves despite all government oppression. The initiation scheme includes the following.

To become a member, one must ritually commit an inhumane crime, namely matricide, but also parricide or kinship. - Lantier cites *J.-P. Lebeuf* ,

**La civilisation du Tchad **, *Paris*, 1950: “In the time of the Sao, a human sacrifice accompanied the accession to the throne of the new king. The inhabitants gathered in the square. There, the future ruler beheaded his mother (...). Then he slit the throat of a cow or a bull. With the skin of the mother and that of the animal, a covering was made for the Koran that had been found on the hill by the first arrivals.” Lebeuf specifies: a ruler who refused the mother sacrifice because he inherited his father's power had to suppress a rebellion. Many Sao were so horrified by this that they fled and committed collective suicide.

The ritual murder is updated by participating in magical crimes comprising four stages.

1. Kidnapping. -

The participants clothe themselves in the skin of a panther or a lion and rub themselves with the fat of these animals so that the dogs, believing that they are dealing with wild animals, do not bark.

2. Offer. -

The victim must kneel before the cauldron (the fetish). The holy man invokes the spirit of the society and makes it clear to him that the sacrifice serves to honor him, thereby reinforcing the objectives. A helper sits on the victim and presses heavily with his hands on his back. Another helper lifts the head so that the throat becomes clearly visible. The holy man severs the windpipe with a single blow. Result: the victim screams in fear and pain, but no one hears it. The companions—probably under the influence of drugs—'hear' these “mute cries,” which the invisible spirits immediately 'perceive' as well.

Incidentally : such “stupid wailing” is frequent in archaic cultures.

3. Communion

(participation). - With a kind of spoon, the participants then take the blood from the cauldron, which they drink to become occultly one with their spirit.

4. Distribution. -

The deceased sacrificed person is turned over. With a cutting knife, the chest cavity is opened and the heart and liver are removed, which are cut into pieces to be boiled together with magical substances. After boiling, the holy man distributes his share to each companion, which is chewed and consumed in restraint. The rest of the remains are treated according to local customs:

mutilated by the claws of the protective animal—panther, lion—the remains are left near the village to sow terror; often the body is sawn in half and torn to pieces; sometimes the remains are eaten or thrown to the dogs. An extreme treatment involves removing the dead from their graves and hacking them to pieces, sometimes resulting in them being eaten.

Note. - Lantier cites *l'Indépendant* (31.07.1970). - London. - An enraged minister decided to found a “Society for the Protection of the Dead” with the objective of crushing those who indulge in black magic, and other magicians in Great Britain for whom one of their favorite pastimes is grave desecration. Reverend Father Percy Gray made such a decision because he was 'shocked'—so he put it—by recent desecration of graves at an abandoned cemetery in Nunhead in south London. “A few days ago,” he added, “I had to rebury the remains of a child that had probably been exhumed by Satanists. The vandals had removed the body from the coffin and chopped off its head.”

Note. Since July 1970, we have all become accustomed to such newspaper reports and to extensive articles in sensationalist tabloids of all kinds. There are indeed individuals and groups—perhaps secret societies—that in one way or another condone grave desecration, viewing it as macabre rites in the service of their objectives. It is not unlikely that the people in question—as the fashion now puts it—“have it in their genes,” not to mention those who learn it from books, films, or articles.

17.2. Incantation and initiation

17.2.1. Incantation

Library st. :

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 91 ss .. –

“I have often attended possession rites, especially in Chad, but one of the most exceptional to my knowledge took place before my eyes in a Luba clan (Katanga).” A noblewoman was “possessed by a spirit that had driven out her soul and taken her place.” About twenty people, the majority women, attended the rite in deep reverence.

They had stripped the woman naked and shaved off her hair. They forced several women firmly to their knees on a mat. She nodded her head constantly and screamed in alarm as copious amounts of foam flowed from her mouth. Three musicians made an indescribable noise. Two men struck tam-tams, which they held under their arms, violently with curved sticks. The other blew

an Arabic horn. A three-note theme was repeated monotonously.

A masked figure with raffia boots and bells came out of a nearby hut, stamping his feet violently.

The possessed woman stopped shaking her head back and forth and began murmuring incoherent words. The masked man threw himself upon her and gave her three terrible blows to the head with a club, “enough to kill an ox.” Blood ran down her forehead, flowed into her eyes, and ran down her nose. The possessed woman stopped screaming and resumed rocking, but now very fast and with her whole body. From time to time, they inflicted violent kicks with their feet on the buttocks and legs of the women they held down. They grabbed one, strangling her almost by the throat. She regularly struck another on the back.

The masked woman brandished a stick, danced, and stomped her feet so that a breathtaking cloud of dust arose. The possessed woman shook her chest and head violently from front to back. When she began to pant, all those present panted along and likewise moved their chests and bodies from front to back. “The collective howling gave me shivers.” This wild ritual lasted about an hour.

A fetish woman appeared: she held a truncated cow horn in her hand, adorned with magical objects—old coins, cowries (shells), pieces of leopard skin. The women laid the possessed man down on the mat with his buttocks on a pillow. They held his thighs apart. The fetish woman emptied the horn and pushed the small point into the possessed man's vagina. From a basket, she took a live lizard and dropped it into the horn. The masked man immediately stuffed the horn shut with a piece of burning wood to force the lizard into the vagina. A horrible odor developed: the horn had apparently been rubbed with a magical product that emits strangling odors when burned. After a few moments, the fetish woman withdrew the horn and stuffed the vagina shut with a bundle of plants, which she secured with a leather belt.

The musicians stopped. The asleep possessed man was stretched out on the mat. The masked man sprinkled a few drops of a whitish syrup on her while he mumbled incomprehensible words.

Suddenly, the possessed woman straightened up to stand gently. She was not surprised by anything and seemed calm. Everyone went home. The possessed woman too. As if nothing had happened.

“I insisted on testing the result of this strange therapy myself a few weeks later. As surprising as it may seem, the madman was now 'normal'. When I asked what had become of the lizard, people seemed shocked by my question. Someone told me that it was a good spirit that, with the combined help of the ancestors and the entire assembled family, had driven out the intruder (Note: the spirit that took the place of the soul) and resumed its place in the possessed person's body.”

Note. - One sees that the reintroduction of the 'lizard' (understand: the visible and tangible present representation of a guardian spirit (a totem animal)) is the ultimate goal of all that precedes it. It is immediately clear why primitives rely on a totem being (thing, plant, animal).

17.2.2. The mythical snake.

Library st. :

-- *B. Tanghe , The Snake at the Ngbandi , Brussels, 1919. -*

The Ngbandi , also Mbatî , are tribes in the north of what was then called Belgian Congo. The author knew their culture exceptionally well, as missionaries can after living on the ground for decades.

The snake. - On May 15, 1912, the missionary had to deal with a thick snake more than four meters long, which the residents, together with him, were only able to kill on May 19, 1912. But then it begins. Ginga , the cook, who had delivered the coup de grâce, began to cry and rant like a madman. Another boy said: “Shut up, for he is a snake.” Suddenly, Ginga stops and speaks as normal and calm: “I am a child of twins, and therefore I am a snake. I just shot my brother dead. Had I not wept, I would have become ill. Now that I have wept, I am at peace.”

The mourning rite.

The following day, Kumba , Ginga 's twin sister , arrived with her husband; she, too, was a snake. In a small bag of leaves, she had remnants of red mbio wood. She took some of it and drew a broad line on the inside of both Ginga's arms from the wrist to the shoulders. Ginga performed the same on her. Thereupon, they both took the rest of the mbio wood and scattered it on the snake's skin, which was lying in the sun to dry. The belief is that if the rite is not performed, illness and death are to be expected.

The reason. -

Only twins and some single individuals, insofar as they are connected to twins, are worshipped as snakes. The author attempted in every way to elicit the reason from the inhabitants, but usually the answer was: “We do not know. God told our ancestors so.”

The extent. -

The worship of the snake governs all other customs and practices within families and in public village life.

'God'. - Gaso , a very prominent inhabitant of the Ngonda tribe, said: “Your God is in the church—he pointed to the chapel—; with us the serpent is what God is to you.” A mother of twins said:

Do you not know that the snake is the Toro (Supreme Spirit) of the Ngbandi ? The Mbanza and the Ngbugbu have their Ngakola and the Banziri their hippopotamus as Toro. Among the Ngbandi, one finds no other Toro than the snake.

The Bible Story. - The origin story in the Bible tells of the serpent as the manifestation of the devil (according to the author). “They asked me at least ten times in a row whether the serpent was really so evil and whether God was truly stronger than the serpent.”

Life force.

Whoever worships the snake enjoys its supreme life force, which can ward off all misfortunes. – Yet this. The dibère is the most extraordinary sacred ash, the effects of which all fetishists know. Nevertheless, a twin was killed by a dibère . Reason: his father had waited too long before paying his debts to a prominent resident of the village. Tired of waiting, this dibère placed under the awning of the father's house, resulting in the death of the twin .

Dreams. - The snake and the twins regularly convey messages in dream sleep.

Those messages are harsh commands. If they are not carried out, the twins will die or the snake will kill others. But whoever feigns a false dream message will be bitten by the field snake.

The author. - Whims of hysterical people, especially women, and hemp - smoking People are led to the most random inspirations. For example: the snake wants people to plant two ngbu instead of nduru as twin trees . Or: the

children were not allowed to suck milk but to slurp eggs and drink banana wine. With the result that both children died shortly after one another. Furthermore: the snake points out someone who was going fishing the following day, during which he would catch two large fish. The man stepped into the canoe, worshipped the snake, cast the net, and caught, among many others, two large fish.

So much for some insight into what a mythical animal, whose visible and tangible presence is seen in biological animals, can mean within the conceptual framework of a primitive culture.

17.2.3. Rainmaker .

Library st. :

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique (Magie et sexualité en Afrique noire)*, Paris, 1972, 220/ 222. -

“Jacques Lantier ” is a pseudonym for a high-ranking civil servant who leaves for Black Africa in 1960. The following story shows us what a rainmaker does.

It was a year of exceptional drought in the land of the Kirdi (from Chad to Cameroon). Every trace of greenery had dried up. People and animals suffered from hunger and thirst. In Ledé, a rite to make it rain took place. The author was allowed to attend the ceremony from a distance and without taking photographs. The rainmaker in this case was a traveling holy man. Common custom: if the rite succeeds, rich gifts follow; if it fails, the saint is beaten. The villagers gathered along a dried-up river arm that becomes a broad stream when it rains.

The rainmaker hacks a furrow into the rock-hard earth with an ancient axe. It was shaped like the female genitalia. Around it, he placed twelve round white stones of varying sizes. In between, he placed six black stones that had the shape and volume of a musical note. He then sat down at the edge of the pit and took a flat stone from a sack, which he placed in front of him. A helper offers him a chicken, whose head he chops off onto that stone. Thereupon, he sprinkles “the altar” with the leaking blood while singing a strange melody that alternated between a slow and a fast rhythm.

melody lasted two hours while he moved the stones around again and again. The sky remained hopelessly blue. Suddenly, the people felt a warm

displacement of air for a few seconds. Thereupon the holy man straightened up and, with crossed arms, turned to the sky. The helper quickened the rhythm of the drum. The wind rose again, but now it continued to blow, now heavier, then softer.

The holy man took an antelope horn from his pocket and extracted a powder which he threw into the furrow. The wind blew in gusts that grew ever more violent. To his great astonishment, the author saw in the distance a phallus rotating on its axis! This white, enormous, immeasurable form approached with dense black clouds in its wake. It follows the dry river arm and sails over us, leaving behind a gigantic cloudburst of rain. In a few moments the entire landscape was flooded: a full river flowed before our feet. The villagers lay on the ground before the deluge. They were immensely happy with their rainmaker and its work.

Note. - Oc, 214s.. - To the Kirdi , the cloaca of a chicken resembles the genital opening of a woman. The raw—and perhaps earliest—magical rite posits that chicken blood resembles and is connected to—in the mentality of the Kirdi —fertile female menstrual blood. In this view, one engages in sexual intercourse with the chicken as with a woman: at the moment of the male orgasm, the magician cuts off the head of the chicken and catches the 'fertile'—understand: yielding—blood on a stone. Thus, sprinkling the earth will bestow this fertility.

Thus we now understand the rite for causing rain, which at a certain moment involves the chopping off of a chicken's head so that "the altar" is sprinkled with the blood, as an essential part of a rite for causing rain. - In a footnote, Lantier states that sexual intercourse with a chicken is still—his book was published in 1972—a rather widespread custom in some more primitive areas of Europe.

Note. - Oc, 7. - The writer says: "It is sometimes said that reality surpasses the imagined. This book is not in need of the denial of that assertion. Yet the astonishing stories I tell are real. I have usually experienced the facts recounted myself. In the other cases, my text is based on testimonies that are irrefutably true."

Note. Such reports offer us insight into what 'religion(s)' can actually be. They can be shocking. But shocking reports are preferable to sugar-coated portrayals that flatter our Western sensibilities but are far from the facts.

17.2.4. Sexual initiation .

Library st. :

-- J. Lantier , *La cité magique (Magie et sexualité en Afrique noire)*, Paris, 1972, 239/248 (Avec les femmes-tabernacles). - The author is particularly familiar with sexual magic among the Yombe , the Vili , and the Kongo (situated between the Atlantic Ocean and Kinshasa). - The cultural system is matrilineal: authority over the children is exercised not by the father but by the mother's brother.

Basic insight.

As soon as sexual maturation becomes visible in a girl, she must always wear panties. The reason: the life force (la force vitale) remains in her body and is shielded against evil spirits. Moreover, she must wear a tunic to conceal her organs and their magical value from view. - 'Tabernacle', the dwelling place, is the girl's genitals.

The deity of the ancestors, creator of all things and especially bearer of the power of fertilization, dwells in her sex. For in marital union, that deity fertilizes the woman through the man. The child is in the ground of the deity . - The author calls this “the magical, mystical , indeed, metaphysical interpretation”. - What follows must be understood strictly within that framework, otherwise one desecrates the sacred – that is the correct word – in the woman. - The virginity with which she enters the first wedding night has that meaning.

Initiation. -

The grandfather usually initiates the young girl into the fact that he is called “his wife.” As soon as she is three or four years old, he teaches her to masturbate with him in a kind of love game. The grandmother also plays the same role with the little boy whom she calls “my husband.”

Incidentally : boys and girls live in separate living spaces.

The young men. - A sister of the mother teaches the boy, if he has reached the age for it, all possible ways of sexual union. - In every village there is, moreover, a holy woman named “Mama Mfumu ”, who is a widow or at least unmarried. She is appointed by the village head. She takes in sexually needy young men “so that they cannot offer an excuse if they assault a girl” (oc, 241).

The young girls.

In every village there is a 'Kumbi'. She lives in a red-painted initiation hut. She lives naked—also made up in red—and often lies on a mat of leaves while girls do her work and bring food. She teaches the girls the ways of union and demonstrates this with a set of phalluses.

The engagement.

Mama Mfumu helps bring about the marriages. In doing so, she relies on her 'intuition' and at the same time on the way she sees young people attracted to one another. The young men who are circumcised and of marriage age are gathered by her into a dance group. After the dance, the girls serve the food they have prepared to the young men. If Mama Mfumu, who observes everything, notices a mutual attraction, she questions the girl first and then the young man "to test the truth of her intuitions" (oc, 242). If there is no objection from either side, the engagement begins.

Note. - For those who have not yet found a partner, the annual festival is the opportunity, - once again under the watchful eye of Mama Mfumu. - On the eve, the young man goes to her with two friends who deliver drinks. He presents her with a chicken killed and boiled by his fiancée. A dinner follows. Afterwards - accompanied by his friends who clap their hands and utter lewd language - he makes love with Mama Mfumu one last time.

Palabers . -

The following day, the direct preparations for the wedding take place: the brothers of both mothers, in particular, speak of the excellent qualities of the engaged couple. Finally, the village head legally confirms the marriage.

The preparation of the girl. - The girl must then withdraw into a hut or sometimes even go to live with the Kumbi for several weeks. The purpose of this period of seclusion is to prepare her so that she can receive her husband in a 'proper' manner. The Kumbi is a type of gynecologist and initiate.

17.2.5. Sexual initiation (continued).

The wedding celebration.

Led by Mama Mfumu, a joyful crowd escorts the bride, carried on a stretcher, to the groom's village. Mama Mfumu sings sensual songs while waving a square cloth back and forth. She leads the girl into the 'love hut' erected by the groom. She undresses her and rubs her body with oil. She prepares her vagina. At her signal, the groom enters. She strips him of his

clothes, anoints him completely, and rubs his penis with a magical remedy.

The unification.

When the penis is ready for use, the Mama places the young man in the correct position while two women hold the girl's legs. The Mama ensures that the deflowering proceeds gently. If the young man is too rough, she restrains him for a moment and then opens the opening with her finger.

Celebrate together.

Outside, the villagers listen to the cries from the hut. Fierce cries show that the girl is a virgin. It is a sign of a good upbringing if one exaggerates. Which sometimes tires the groom. If he loses his lust, Mama knows what to do.

The unification.

The moment the Mama deems suitable, she pushes on the man's buttocks. The penetration is then total. Thereupon the bride must immediately let out loud cries of joy to make her happiness known to the people.

The conclusion. - Now that her work is finished, Mama Mfumu leaves the hut with both women. They are welcomed with cheers by the villagers. - In principle, the man must continue with lovemaking or caresses according to the techniques of the tribe until early morning. The villagers rise early to see the woman come out. She goes to fetch water from the well with the jug that her mother-in-law gave her. She must do this in silence. If, upon returning, she shows her satisfaction in the ritual form, the marriage is final. If she leaves the jug in the well and returns to the parental home, the marriage is annulled.

Reflections. -

The author says: "One might suppose that such seductive habits aim at a refined hedonism. Not at all! It is a solemnity that largely transcends the magical aspect to become religious and even metaphysical" (oc, 245).

Note .. - The author defines (as is often the case) 'magic' as "non-religious" or "non-metaphysical". His further explanation proves the opposite. "The entire rite demonstrates the sacred nature of the marital act and the necessity of safeguarding the purity required of the 'tabernacle' of the spirit of the ancestors". A 'sacred' female institution such as that of the Mama Mfumu has the sole purpose of offering an outlet to the lack of self-control of boys and young men and, at the same time, protecting the virginity of girls: it serves to offer the divine sperm a vagina free from all 'defilement'. After all, the husband

is the holy man who represents the ancestors. "His role is therefore religious" (oc, 245). Such a sacred role does not possess the intensity of the Hindu Tantrists, certainly not that of the Tantrists "of the left hand" (*note*: who do not take morality so seriously). Here, the woman is not the representation of the goddess as in India, but as a tabernacle she represents a mystical dignity. The union is in itself magical, indeed, divine. The result: the female orgasm expressed in the jubilant cry clearly demonstrates the penetration of the god who comes to impregnate the virgin reserved for him alone.

Side effects. - The strict rules of conduct surrounding virginity as outlined above are one of the unconscious reasons for male homosexuality.

Universality. -

Oc, 249. - "The belief in woman as tabernacle is in fact widespread. It lives on in a variety of forms even among the most evolved peoples. In Africa, the protection of woman as shrine of the deity is ensured by numerous female societies. Their primary goal is to morally assist women in the exercise of their "natural role" (Note: **to** be the shrine of the deity)".

17.2.6. Ritual rape

Library st. :

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 114ss .. -

The author, familiar with the Congo, discusses the Simba in connection with the uprisings of the Mulele and the Soumaliot in Eastern Congo. The Simba, as a secret society, continue the tradition of the leopard-people, notorious throughout Africa.

Briefly outlined: through a series of brutal keys, one identifies with the ' simba ' (civet cat) thanks to a ' dawa ' (a fetish), only to magically transform into an invulnerable animal (panther, leopard, lion).

Incidentally: if a candidate dies during the initiation, the elders cut off his nose, ears, and genitals to make fetish materials from them: the crushed and mingled flesh is mixed with earth and other magical substances. Thereupon, they dig a pit in a secret place in which they bury the unfortunate man.

The Mulele and the Soumaliot, tribes in Eastern Congo, staged uprisings. The secret society there became notorious for its atrocities, for the ritual rape of the Belgian nuns in Bunia. The missionaries and the nuns had been

rounded up and locked up—more to protect them than to guard them—in the PapaNungovitch Hotel by a major and his soldiers. Everyone awaited the end of the hostilities.

Suddenly the situation turned around: on the evening of November 16, 1964, a strong group of Simba warriors—like a soldier-ska—entered Bunia . They reached the hotel. To demonstrate the magic of the dawa , they were naked. Their bodies were smeared with sacred paintings. The Congolese major asked the leader what he wanted. To which the latter replied: “To rape the nuns.” The major resisted, but the leader punched him in the jaw and shouted to his men: “All these filthy whites are at your disposal. Do with them whatever you wish.”

The nuns had understood what was coming: they barricaded themselves in a room. The priests fought but were incapacitated with rifle butts and machetes and dragged outside, bound hand and foot. - The ferocious Simba seized the sisters, who were fighting back screaming in terror: they were stripped naked and thrown one on top of the other in a heap outside. Thereupon the savages formed a circle and, to the sound of drumbeats, danced and stomped, brandishing their weapons. They paused to let out long cries that sounded like the hooting of night owls.

One nun stood up to dance and stomp her feet as well. Her eyes bulged out. Suddenly, she stepped straight ahead: the warriors made way and let them flee. In the mentality of the region, the insane are already in the underworld with the ancestral souls, and so they are treated with 'reverence'. This lasted until half an hour past midnight. At that moment, the ritual rape began. Thérèse, one of the nuns, was lifted onto a kind of altar: she passed away around two o'clock in the morning. At six o'clock, the last Simba warriors left the grounds.

Note. - Lantier notes that atrocities were committed almost everywhere in the East Congo during that period. - Near Paulis , a 'captain' went insane: he killed six hostages in an exceptionally savage manner. He cut a slit in the lower abdomen, pulled out the victims' entrails through it to use them as a rope to hang them from trees. -

The cannibals also resumed in full swing. Young people from ' le Mouvement national' Congolese Lumumba in Stanleyville sent a telegram to the Organisation de l'Unité on 20 November 1964. Africaine : “The Congolese people want to dispose of the prisoners of war themselves. Stop. The entire

population is prepared to eat prisoners of war if there are other bombardments in our region. Stop. If you refuse, we ask permission to surround all the residences where these prisoners of war are staying with barrels of gasoline, to be ready to burn them alive if Maison-Blanche does not commit to negotiating with the revolutionary government before Tuesday. Stop. Lumumbist greetings. Full stop.”

Cruelty is contagious. Most certainly ritual cruelty.

17.3. Magical practices

17.3.1. Funeral of a magician .

Bible st. : -- J. Lantier, *La cité magique* , Paris, 1972, 53ss .. –

The author is in the region of the Kabré (Kabiye , Cabrais) in Northern Togo, where he was allowed to attend the funeral of a magician. The corpse had lain for a week in a round hut on a clay bed, wrapped in palm leaves. Flies and insects swarmed amidst an unbearable stench. The villagers, who had spent the entire week absorbed in dancing, libations, and the consumption of drugs, were exhausted, except for the blacksmith, the head of the magicians, and a few women. Among these, the deceased's eldest sister controlled the proper conduct of the rites with a small whip. The strongest continued dancing to the beat of drums. Occasionally, they paused to drink sorghum beer from gourds. The rest of the villagers lay on the ground.

Incidentally: The author, as always, had eucalyptus oil with him for nasal allergies, but this did not help now; so disgusting was the mere sight of decaying flesh. That did not seem to bother the Kabrè . Late at night, amidst continuous drumming, the blacksmith and the deceased's eldest daughter led some twenty people into the 'womb hut,' along with the author. They sat down. Outside, men bricked them in. The blacksmith began to raise litanies, to which those present responded endlessly in the same manner. “I could not tear my eyes away from the young woman who was raging, screaming with all her might, making gestures while brandishing a large knife, the purpose of which I did not know. Her long, sagging breasts swung back and forth over her belly. A leaden heat pressed down on us amidst a stifling dampness. I wondered if I, too, was not going to die.”

About fifty centimeters above the dead man's head, a hole of twenty centimeters in diameter had been made in the wall. A slight airflow had started between the openings in the wall that were supposed to enclose us and the

hole in the wall.

Suddenly, after a series of onomatopoeic words uttered in a shrill tone, the young woman plunged her knife into the body of the dead and began to remove the bandages and palm leaves from around the corpse.

“When the corpse was exposed in that hideous manner, I had the impression that it was swelling visibly. I did not have the time to verify the occurrence of such a phenomenon. The most bizarre event imaginable occurred: the dead man straightened up and sat down. From his open mouth came a sphere or a flame! I could not say exactly, for it happened so quickly and so unexpectedly that my ability to pay attention to it was overtaken. That thing—it was of a blue-green color—found its way for a moment before disappearing through the hole in the wall. What happened afterwards, I could not say. I found myself outside, but with a bad feeling in my stomach and a heavy head. The villagers: amidst a hellish noise, they had resumed their drinking bouts and their dancing.” So much for the report.

Background. -

The Kabré are mountain dwellers who have remained very primitive. - Myth. - Eso , the primordial father of all mankind, has departed to heaven. He is surrounded by spirits, by a phallus “as large as the sky”. From the Quran they adopted the notion that after death one can eternally indulge in eating, getting drunk, and engaging in lovemaking. - Ancestor worship takes place in a small hut where every deceased person is represented by a clay cone that approximately depicts their genitals. In front of it is placed a fetish consisting of clay, the placenta of a woman who died in childbirth, the menstrual blood of a female dog, livers, and feathers from chickens that met their end in sacrifices.

Eso 's vigilance and wish to reincarnate as a newborn. Therefore, living mages examine every birth. If certain signs indicate that the baby is a former mage, they strangle him with his umbilical cord, decapitate him, and bury the two body parts separately.

17.3.2. Metamorphosis.

Bibl . st. : -- J. Lantier , La cité magique , Paris, 1972, 84s .. –

The author conducted a customary law investigation in the vicinity of Kinshasa (Congo). A villager had seen his chickens die one after another. Then he saw his wife die “without ever having been sick.” Well, in his village, a young

man had been noticed because he transformed himself into a wild boar. Several people had met the wild boar and recognized the young man in it. They are there to testify under oath. — at least, that is how the author understands it, for the lawyer does not plead but limits himself to performing dances with the ringing of bells before the court.

The judge questions the magician—understand: the shape-shifting young man—: he accuses him of having sparkling eyes.

Note. - Among the Bakongo in the region around Kinshasa, such magic is called 'n' doki ': whoever deviates from tribal or clan behavior is n'doki . Certainly in a case of shapeshifting. - Based on that concept, the judge considers sparkling eyes a case of n'doki . - Such 'evidence' suffices to sentence the young man to pay the amount for the chickens and the woman, as well as that for a crate of beer for the court.

Note. - This case is not very convincing except with regard to the axioms of customary law. The following is more convincing.

In Congo.

The judicial police in Kinshasa accuse a man of transforming himself into a crocodile to steal a child. - About ten years ago, the man, who had a wife but no children, turned to a renowned magician asking him to provide him with a son whom he would raise as his own. The magician agreed and gave him a potion to transform into a crocodile. In this form, the man descends into the stream and follows a vessel containing a six-year-old child. The child moves to the end of the vessel to urinate.

The 'crocodile' drops it into the water, seizes it, and carries it to the village. The man resumes his human form and asks his wife to act as the child's mother from now on.

There will be a trial. - All those involved acknowledge the events as real. This includes the adolescent, who is now sixteen and fully remembers the circumstances of his abduction. The court of Kinshasa sentences the man to return the son to his family and to pay substantial compensation as well as a heavy fine.

In its considerations, the court emphatically states that the man truly transformed himself into a crocodile to commit his crime.

Note .. - Oc, 82s .. – The author sets out the Bakongo 's view of man . -

1. The normal aspects. -

a. "I am". This is the soul insofar as it is independent of the body and lives on after death.

b. Clairvoyant soul. - Just as magical plants, medicines, and drugs 'feel', so the soul 'feels'.

c. Decisive soul, called ' ndwenga '. – The soul united with the totem (thing, plant, animal that provides protection) is capable of calculation and cunning. The seat is located in the head. –

2. The supernatural aspects . - For these two. -

a. The soul as ' yembo ', situated in the spinal cord at the base of the cervical vertebrae and extending to the ears, the eyes, the shoulders, and just before the stomach, 'sees' all that is invisible danger, reacts with fear but unfolds heightened life forces.

b. The soul as ' kasasa ', situated in the glabella (between the eyebrows) and extending into invisible, horn-like 'antennas', is clairvoyant: it 'sees' within itself and in others and 'sees' the future.

Yembo can be practiced through initiation. Kasasa – poorly developed in most – is found in people who “speak as they go” with a deceitful mind. Some, by virtue of a higher initiation, can master kasasa and become very powerful. They guess what others are thinking and force them to do what they want. Fortune tellers, magicians, and witch hunters apparently possess this gift. – The ability to shapeshift belongs to the latter type.

17.3.3. The mythical snake .

Bibl . st. : -- *B. Tanghe , The snake at the Ngbandi , Brussels, 1919. -*

The Ngbandi , also Mbatì , are tribes in the north of what was then called Belgian Congo. The author knew their culture exceptionally well, as missionaries can after living on the ground for decades.

The snake. -

On May 15, 1912, the missionary was faced with a thick snake more than four meters long, which the residents, together with him, were only able to kill on May 19, 1912. But then it begins. Ginga , the cook, who had delivered the

coup de grâce, began to cry and rage like a madman.

Another boy said: “Shut up, because he is a snake.” Suddenly, Ginga stops and speaks as normal, explaining: “I am a twin child , and therefore I am a snake. I just shot my brother dead. If I hadn’t cried, I would have gotten sick. Now that I have cried, I am at peace.”

The mourning rite.

The following day, Kumba , Ginga 's twin sister , arrived with her husband; she, too, was a snake. In a small bag of leaves, she had remnants of red mbio wood. She took some of it and drew a broad line on the inside of both Ginga's arms, from the wrist to the shoulders. Ginga performed the same on her. Thereupon, they both took the rest of the mbio wood and scattered it on the snake's skin, which was lying in the sun to dry. The belief is that if the rite is not performed, illness and death are to be expected.

The reason. -

Only twins and some single individuals, insofar as they are connected to twins, are worshipped as snakes. The author attempted in every way to elicit the reason from the inhabitants, but usually the answer was: “We do not know. God told our ancestors so.”

The extent. -

The worship of the snake governs all other customs and practices within families and in public village life.

'God'. - Gaso , a very prominent inhabitant of the Ngonda tribe, said: “Your God is in the church—he pointed to the chapel—; with us the serpent is what God is to you.” A mother of twins said:

Do you not know that the snake is the Toro (Supreme Spirit) of the Ngbandi ? The Mbanza and the Ngbugbu have their Ngakola and the Banziri their hippopotamus as Toro. Among the Ngbandi, one finds no other Toro than the snake.

The Bible story . -

The origin story in the Bible tells of the serpent as the manifestation of the devil (according to the author). “They asked me ten times in a row whether the serpent was really so evil and whether God was truly stronger than the serpent.”

Life force . -

Whoever worships the snake enjoys its supreme life force, which can ward off all misfortunes. – Yet this. The dibèrè is the most special wijas (sacred ash), the effects of which all fetishists know. Nevertheless, a twin was killed by a dibèrè . Reason: his father had waited too long before paying his debts to a prominent inhabitant of the village. Tired of waiting, this dibèrè stuck under the awning of the father's house, resulting in the death of the twin .

Dreams.

The snake and the twins regularly convey messages in dream sleep. These messages are harsh commands. If they are not carried out, the twin will die or the snake will kill others. But whoever feigns a false dream message will be bitten by the field snake.

The author. - The whims of hysterical people, especially women, and of hemp -smoking people lead to the most arbitrary inspirations. For example : the snake wants one to plant two ngbu instead of nduru trees as twin trees . Or: the children were not allowed to suck milk but to slurp eggs and drink banana wine. With the result that both children died shortly after one another. Furthermore: the snake points to someone who was to go fishing the following day, during which he would catch two large fish. The man stepped into the canoe, worshipped the snake, cast the net, and caught, among many others, two large fish.

So much for some insight into what a mythical animal, whose visible and tangible presence is seen in biological animals, can mean within the conceptual framework of a primitive culture.

17.3.4. Throw of lots .

Bibl.st. :

-- S. Hutin, *Techniques d'envoûtement* , Paris, 1971;
-- L. Bemard d' ignis , *Traité du désenvoûtement et du contre-envoûtement*, Rennes, 2002. -

By way of introduction, what follows.

Magic (sorcery)/witchcraft. - If one S. Greenwood, *Magic and Witchcraft (An illustrated historical account of spiritual worlds)*, Utrecht, 2002 (or. : *The Encyclopedia of Magic and If one is to believe Witchcraft* (2001), then 'magic' is the description of the 'spiritual' or ' spiritual ' side of all things. - 'Spirit' is

apparently the same as 'life force' (the basic dynamic concept). -

Oc, 122, it is pointed out that “spiritual forces” are neutral in themselves but can be used for both good and bad. The bad use would then be called 'witchcraft'. – But let us consider one of the pinnacles of witchcraft, the toss of lots.

Definition. -

In any case: autosuggestion in the form of “feeling bewitched” falls outside the strict definition. - Hutin defined 'throw of fate' as “the grip of a strong personality on a weak personality” (in the realm of life force). Part of that definition is the fact that the victim believes in it and realizes it. - After reading Bernard d'ignis admits that the concept of 'throw of the lot' also applies to people who do not realize it and do not even believe in it. That is how Bernard calculates. d'ignis also “the memory of the walls” (which even after centuries still radiate the noxious energies of past occult evil) or the noxious energies of a landscape, up to the concept of 'throw of fate'.

A lot-throwing spell is the magical practice by which a cast lot is annulled.

Features

- Bernard dignis provides lists that express a criterion for distinguishing the throw of fate from the rest of reality. We summarize them somewhat and arrange them differently.

1. Energy loss. -

The ultimate effect is, of course, the deprivation of vitality. - Fatigue “without apparent reason”. In the morning, one is already dead tired. One has a conversation with someone for a few minutes: in the course of that conversation, one becomes so tired that one seeks a deck chair as quickly as possible.

2.1. Despondency of all kinds. -

One “can’t take it anymore”. Time and again for more. Fears overwhelm you. Nightmares disturb sleep, which is very restless even without nightmares.

2.2. Isolation. -

Those around you avoid you. Family members, colleagues, and friends seem to shun you. Even strangers develop an almost immediate aversion to you. Animals also react negatively.

2.3. Disgust. -

The victim themselves develops negative attitudes towards their environment: housemates, the opposite or same sex, and strangers with whom they live or work come across as strangling or disgusting. This can escalate to fits of rage.

2.4. Financial problems. -

Affected parties usually experience breakdowns (computers, anything electrical in particular, but also cars and other equipment). Accidents “without apparent reason” strike unusually. Turnover drops unusually despite special efforts. People injure themselves in an inexplicable manner.

2.5. Physical problems. -

One experiences peculiar chills. One feels a rare lump in the throat or stomach. Certain headaches torment the mind. At certain moments, one suffocates during the day or also at night. Peculiar tingling sensations occur in parts of the body.

Nausea and dizziness occur. Unusual digestive disorders may be added to this.

3. Extrahuman phenomena. -

Animals—including pets and stuffed animals—behave aversely. Electric lights and all equipment exhibit unpredictable and unusual behavior, such that the specialist called in “finds nothing” and walks out shaking his head.

At times one feels 'someone' or “a group” behind oneself, indeed, pressing in the back. Streams or forms seem to move through parts of the body.

Bernard D'ignis states that none of the listed 'phenomena' suffices in itself and that the accumulation of the listed characteristics—the more numerous, the better—is the only thing that offers some certainty regarding the fact that there is indeed a throw of fate. For diagnosing it is a very difficult matter, with the risk—always present—of being mistaken (especially if one takes autosuggestion into account in this regard).

17.3.5. Ancestors .

Library st. :

-- *J. Lantier, La cité magique* , Paris, 1972, 40ss .. –

The author finds himself in the land of the Fali in the Tinguelin Mountains. It is claimed there that the ancestors move during a full moon. He asks a village chief if he may witness such an event. The chief replies that he must “arrange the magic” to do so. For appropriate payment, a magician agreed to

do this. He ventures into the wilderness to gather the substances that confer invisibility—invisibility which is necessary if one wishes to see the ancestors move during a full moon—for he was to prepare a mixture with herbs (containing two eyes ripped from the head of a living monkey, urine from a female dog , etc.). Two days later, everything was ready.

The village chief, the author, and the magician drank the mixture that renders one invisible. “I took about three tablespoons of a slimy green concoction. (...). A slight drunkenness took hold of me, whereupon I felt numbed by a kind of paralysis.”

At a sign from the magician, the village chief asked to follow him into his family enclosure as far as the hut of the ancestors, a simple conical place in hardened red earth. A wickerwork in front of the entrance was lifted. By the light of a kerosene lamp, a pile of stones was visible. In the passageway leading to that pile, there was a sotghum offering and a fist-sized, luminous, and dirty thing that appeared hairy. When the author asked what the latter was, the answer came: “That? That is fetish!”

They sat down in front of the entrance to the hut. The lamp inside illuminated the pile of stones with a faint glow. They remained sitting like this for a long time. The village chief stared intently at the pile of stones. “When will we become invisible?” He signaled to be silent.

Nearby, monkeys shrieked and could be heard galloping. The long silence that followed was interrupted only by a hiss that seemed to come from a snake crawling very close to us. A hyena began to laugh. The head that continued to stare at the pile of stones in the glare of the light invited me to look. He seemed deeply impressed. The author, for his part, experienced—without grasping the reason for it—an indefinable fear. “I had no reason whatsoever to experience such unease, for I did not believe in the least bit in this history of the stones.”

Suddenly, the silence was broken by strange sounds. “They would have sworn that stones were falling on those cobblestones right in front of us. The light flickered. I stared intently at what I could make out. The cobblestones trembled and clashed against one another as if being shaken. I surveyed the scene attentively: I clearly heard the sound of cobblestones colliding. I saw several of them slowly rise, suddenly turn around, and fall down with a thud.” “It is over. Now we must leave quickly.” Thus spoke the head.

Thereupon, he and the author found themselves by a fire outside the

enclosure. The magician had left. The nocturnal life of the village continued at its usual rhythm. Every emotion had vanished from the mind. The author was bored. And could not bring himself to say it. A little later, he managed to say a word: "You told me that we would be invisible, but that was untrue!" To which the answer was: "Yet it was! We were invisible!"

I remembered that indeed, while the cobblestones danced, it seemed to me that for a few moments the village head was no longer present beside me.

Note. – The author tells this story to a French captain who was a doctor in Fort Lamy in Chad . The officer burst out laughing: "They played a trick on you! To swindle you out of money. The two fools gave you a hallucinogenic (meaning: hallucination-inducing) substance to drink and you thought you saw the stones dancing. It is also possible that they dug an opening behind the hut and that someone came to shake the stones with a stick." The author: "I confess that I was ashamed of my naivety for several days. My astonishment grew when I learned that the captain-doctor had never been to the land of the Fali ."

17.3.6. God.

Library st. :

-- L. -V. Thomas/ R. Luneau, *Les sages dépossédés (Univers magiques d'Afrique noire)* , Paris, 1977, 132/169 (*L'homme et le divin*). -

Lantier has presented us with a picture of African 'sacred' facts. He did this based on his positivist axiomatics, which views humanity and its religions evolving from—what he calls—"the magical (primitive) stage" through "the metaphysical stage" (which dissolves into vague concepts) to "the positive (understand: natural scientific) stage". Consequently, his view is severely limited, for the three stages are in fact all present simultaneously, albeit with different emphases. The preference he displays for the sexual in magic coincides with a tendency toward sexual emancipation. However, what he has seen as an eyewitness is highly valuable, partly because he is a radical skeptic and therefore considers the extra- and supernatural impossible as much as possible. Even if he sees with his own eyes what positive science cannot 'explain' with certainty today, he does not deviate an inch from his skepticism.

Let us now consider what Lantier barely sees, namely the concept of 'Supreme Being' in Black Africa. "The African sees in all that his senses perceive as a given, something other than what he sees." (*R. Bastide, Religions*

agaires et structures de civilisation, in: Présence africaine 66 (1968)).

The usual course of events.

Oc, 166. - A large number of rites are performed without mentioning God. Not every drought is dramatic, for example, and thus in the course of ordinary days the African situates what occurs within the ordinary course of events, which visibly presents the spirits, the second-rank deities, the ancestors, and the nature spirits as a quasi-immediate given. Lantier 's accounts have made this abundantly clear.

The unusual course of events. – For the African, the fundamental given is the existing order of things and events. The ordinary course of events belongs to that order. However, when this is disturbed to an excessive degree, something like a Supreme Being emerges. And indeed, as the pre-eminent reason for what occurs.

When one wishes to summarize the scholarly exposition of the authors, this becomes apparent: there is a great variety regarding the names given to the Supreme Being (if a name is given to it at all), a variety that reflects the types of culture: a shepherd speaks of 'God' differently from a farmer or a livestock breeder. But the exceptional, understand: all-transcending essence of the Supreme Being is fundamentally the same everywhere. Even though it seems (some scholars emphasize this) that 'God' – who should not be confused with the God of the Bible – exhibits paradoxical characteristics that are sometimes confused with contradictory traits. At one time 'God' is given names; at another, it is stated that no name exists for Him. –

Note - That means that, if the names do not betray the essence of 'God', they may exist, and that, if the names betray that same essence, they must remain absent. That is a paradox but not a contradiction.

At one time 'God' is far from people (which one might then call “deus otiosus ” (deity on vacation)); at another time He is closer to life than all that is visible and tangible. Thus, one can encounter similar 'opposites' in the discourse surrounding 'God'.

Without equal.

One characteristic predominates: 'God' has no equal. He is comparable, but can never be equated.

A model (oc, 159). -

The Mosi express it this way.

- An yiid Wêndé (Who transcends God?).
- An toê né Wêndé (Who will take it up, God?).
- An tög Wêndé (Who is mightier than God?).
- An kê m Wêndé (Who is older than God?).
- An gê né Wêndé (Who usually dwells with God?).
- Wênnam m'mi (God knows).
- Saw be Wêndé (All is in God).
- Da gêls Wêndé (Do not look God in the eyes).
- Da pêlg Wêndé (Do not approach God).
- Sid be Wênné (The truth is in God).
- Sid be Wêndé (The truth is with God).

Like A. Hampaté Ba, *Aspects de la civilisation africaine* , in: *Présence africaine* 1972, says :

For tradition-bound societies, the principle of all true insight (...) always comes from above.

17.4. Sexuality and religion

17.4.1. Clitoris.

Library st. :

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique* , Paris, 1972, 286ss .. –

Lantier meets a fetishist and questions him about the female clitoris. We summarize.

How can one, as the mission does, forbid women from engaging with what plays the leading role in unity with the ancestors? God (understand: the primordial father) created the female sex in such a way that only He can visit it to instill His spirit into it at the moment of conception. Furthermore, the woman is driven and aroused by desire in two places: the clitoris and the vagina. By what? The hearth of the vagina is sealed by a hymen and is accessible only after it has been torn. Why did God place this seal there? Why does He desire such a blood sacrifice? God has never done anything without reason. The reason is that only God must come to impregnate the woman by delivering her the spirit of the ancestors.

Result :

She ought to remain a virgin until the day when the husband chosen by the ancestors opens the way that enables God to bring offspring into life. Such

a place must not be defiled, for the spirit of the ancestors must find purity. Furthermore, God willed that His presence grant the woman the greatest pleasure she can experience in the course of her existence.

Clitoris. -

God gave the clitoris to woman so that she could make use of it for marriage, experiencing the pleasure of love without losing the virginity that the Spirit of God requires.

Consequence: she has no excuse if she loses it. And what is more: the pleasures she experiences sharpen within her an intense desire to be married.

Clitoridectomy.

Clitoris excision is not performed on very young girls because the clitoris serves them for masturbation. The excision is performed only on young girls who are judged to be suitable for conception and marriage. Once they lose their clitoris, they no longer masturbate. As a result, they miss out on a great deal. Then all their desire turns inward: they immediately seek to marry quickly. Once married—instead of becoming absorbed in vague and insignificant experiences—they focus everything on the same place and—as is normal—the couples experience much happiness.

Your God, white ones, acts like a man. We do not understand that. God does not work because He has no hands. God—for us—is the deep purpose in all that exists: everything moves in a direction fixed once and for all. It is our duty to always go in the direction He foresaw. Not deviating.

Difference. -

One tribe cuts out the clitoris; the other does not, because each tribe has its own God. Immediately, the tradition differs, and therefore the custom as well. The differences also point in the direction of God.

So much for what the fetish man said.

The author –

('The rest of our conversation strayed—I must admit—into far-fetched metaphysical musings of no relevance whatsoever. The reader will—I hope—admit that I do better to convey the content of the conversation between me and the fetishist than merely to set out my own opinion on the matter. From what the fetishist asserted, so many ideas and interpretations can arise that I leave to everyone's reactions').

His interpretation.

“Why do people in the countries that present themselves as the most advanced still believe, more than they would like to admit, in the importance of girls' virginity? Why are boys left in their almost general ignorance regarding the erotic scope of the clitoris? All questions which we—for what reason?—deem delicate to answer, but which might perhaps 'demythoize' (understand: “strip them of their mythical character”) the ideas of the fetish man and deprive them of their untouchability.” Much has changed since 1972!

17.4.2. *There is phallus and there is female phallus .*

Bibl.st. :

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique* , Paris, 1972, 163ss. -

The author discusses the objects made by primitives. Instead of presenting the lengthy theory he develops, which is virtually commonplace among ethnologists, we present a history that is a sample but fully reflects the general idea.

Bakongo region, the sculptors make phalluses. Accompanied by a Canadian—a representative of the UN—who wanted to see how an astonishing fetish (meaning: a magical object) is being created in the author's house, the author travels to a village near Kinshasa. In a workshop full of phalluses of all sizes—from our little finger to that of an elephant—both stand still in amazement. The sculptor was amazed for the sake of that amazement. To the Canadian's question, "What does that mean here?", the man replies:

“That is prokondo .” “And what is prokondo ?” “It is when you approach a woman but are tired, then you proceed with prokondo .”

Thereupon, the sculptor imitates a locomotive traveling from Kinshasa to Matadi with his mouth and cheeks. He takes a prokondo , and turns around a large table with the prokondo , sighing and spluttering like the train.

Both men suppress their laughter, as the Bakongo are easily offended. The author points to a prokondo , the largest one, weighing a good twenty kilograms, and asks, “Surely you aren’t going to tell us that Bakongo girls can use such contraptions?” “Yes they can! It is a matter of magic: on the wedding day, the woman sits down on it to conceive a child.” “But surely there is no reason why sitting on it favors the arrival of a child.”

To which the sculptor replied: “Not just like that! This prokondo was made as it should be, with magic in mind, but it has not yet received magic. It involves lengthy work to impart the magic. When the village chief has bought

the prokondo from me, he will make the object suitable for magic. After that, the prokondo will be used at weddings.”

The Canadian places the order, negotiates the price, and buys. Upon leaving the workshop, the sculptor—perhaps because he had secured him a buyer—slips a beautiful prokondo under the author's arm, “a jet-black one of life size”.

The author's interpretation.

In the culture of the Bakongo, every reality is a bearer of 'mana' (life force), such that it radiates and receives influences. Influences that are sometimes beneficial and sometimes malevolent. The result: “The object deserves reverence and attentiveness” (oc, 152). The author uses the French term 'ambiance', 'environment', to denote the space—the occult space, that is—in which the natives live—an environment of countless 'influences', good and evil. It is from that 'environment' that one can understand the sacred phallus.

He expresses the power that the deity/ancestor places at the disposal of the married woman. If she—married—sits upon it in a ritual manner, then through that phallus which, thanks to 'consecration'—understand: magical manipulation (it is a lengthy, attentive manipulation)—becomes a sacred phallus, the ancestral deity responds with his divine sperm upon the union with the man.

The author emphasizes:

Magical objects of that type are a message directed to the recipient, who here is the supernatural fertilizer. The message, here a question: “Grant fertility”, is not limited to thoughts, words, and deeds but becomes 'speaking' as a consecrated object transmits the message, the question. The belief is that the divine progenitor understands the message much better through that sacred object.

Note: P. van Baaren, **Doolhof der goden**, Amsterdam, 1960, 190, emphasizes the same 'rhetorical' meaning of magic: “Man calls upon divine beings for help and at the same time drastically shows those divine helpers what help he expects from them.” Of course, this only succeeds within a single religion with its system of high beings and their openness towards human followers, a system of mutual understanding.

17.4.3. Female fetishists .

Library st. :

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique (Magie et sexualité en Afrique noire)*, Paris, 1972, 67/77. –

The author notes that in Afrikaans usage, things such as a mask, a figurine, a tree, a plant, or even a container full of various 'things' are called a 'fetish,' and that those of us humans (men, women) who can! are allowed to create a fetish, undergo their own initiation through very hard tests. He was once allowed to witness a rite in a 'monastery' of female fetishists in northern Dahomey (West Africa), just before the annual festival of fetishes in Lolo . The Kaaba Lolo attracts many people.

The founding ancestor of the Ber or Bariba , a very primitive people, is named Saccalolo . He is worshipped as a god. The Bariba Fetishists fetch earth from Lolo , where he is buried, to use in the creation of fetishes. Two types are known: healing ones made of Lolo earth, and good-luck ones that are human figurines rubbed with magical mixtures.

The holy women destined to transfer life forces to a fetish undergo a three-year formation. Some telling details: they are first deflowered but remain without sexual relations all that time; each possesses a hut containing a phallus which they touch several times a day but which they are under no circumstances allowed to use as an aphrodisiac. In the courtyard, a rooster can be seen tied to the large fetish that Saccalolo currently possesses. When he crows morning and evening, the novices must masturbate according to the customary rites. The initiation ends with a clitoris excision.

The 'power' of King Lolo . -

The initiates, led by the chief fetishist , are dressed in white. They move nearly a kilometer to a large pond in a bend of the river. The villagers keep their distance. The village chief lets out a few cries and then throws a series of live chickens into the pond. The numerous crocodiles pounce on the animals. The initiate leads the way, singing, followed by the novices. They enter the water until it rises to their waists.

The crocodiles –

"I saw that fantastic miracle," says Lantier (oc, 76), clearing the way. Thereupon the initiate turns to the crocodiles and, in the name of Lolo, commands them to allow the women of the place to draw water from the pond all year round. "Here and there the enormous maws of the crocodiles opened as if to answer" (ibid.). Then the fetishists stepped out of the water backwards.

The lower part of her skirts was mud-stained; the upper part was white. What a strange impression. They reach the shore. They undress and return to the water where they bathe amidst the crocodiles.”

Final impression. -

“I breathed heavily out of fear of the aggression of these predators. A few minutes later the fetishists emerged from the pond. Then the village women, who held jugs ready, came to draw water in the face of the crocodiles, whom they viewed with the greatest possible indifference” (oc, 77).

Note .. – One phase of the rite that Lantier was allowed to attend, in which the novices become one with “the hidden powers” (oc, 74), be mentioned. The novices – completely naked – emerge under the guidance of the initiate “with staring eyes” as if they had taken drugs. The village chief, to whom Lantier asked if they had taken a 'medicine', smiled and said that they were seers. When asked what they saw, he said: “They see King Lolo in the company of his subjects and his wives. These are satisfied because the king has conquered all his enemies and he has the sun behind him. The king is so powerful that he grants to the women who see him the ability to control all that lives.” Thereupon Lantier asked if he could not see proof of this. The above-described entering the water amidst the crocodiles, and doing so twice, counted in the mentality of the village chief as 'proof': “Most certainly. It is easy. Be patient,” he had said. He meant the scene in the pond! –

Note. - Even primitives have their 'miracles' that substantiate the axioms of their religion.

17.4.4. A secret society of women.

Library st. :

J. Lantier, *La cité magique* , Paris, 1972,249/257 (*Sarabandes de femmes*). -

The magical role of woman as a shrine of the sperm of the primordial father is ensured in Black Africa by numerous societies that initiate young women. In Gabon, the societies are called ' Nyembe ' (' Nzembe '). In the past, one risked one's life if one attempted to attend or spy on the meetings of the women's societies. The author recounts his experience in this regard. It was agreed: he was allowed to watch the ceremony and was accompanied by an elder, not by a holy woman.

The ritual site is an open space shielded from view by a triple circular enclosure consisting of hedges of various plants, some of which bear very fragrant flowers. In the center stands a sacred phallus made of earth, about two meters high. Lantier was not allowed to enter the enclosure; nor was he permitted to take photographs. He could observe while standing on a ladder leaning against a tree near the clearing. When he arrived, the rite had already begun. Light clouds obscured the moonlight, but burning torches provided relief.

In front of the sacred phallus, a woman beat a drum. Some fifty women walked incessantly around the phallus. They formed a train: one after another, they placed their hands on the shoulders of the previous one. They were completely naked but equipped with a thick artificial penis, with which each woman—or so it seemed to Lantier —touched the buttocks of the one in front.

The ceremony lasted in that monotonous form—such as Africa often has—for at least an hour. Suddenly, however, as if by magic, the sarabande stopped. The woman who was beating the tam-tam mounted her instrument, which resembled a round stool, and addressed the participants. Every now and then, they interrupted the speaker with cries or with repetitions of sentences incomprehensible to Lantier . The speech seemed endless. The speaker ended them with a series of doubled tam-tam beats.

She then bent forward, resting her head against the phallus, and showed her backside to those present. She pulled her buttocks open with her hands. This lasted about ten minutes. Afterward, the drag began, during which each female participant pushed the penis with which she was equipped between the leader's buttocks.

Then the women positioned themselves around the earthen phallus, removing the penises with which they were adorned. The leader struck the tam-tam briefly. The participants resumed her adorned penis and moved it back and forth as a representation of sexual intercourse.

“I wondered how it would all ever end when the old man who had accompanied me ordered me to leave my ladder. I begged him to let me look for a few more minutes, but he assured me that this was impossible, for we would be killed by I don't know what spirit if we were to attend the most secret part of the rite. I cast a final glance: one of those women was rolling in the sand while she let out violent cries. Two other women held each other in a grip. But the old man pulled me away” (oc, 257).

Note. - The author, op. cit., 255, says: "It is my conviction that gatherings of that type can be regarded as letting loose, roughly in the sense of those that currently exist in the Paris region." -

This statement is surprising, as it conflicts with the rest of the interpretation the author holds regarding the background of sexual magic in Black Africa. That the women in question "let themselves go" is entirely in line with her sacred views. They sincerely experience what the traditions dictate. That this is interpreted as 'indulgence' demonstrates a misunderstanding of its sacred nature. Although a kind of indulgence is apparently an aspect.

The secret societies, such as the one the author sketches in her meeting, are destined to uphold the rules of conduct of the ancestors on earth and in the other world, in the form just described. Woe to him in such cultures who dares to break them down. That perhaps explains the surrender of the women.

17.4.5. From mask to sacred mask.

Library st. :

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 195ss.. -

The author attends a private consecration of a mask in Diosso, a village near Pointe-Noire (Congo-Brazzaville). The rectangular hut is filled with a wide variety of objects, including the base of the magician. Several men and a woman in rather ordinary clothes were present. The holy man keeps his upper body bare but is laden with a surprising set of magical weaponry. He sat down during a banal conversation.

At the signal of someone present, he stands up and takes a number of baskets and objects from a corner, which he places in front of him. On a block, he lays a mask painted with geometric figures. From a bag, he takes out a fetish (an object charged with magical power) to which pieces of metal, nails, pieces of keys, etc., were attached.

The woman undresses and begins a melody in a piercing voice, which she sings until the end of the arrangement. - The holy man places the mask on the fetish. He draws a sleepy-looking snake from a basket and seizes it by the head. Slowly, it coils around his arm. While holding the snake above him with outstretched arm, he shakes a basket full of jingling objects three times. The snake unfolds. He seizes it with both hands and makes it coil around the mask. The animal performs the ritual apathetically. This is how the Lantier

appears .

The woman sings, or rather cries, swaying her hips, making gestures, clapping her hands. - The holy man draws a truncated horn into which he throws a powder. He shakes the horn like a dice thrower. He brings it to his lips, bends over the mask, and, blowing three times, throws powder onto the mask.

The woman suddenly stops. - The magician places the snake, the horn, and the fetish in their respective baskets and places the mask on the block.

Returning to Pointe-Noire, Lantier expresses his surprise at the absence of dancing. He is explained that the mask is not intended for collective purposes but was ordered by one of the men present: two of his children died within a few days, and he asks for an incantation against a throw of fate.

Axiomatics. -

O. c., 154. - Lantier notes that, within the presuppositions of such a magical event, the given things hold true and the creation of a new thing is a disruption of the given order of things. Therefore, recourse to ancestors, and especially to the founding ancestor, is above all a duty. One wishes to know whether what one is about to create pleases them, or one even wishes to impose the creation upon them. Consequence: every creation is thoroughly a rite directed at "the spirits" in order to persuade them and which provides the process with the necessary and sufficient safeguards. - Consequence: the construction of cities, villages, huts, - their placement, - the creation of conveniences, - all this is governed by sometimes very complex rules which, moreover, reveal a great variety across the globe.

Note .. - *Th. P. van Baaren* , **Doolhof der goden **, Amsterdam, 1960, defines the sacred mask as a face covering that usually bears the features of spirits or deities that 'appear' through the mask, being visibly and tangibly present. The mask dance then depicts divine or at least higher beings with the aid of these masks.

The question arises from Lantier's description of the external as to which processes and presences the holy man, the singing holy woman, the wise serpent, the consecrated objects, and the attendees conceal. What is magically certain is that the mask, once consecrated, emits a new life force or 'mana' which manifests itself within the family of the author whose children died within a remarkably short time. That life force is that of the magician himself,

of his objects, but also and primarily—as van Baaren states—of the founding ancestor and of the ancestral souls, of the spirits connected with these beings, etc.

The insight into this is, then, grasping the 'holy' or 'sacred' that lies hidden within and behind all that is external. Only then does one grasp what is actually happening. Only then is there true religious scholarship that sees through the external.

17.4.6. The judge as interpreter of a spirit .

Bible st. : -- J. Lantier, *La cité magique* , Paris, 1972, 132/134. -

Within the forests of Gabon, the training of judges comprises two stages: the appeal to family spirits and the ritual initiation. In every family, the skulls of the ancestors are kept, which are stripped of bark, cleansed, and rubbed with women's saliva with great care.

A carefully chosen boy is accepted by the ancestors in a rite: to this end, he takes a decoction of the bark of a euphorbia ('alan') so that he can see the spirits. Byeri, the primordial ancestor himself, appears to him and gives him a tap on the shoulder, thereby making him a holy man. If Byeri does not appear, this means that the ancestors reject the man nominated by the living.

In some tribes, the judges are selected from among the men who have contact with Byeri. The assembly of judges chooses them themselves. Those thus chosen isolate themselves to see Mundju, the spirit of the power-charged plant. Around that plant, each participant places the family skulls. As close as possible to them, they place the skulls of the deceased judges. For eight days, the candidates must incessantly move their heads up and down to the rhythm of drums and jingling, except during meals. They take a precisely determined dose of iboga (a plant) so that they see the ancestors three days later.

On the fifth day, the life force of the plant enters their heads, so that from then on they know themselves to be inhabited by its spirit, which represents the world order. What they say then is infallible. After this, they adorn their heads with the feathers of the parrot, “the bird that speaks without understanding.” With a stick, they strike the earth and thank the spirit that is within them: “You, Spirit of the Word, you who have opened the narrow and difficult-to-access door for us, we thank you. Spirit of the Word, from now on you speak through our mouths. Spirit of the Word, from now on, thanks to

you, we are the truth.”

The judges then receive the insignia of their office: a red Phrygian cap, a staff of command, a staff fitted with bells to enforce silence, as well as a whole set of magical objects with which they touch those from whom they demand a respectful attitude and absolute obedience. Since the spirit of the ancestor speaks through them, everyone naturally bows before them. Such judges play the role of law enforcement officers and adjudicators.

Note. - Oc, 124. - The role of a sacred plant intrigues Lantier ; indeed, it annoys him. Thus he says:

“Plants simply possess the ability to heal or kill.” Following the discovery of fire, the author considers this discovery the most important finding in the evolution of humankind. Moreover—and this annoys the author even more—plants make seeing the other world possible.

He concludes: “The primitive mentality is startled by the existence of such a fantastic power and resigns itself to the superiority of the plant” (ibid.). The plant—so he puts it—once 'personified' acquires a superhuman power. Even worse: a magical tree, for example, is inhabited by an invisible spirit . Given all this, the plant is in itself a fetish for a primitive: it derives its essence from the other world. Because it belongs to the other world—surpassing man in this respect—it testifies—like a 'person'—to the ability to read the minds of men, to determine their guilt, to judge their deeds ethically, and to respond to this with reward or punishment.

“This astonishing belief, so widespread in societies of the archaic type, carrying so far in terms of consequences,” irritates the author, who nevertheless—especially where sexual magic is concerned—approaches the primitives with an open mind.

Note. - It is clear: Lantier's interpretation, which we just outlined, testifies to a superficial, behaviorist method (focusing solely on external behavior). He disregards what the primitives tell him by not explaining their claims based on their axioms and experiences, but by viewing them from the perspective of his Western axiomatics as an outsider. That may be scientific, but does it reflect reality?