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INTRODUCTION: What is meant by a People's Worldview

This is a particular view of the whole of reality, through which one attempts to understand everything that comes before one's consciousness.

A people's worldview is the sum total understanding and explanation of the world around them. It provides frame of perception to a people's religious, social, political, economic and other viewpoints. Thus, the American anthropologist, Robert Redfield defines worldview as "the way a people characteristically look outward on the universe".

It is also how people use themselves in relation to all things and all things in relation to themselves. A worldview could be said to be colour and shape all of a people's experiences, providing them the blueprint for predicting, explaining and controlling their environment. Talking about environment as influencing a people's worldview, Michael Kearney notes that worldviews must be founded in the real concrete world which allows it bearers to adapt to their environment as it changes or influences worldviews. A worldview is therefore the mental basis for acting within the total environment.

A people's worldview has therefore been described as the complex of their beliefs and attitudes concerning the origin, the nature, structures, organization, and interaction of beings in the universe with particular reference to man. A worldview seeks to answer fundamental questions about the place and relationship of man in the universe. Answers to these fundamental problems provide man with the blueprint for controlling his environment and for establishing his social and political institutions. Conversely, knowledge of a people's worldview is a key to the understanding of their social, political and even psychological problems. Dr. Victor Uchendu, in his monograph the Igbo of Southeast Nigeria said: "To know how a people see the world around them is to understand

how they evaluate life, and a people's evaluation of life both temporal and non temporal, provides them with a "character" of action, a guide to behaviour".

However, a people's world view is not only the multiplicity of beings, concepts, beliefs and attitudes which they share, but also the underlying thought-link or logic which holds them together. So that an adequate view of a people's worldview can only be obtained a description of their whole life especially in its social context. Besides, a people's worldview is never static; it is constantly changing as a result of contacts from outside and inspiration from inside. So that it is difficult to come by two groups of people who have identical worldviews. Even within one group, different segments or individuals may have different worldviews. What we describe here therefore is not a worldview shared by all African or even a large section of African societies but rather some characteristics features of African worldviews generally. The visible world, 'terra firma' (Solid earth) is populated by rivers, forests, mountains and so forth. The invisible world consists of the heavenly realm, said to be the home place of the ancestors, the spirits, disembodied spirits, located somewhere inside the ground. However, it must be noted that this classification is only made for the convenience of analysis. One could even say that to a certain extent the two worlds overlap. One is the carbon copy of the other. One colonial administrative report on the beliefs of peoples of Southern Nigeria expresses this succinctly in parts of a text entitled "The Pagan Creed".

"I believe that all things in this world have their spiritual counterpart, of which their material appearance is but their expression in corporal being".

Thus, the dichotomy which is so characteristic of graeco-Christian worldview is strikingly absent in African worldview. There is no clear cut distinction or opposition between the visible and invisible, the material and spiritual, the temporal and non-temporal, the sacred and the profane. Rather characteristic of African worldviews is what

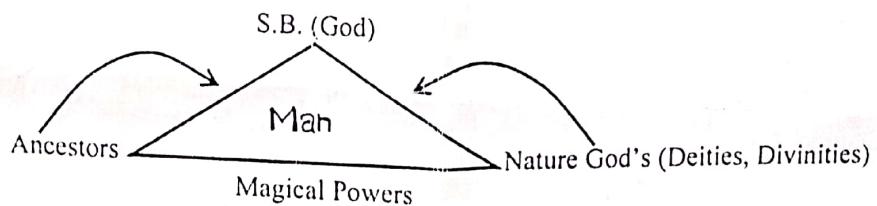
Taylor has described as 'that sense of cosmic oneness which is an essential feature of primal religion'. He goes on to explain this thus:

Not only is the less separation between subject and object, between self and non-self, but fundamentally all things share the same nature and the same interaction one upon another... the living, the dead and the first ancestors, from the stone to the divinities a hierarchy of power but not of being, for all are one, all are here, all are now.

An example of this close relationship between the material and spiritual realm is seen in the belief that the deities inhabit the natural phenomena with which they are associated like rivers, forests, sky, or the sun. The ancestors among many African groups are believed to be around their homes and hearts, and take part in interaction between beings in the universe irrespective of the realm (visible or invisible) to which they belong. Men could be possessed by spirits and spirits sometimes incarnate themselves in visible. Men can influence the deities and the spirit through sacrifice prayers and spells. Conversely the deities can intervene in human affairs to bring good fortunes to their devotees or misfortunes in their laws are flouted.

The Hierarchy of Beings

Several authors have expressed different opinions on the structure of African worldviews. E. W. Smith thinks that the best illustration of the structure of the invisible world as it appears to the African is a pyramid or a triangle.



At the apex was the Supreme God, on one side of the triangle were the nature gods, and on the other side the ancestors, while at the base were the lower magical powers.

According to this classification, there are four categories of spiritual beings – the Supreme Being, Nature gods, Ancestors and Magical Powers. However, some slight differences have been noted between the nature and character of the spiritual beings in the worldviews of many West African peoples in contrast with those of the Bantu speaking peoples of East and Central Africa. As E. W. Smith himself observed, whereas the West African societies have prominent places for nature spirits in their cosmology... the spirits of the Bantu are mostly those of human beings who continue to live in the unseen world.

Pushing this distinction a little further, Parrinder remarks that:

Roughly, it may be said that the peoples of Central and Southern Africa have not developed belief in nature gods; whereas many of the leading peoples of West Africa have large pantheon of gods.

The Bantu areas of Africa therefore generally have four categories of spiritual beings – the Supreme Beings, Spirit-forces, Ancestors and Magical Forces. Whilst, many West African people recognize five categories of spiritual beings the Supreme Being, the Deities, spirit-forces, Ancestors and Magical powers. So that this affirmation of Idowu about the whole of Africa, does not apply to most Bantu areas of Africa.

Taking Africa as a whole, there are in reality, five component elements that go into the making of African Traditional Religion. These are belief in God, belief in the divinities, belief in spirits, belief in ancestors and practice of magic and medicine, each with its own consequent, attendant cult.

The Supreme Being

According to J. S. Mbiti, in his large work, 'Concept of God in Africa (1969)', he said that he has collected all the information available concerning the traditional concepts of God. This study covers nearly 300 people from all over Africa outside the traditionally Christian and Muslim communities in all these societies, without a single exception, he

said, people have a notion of God as the Supreme Being, who is seen as the creator, sustainer, preserver and have final authority in the universe. He is said to be invisible, and no African people are known to have drawn or carved representations of God. But He is believed to be a Spiritual Being. African knowledge of God is expressed in proverbs, short statements, songs, prayers, names, myths, stories and religious ceremonies. Therefore a word for God exists in each of the African Languages, some of the words being used commonly among dozens of languages indicating that the belief is ancient and was already there before these languages evolved. Hence, we have examples of proverbs like "No one teaches or shows a child to know God or the Supreme Being since God is self-evident.

African concepts of God are strongly coloured and influenced by historical, geographical, social and cultural background or environment of each people. This explains the similarities and differences which we find when we consider the belief about God from all over the continent.

The Supreme Being is therefore depicted in numerous ways or attributes. For instance, a number of societies consider God to be Omniscient, that is to know all things, for example, to the Zulu and Banyarwanda, God is known as 'the wise one', and to the Akan as "He who knows or sees all". To the Yoruba, 'Only God is wise and they believe that He is 'the Discerner of hearts', who 'sees both the inside and outside of man', etc. God is depicted to be simultaneously everywhere (i.e. Omnipresence) hence one name for His among the Barundi is 'the watcher of everything'; the Bamun calls Him (Njinyi or Nnui) which means "He who is everywhere". This idea comes out among other people who say that God is met everywhere hence His presence protects people and on the other hand the wrongdoers cannot escape the judgment of God which is found among many African people.

example, by the Nuer; and some societies like the Akamba and Akan speak of Him as 'the God of Comfort'.

Moreover, the majority of African people regard God as 'essentially good who always do good hence there is no need to complain. For example, the Ewe firmly hold that "he is good for He has never withdrawn from us the good things which He gave us; etc. For some, the goodness of God is seen in His averting calamities, supplying rain, providing fertility to people, cattle and fields. So in situations when calamities, misfortune and suffering come upon families, or individuals, for which there is no clear explanation. Some societies would consider these to be brought about by God, generally through agents like spirits or magic workers or as punishment for contravening certain customs or traditions thus, by so doing they do not see God as intrinsically evil. On the other hand, some people hold that God is capable of showing anger hence, death, drought, floods, locusts and other national calamities are interpreted to be manifestations of His anger, for example, a few people like Tonga, and Tiv, look upon thunder and lightening as resulting from God's anger.

From the above discussion of the eternal, intrinsic as well as the moral attributes of God, He can be distinguished from His creation and what makes Him not only the genesis but also the sustainer of all things in existence.

DIVINITIES AND DEITIES

In addition to be the belief in the Supreme Being, many Africa peoples believe in the lesser gods (divinities or Deities) are next to God (Supreme Being). Thus, they are thought to have been created by God in the ontological category of the spirits. They are associated with God and often stand for His activities or manifestations either as personifications or as the spiritual beings in charge of these major objects or

God is further depicted to be Omnipotent i.e. Almighty which is a concept that is easier to grasp than the attribute discussed above. Consequently, we find many concrete examples from all over Africa, in which people speak of God as Omnipotent. Among some people like the Yoruba, Akan, Ngombe and Ashanti, one of the names for God describes Him as 'All-powerful' or 'the Almighty'. His power is seen in practical terms. For instance, the Yoruba might say of duties or challenges, that they are easy to do as that which God performs; difficult to do as that which God enables or not. The Zulu conceive of God's power in political term thus, being such a powerful nation then, this meaning can be clearly seen. They describe Him as "He who bends down... even majesties, and "He who roars so that all nations be struck with terror; He is also addressed as the One who makes the mountains quake and rivers flow. So also the wind, the sun and the rain are beyond human power of control, but not beyond God's power who works through them as other natural phenomena or objects.

Furthermore, the Supreme Being is depicted as transcendental. He is 'far' that men cannot reach Him; yet, He is 'near' (immanent) or close to the created world. He is remote, yet can be approached by human beings at times of grave, collective crises, hence the above paradoxes are complementary.

Apart from the above mentioned attributes, there are also moral attributes of God. Thus, many Africans, such as the Akamba Banyarmanda, Ila, Herero, etc consider God be merciful, showing kindness and taking pity over mankind. For that reason He is referred to as 'the God of Pity', 'God is kind' or 'God is merciful'. The mercy or kindness of God is felt in situations of danger, difficulty, illness and anxiety, when deliverance or protection is attributed to Him, or He is called upon to help even when sorrows have struck, God may be called upon to comfort the people, as is done, for

phenomenon of nature. Hence they are seen as assistants, agents, sons, servants, messengers etc of the Supreme Being between the Spiritual and material world.

Each of these Divinity is believed to govern a sphere of life or human activity and may be also connected with natural objects or places, such as river, rocks, mountains, sea, lake, forest, etc. That is, they are seen as personifications of natural phenomenon like rain, wind, thunder, lightening and even death). These divinities or deities derive their power from the Supreme Being and are the most immediate link between Him and human beings. Though generally beneficent, they can be dangerous, punishing or damaging human like under certain circumstances.

It is reported that the Ashanti who have pantheon of divinities through whom God manifests Himself called them Abosom who act as God's intermediaries between Him and other creatures particularly human whom they guard. The Banyoro divinities are departmentalized according to people's activities, experience and socio-political structure. They include the divinities of war, smallpox of harvest, of health and healing, of weather, of lake, of cattle and minor ones, of different clans as also are other tribes.

The Yoruba have one of the largest single collection of thousand and seven hundred divinities among the African people. They called them "Orisa" and are associated with natural phenomenon and objects, as well as with human activities and experiences. Parallel to Yoruba socio-political structures, these divinities too form a hierarchy hence they have orisa-nla – the 'the Supreme Divinity in charge of molding human bodies and executive functions, Orunmila is reputed for knowledge hence linked to ifa (god of divination); Ogun is the owner of all iron and steel being originally a hunter who paved the way for other divinities to come to earth, for this reason, they counted him as 'chief' among the divinities; He is believed to be ubiquitous, and the divinity of war, hunting and other activities or objects connected with iron. Sango

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represents the manifestation of God's wrath thus, he is the divinity of thunder and lightning, and there is a cult for him.

Although other African peoples too have some divinities but most of them are not elaborate as the above mentioned so we will not go into discussing them.

Conclusively therefore, the belief in the existence and activities of divinities is commonly found in African societies that traditionally have central rulers (kings or chiefs) assisted by minor chiefs and sub chiefs of which the Yoruba is a good example. So the concept of divinities headed by God himself can be interpreted as the spiritual counterpart of earthly political structure. Therefore, in many African societies where traditional kings and chief exists, they are regarded as sacred or divine even if a clear distinction is not drawn between the human rulers and God.

Spirit Forces

The belief in the existence of myriads of spirits is widespread throughout Africa, but they defy description almost as much as they defy the scientist's test tube in the laboratory. Though some societies attach more significance to the spirits than to others. Spirits may be classified into several categories, those created in the form of spirits, the disembodied spirits of human beings like the national or tribal heroes who become deified; Ancestors otherwise known as the long dead; the spirits of people recently dead (living dead), malicious or malignant spirits.

Thus, different authors have used different terms to designated non-human spirits which have not attained the status of deities. Mbiti describes them simply as the 'common populace' of spiritual beings. Idowu refers to them simply as spirits. In some West African societies, they are clearly distinguished from the Deities. The Ashanti call them "Asuman" (minor deities and believe that they derive from the Abosom Deities or

THE LIVING-DEAD

The living dead comprises of all the souls of the departed in African Religion. Thus, the living-head is a person who is physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew him in his life as well as being alive in the world of the spirit. So long as the living-dead is thus remembered, he is in the state of personal immorality and is externalized in the physical continuation of the individual through procreation, so that the children bear the traits of their parents or progenitors. This personal immorality is further expressed or externalized in like respecting the departed, giving portion of food to them pouring out libation (of beer, milk or water) and carrying out instructions given by them while they lived or when they appear. All these are symbols of communion, fellowship and remembrance which are the hysterical ties that bind the living-dead to their surviving relatives. These acts are performed mostly by the oldest member of the family who has the longest living period therefore the longest memory of the departed on behalf of the entire family, addressing (when the occasion demands it) the symbolic meal to all the departed (living-dead).

ANCESTORS - THE QUALIFICATION AND THE PROCESSES OF BECOMING AN ANCESTOR

Although the term the living-dead has been designated to include all categories of the departed in African religion, yet it should not be a substitute for ancestors.

Ancestors constitute a special category among the spirits of the departed and have a special places in African worldviews and traditional cults, and must not be confused with other spirits of the departed who are not ancestors. In fact, in the hierarchy of beings in most African worldviews, after Supreme Being and the deities, came the ancestors. For most African societies accept that death by itself does not turn one into an ancestor. The deceased must have the requisite qualifications and some processes must be

from the souls of animals or trees). The Igbo call them "Arusi" and believe that they are of a lower nature than the "Muo" (Deities).

Spirits are invisible and because they are invisible, they are thought to be ubiquitous, so that a person is never sure where they are or not. Although the spirits are ubiquitous, men designate different regions as their place of abode. For instance, among some societies like the Abalayia, Banyarwanda and Igbo, it is thought that the spirits dwell in the underground, netherworld or the subterranean regions; while still a few societies like some Ewe, some Bushmen and Mamuu-mangutu, situated the land of the spirits above the earth, in the air, the sun, moon and stars. However, the majority of people hold that the spirits dwell in woods, bush, forest, rivers, mountains, trees, ponds, seas or just around the villages.

Spirit as a group have more power than men, just as in a physical sense the lions do. Yet, in some ways men are better off, and the right human specialists can manipulate or control the spirits as they wish. Thus, men paradoxically may fear or dread the spirits and yet they can drive the same spirits away or use them to human advantage. For instance, when a person is possessed by the spirits, it is believed that it is the spirit that speaks through him, so that he now plays the role of a medium, and the messages he relays are received with expectation by those to whom they are addressed. On the other hand, spirit possessions, especially unsolicited ones, result in bad effects. They may cause severe torment on the possessed person until rites of exorcism are performed to drive away such spirits by either traditional doctors or diviners.

Human relationship with the spirits vary from society to society. It is, however, a real active and powerful relationship, especially with the spirits of those who have recently died whom we referred to as the living-dead as well as those who have become ancestors which we shall now discuss.

followed before he attains the status of ancestors. These qualifications and processes may vary from society to society.

But most African groups make a clear distinction between the department who are ancestor and those who are not, and have terms and different cults for the two groups. For example, the Igbo call the ancestors "Ndiche" and the others who have not attained ancestorhood 'Ofeli' (wanderers). The ancestors are venerated as good spirits while the wanderers are generally regarded as malignant spirits and are driven away by rites of excision.

Also the Fon call the ancestor – the vodu – other dead – chio. These Fon have intricate ceremonies for defying their dead and so transforming them into ancestors ritually eligible for veneration. From the above discussion, therefore it may be more useful to retain the term (Ancestors) for the departed who have been elevated to the status which makes them ritually eligible for special veneration and cult. Also the term the 'living-dead' (could be used to designate all the departed generally while the term 'ghost' could be resorted for those departed who have turned into wandering malignant spirits.

The questions as to who could and how one can become an ancestors are answered differently by different African societies, since the qualifications and processes of attaining ancestorship vary from society to society. But it is generally accepted that death by itself does not make one an ancestor. In some African societies, old age, life lived according to the accepted moral standards of the group and appropriate funeral rites are absolutely necessary because they are regarded as rites of passage by which the dead are installed as ancestors. Therefore, the requirements – old age, offspring, good moral life, funeral rites and good death.

Physical death is accepted as both natural and inevitable, death after ripe old age is called "God" death or "natural death" and is counted as a blessing to be sought for through prayers and sacrifices. Any death before this time is regarded as unnatural for which various explanations are given springing from the blames on agents of evil, witches, sorcerers or evil spirits of the dead, and occasionally on God and the deities, when God, the deities or the ancestors cause death it must be for a just cause, as a punishment meted out to individual for his sins either in this life or his previous life. Death by suicide, accident, leprosy, dropsy, small-pox, epilepsy, etc, are regarded as bad deaths. Victims of such deaths are not given the full funeral rites, and consequently cannot become ancestors.

However, it is important to note that the above five mentioned requirements are not recognized by all African societies. For example, having an offspring and good moral conduct requirements do not apply uniformly in all societies. For instance among most matrilineal societies in Africa, such as the Ashanti, the Nduibi etc, even though it is the father that transmits the 'Ntoro' – spirit to his children, and takes direct responsibility for their upbringing, it is the mother's brother that becomes an ancestor and is venerated as such but not the father. Though some may honour the memory of their father. Also according to M. Fortes, among the Tallensi people a man may be alien, a wastrel or an adulterer, a quarrelsome neighbour, or a negligent kinsman... if he dies leaving a son, he becomes an ancestor of equal standing with any other ancestor. But on the other hand, if he was a public criminal, a witch, and does anything that merit him expulsion from his lineage group or community, he cannot be elevated nor venerated as an ancestor.

Therefore, a man's status in life determines his status as an ancestor in the spirit world and the types of cult he is given, the king remains a king, the village headman and lineage remain so. Also title holders are accorded the respect due to their rank in the

ancestral cult. This also explains the position of other departed members of the clan or lineage of those who are not ancestors especially women. Generally in most African societies women do not attain the status of ancestors as such, they are represented by their brothers or husbands. So women who have offsprings, and receive the funeral rites join their lineage members in the spirit-land as wives and sisters just as they did in life. Even when their daughters set up shrines for them, they are only invoked as mothers, sisters, aunts not as ancestors. On the other hand, the departed who have nobody to venerate them do not become ancestors rather they are regarded disgruntled spirits and are believed to be malignant and liable to cause misfortune.

However, it appears also that there are those who although they are not strictly qualified in the way described above, may be admitted into the spirit world of the deceased because they are good and their days on earth are done, even though they may be young and childless. In certain areas of Yoruba land and Igbo land, the belief in continued existence and influence of this category of deceased persons is symbolized in the various festivals such as the Egungun, Oro, Mmo, Ayaka; which are various manifestations of the fact that those who have passed into the spirit world of departed members of the community are still a part of the social structure.

THE ROLE OF THE ANCESTORS

The ancestors are an important dimension of African primal religion all over the continent, although the ancestral cult is of greatest importance among some people than others. The general belief is that the dead continue their existence as "shades" or spirits and that they possess the power to affect the living, particularly when newly dead or if the dead persons were as especially powerful person while alive. Thus Alexis Kagama expressed this:

This living man is happier than the departed because he is alive.

But the departed are more powerful.
 The ancestors are generally believed to be the good spirits that have reached the spiritual world, but still taking a lively interest in the affairs of their families, i.e. they are believed to be watching over their families like 'a cloud of witnesses' who watch the spectacle of life. Thus they are regarded still as heads and parts of the families or communities to which they belonged while they were living human beings; for what happened in consequence of the phenomenon called death was only that the family life of this earth has been extended into the afterlife or supersensible world. They remain therefore the spiritual superintendents of the family affairs still felt to be present watching over the household directly concerned in all the affairs of the family and property, giving abundant harvests and fertility. But the ancestors are unpredictable, they are even at hand to harm or to help; it is their power to injure and their sudden attack on routine well being that make men aware of them rather than their beneficent guardianship. By their attacks and interventions men continued to obey the ancestors and so the social order is maintained. For instance in the coast lands of Ghana, we are told that no man is half much afraid of his gods as a man is of his ancestors... the ever present watchful dead and their powers to suit or bless the living.

Nevertheless, it is of importance for the assessment of their status to know that they are no longer living human beings according to earthly assessment, they have become spirits - spirits whose sphere is the spirit world reserved for good ancestors and in consequence of which communion and communication with them is possibly only at the spiritual level. This is because they are no longer of fleshy order or ordinary mortals since they have crossed the borderland and between this world and close to the Supreme Being, the deities and acts as intermediaries between those divine beings, they have enhanced powers and influence as well as better knowledge of the affairs of the spirit

world which they constantly warn their descendants and kinsmen of an impending disaster and counsel them on what to do to attract the most favourable fortunes. As members of the clan into which they hope one day to reincarnate, they are very concerned with the continued existence and strengthening of the clan. They are therefore believed to be custodians of traditional laws and customs on which the survival of the clan or community depends and would punish with sickness or misfortune anybody who flouted them.

The ancestral spirits have the potential power to effect the living both for good and if they are respectfully and properly venerated, and for evil, if they are neglected. Because of this great concern for the ancestors, Africans frequently offer sacrifices and pour libation to them. It is believed that the ancestors are in control of the land and its produce. Therefore, before anyone enjoys this produce a bit of it must be offered to the ancestors. At hr time, there are larger offerings to them when new arrivals are born to the flocks some must be slaughtered and their blood spilled to the ancestors in order to ensure continued blessings in the future.

Also the ancestors were thought to be able to help their tribe in time of war and were invoked before battles. This is because ancestors are believed to have acquired special knowledge in the afterworld. Ancestors are believed to communicate with the living from time to time. One of the most common forms of this communication is the dream. Sometimes the message of the dream is direct and need no interpretation, but at other times the message is not clear, and the dreamer must seek the help of a diviner to understand it. Thus, they are consulted as and the mediums, diviners pass on their messages to those who consult them. In dreams ancestors speak to men and the interpretation given by diviners/mediums indicates the will of the father (ancestors).

Furthermore, ancestors are factors of cohesion in African society. This is a fact well illustrated in the sacred stools which are ancestral symbols of Ashanti, especially the Golden stool. R. S. Rattray describes the Golden stool as 'the shrine and symbol of the national soul', the great umbrella covering the stool when brought out in procession or during an open-air ceremony is known as 'Katamanso' – the covering by the nation. It is the supreme symbol of the ancestral genius of the nation and is thus that which gives the nation a sense of cohesion or unity. We shall discuss the activities in details during our case study of ancestors among the Ashanti.

Mbiti however described the role of the ancestors succinctly thus:

They return to their human families from time to time and share meals with them, however, symbolically. They know and have interest in what is going on in their family... They are guardians of family affairs, traditions, ethics and activities. Offences in these matters is ultimately an offence against the forefathers who in that capacity act as invisible police of the families and communities.

Conclusively, one of the most important duties therefore is to see that the burial and later mourning ceremonies for the dead are duly carried out, and often great expense is incurred and debts are accumulated by his expression of filial feeling. Sickness and misfortune and often believed to be due to some neglect in fulfilling the final funeral rites with due care. Bad dreams are put down to the anger of a restless ghost. Family is strengthened by emphasis on performing full duties to the dead since it is a great disgrace to be cut off from the family.

Having discussed the general role of the Ancestors, we shall now consider the variations from these general patterns by examining the beliefs and cults of ancestors found among the different African groups.

ANCESTRAL CULT AMONG THE IGBO

Ancestors had very important place in Igbo traditional society which was organized on the segmented lineage system. Authority at each level of the social structure was in the hands of the council of elders under the presidency of the eldest male of the senior line called the Okpala. He owes his authority to the fact that he is the representative and mouthpiece of the ancestors. Igbo ancestors are called Ndichie or Ndi-oke, and they are represented by pillars or staff placed inside the hut, but facing outwards so as to keep watch. Food is put at these pillars and wine poured on them traditionally whenever eating. But there is a portable stick (ofo) which is the most important symbol of the ancestors. This 'Ofo' is used by the head of the family as the principal symbol of the presence and authority of the ancestors since it has been handed down by the founder of the lineage through the succession of lineage heads; the 'ofo' is a cult of symbol said to have been given to man by God himself for communicating with Him through the ancestors. Laws are promulgated by hitting it on the ground because the ancestors and the Earth - Deity (Ala) are guardians of traditional laws and customs, morality and owners of the land. Any departure from customs is likely to incur the displeasure and vengeance of the ancestors. Therefore, sacrifice is offered to them periodically or especially when a diviner says that it is necessary. Sacrifice is performed by the oldest man, or head of the family, they are the family -priests and do not need an outside priest as in the case of the gods, more so, since the 'Ofo' is the principal symbol of authority; it receives periodical libations and at communal sacrifice each man lays his Ofo with others and receives part of the sacrifice. In some places this sticks is thought to receive the soul of a dying man. Beside the Ofo symbol, most homes in Igbo land had ancestral shrines at a corner of the reception hut known as the family stools (Okposi).

The Igbo also have ancestral ceremonies associated with secret societies, notably the Mmo-society, a word which means spirits of the dead. These masquerades appear in public at the end of funeral rites, at festivals of the sessions, and on other occasions. The Mmo masquerades are saluted as our fathers, owners of the village, 'owners of the soil'. They go from house to house at night singing and dancing and twirling the piece of wood on a cord known as the 'bullroarer' demanding for gifts from the householders and then dispense to eat a communal meal. While this is going on women are strictly confined indoors. Also at the beginning of the harvest, this (Mmo) and other societies (Odo and Omabe) parade in the town and receive sacrifices and gifts of new yams. Moreover, besides the daily prayers with the 'Ofo' during which simple offerings of kola and chalk are made to ancestors, there are also two big annual festivals at the beginning and end of the rainy seasons during which many people who live their villages come back with gifts to offer sacrifices to their ancestors which is done on their behalf by the lineage heads.

ANCESTORS AMONG THE ASHANTI

The strength of an Ashanti Chiefdom is founded on the belief in the ancestors and sentiments of unity and solidarity associated with their worship. The position of the Ashanti king as a civil ruler is validated only by his sacred role as the 'one who sits upon the stool of the ancestors'. He is the link between the living and the dead, for the living, the dead and those yet to be born of the tribe are all members of one family and it is the stool that binds the family together. The stool is the soul of the nation, say the Ashanti. So during the coronation ceremony, the Chief is gently lowered and raised three times over the blackened stool of the ancestor. He is believed to be thus imbued with the spirit and power of the ancestors and his person becomes sacred.

It is believed that success and prosperity in this life depend on favours from the ancestors. At meals, the old Ashanti used to offer the first morsel of food to the ancestors

and pour libation to them daily. They are believed to be constantly watching over their living relatives. But they punish those who break traditional laws and customs or fail to fulfill kinship obligations with illness and even death. Their blessing for those who obey customs consist in plentiful crops, children and prosperity.

Each Akan Chief at his enthronement, carves a stool for himself and uses it as his personal stool while he is alive. When he dies, he is placed on his stool and bathed before his burial. Thereafter, the stool is blackened and kept at the shrine of his ancestral spirit. Each has a chapel of blackened stools which is the shrine of its ancestors. At the shrine, the lineage head at appropriate times offers food and drinks to the ancestors, praying for protection, long life, health and prosperity of members of the lineage. Every lineage is protected by its own ancestors, but it is the dead rulers who protect the tribe.

The most important ancestral customs of Ashanti are the Adae, a word meaning a place of rest or lying down, work being forbidden on that day. Rattray has recorded extensively the ritual and the frequency of the Adae memories, which are tribal festivals. Throughout, Ashanti country the Adae rite is held twice in forty-three days, one on a Sunday (Kwesadae) and other on a Wednesday (Wukadae). On the day before the Adaw, stocks of water, wood, and food are got in, as nobody must work on the sacred day. Utensils are cleaned, stools scrubbed and money counted out for the festival.

On the Wukadae as described by Rattray, all assembled in the courtyard of the Chief's palace led by the head stool carrier, the chief and officials entered a small dark room in which were the ancestral stools on a low platform of poles and cross bards. When their cloth covering was removed, they were seen to be blackened and crumbling, caked with clothes blood and fat. Water, which had been drawn early by an old woman, was poured out and the ancestors asked to wash their hands.

The Chief, stripped to the waist in respect, then took a spoonful of mashed plantain and put the content on the oldest stool, saying: 'My spirit grandfathers, today is the Wednesday Adae, come and receive this mashed plantain and eat; let this town prosper; and permit the bearers of children to bear children; and may all the people who are in this town get riches. The same was done at the other stools but the names of those ancestors were not mentioned. The remainder of the plantain was scattered on the ground outside for the spirit of the stool-carriers of the dead chiefs.'

A live sheep was then brought in and offered with similar words. The Chief stabled its throat, some blood fell on the floor and it was taken outside and killed. The blood was collected and taken in to be smeared on the seat and edge of each stool, by the carriers, without speaking. The fat of the intestines was put on the center support of the stools. Choices pieces of meat out there were roasted nearby and then brought to the Chief who put one on each stool saying: "Here is meat, receive and eat".

A bottle of whisky was opened, the herald drank one fast from a brass cup, then the head stool carrier poured some on to each stool, addressing them at greater length than before. His speech, as previously, was punctuated by words of appeal from those present. The rest of the whisky was drunk by the ancestors. The meat remained on the stool till evening; one part has to be eaten by the Chief and the rest by the stool carriers.

The Sunday Adae differed little from the above. It was preceded by a "wave offering". A pot of water was waved by an old woman above her head, outside the palace, then quickly turned upside down on the grounds, the idea being to stop any disagreement among those assisting at the rites. Yams were put on the blackened stools by the chief, a sheep offered as before, the meat placed on the stools and rum poured on them; all these are sacrifices offered to the ancestors to serve as a continued communion and communication with the ancestors symbolically.

ANCESTRAL CULT OF THE GIKUYU

The Gikuyu recognize three groups of ancestral spirits in the spirit world. These are:

1. The spirits of the father and mother (Ngoma cia aciāri) which communicate directly with the living children and can advise or reproach them the same way they did when they were alive.
2. The clan spirits (ngoma cia Moherega), which have an interest in the welfare and prosperity of the clan. They act collectively just as the clan council of elders, and may administer justice in the clan affairs or on any of its members.
3. The age group spirits (ngoma cia riika). These are concerned with the activities of their particular age-groups. This group can be called the tribal spirit council for it is the age group that unifies the whole tribe.

The function of the elder both in the family and in the community is to harmonize the activities of various groups, living and dead. He mediates between the living and the dead. The Gikuyu believe that the elder most constantly pay tribute of food, meat and drinks to the ancestors who are his seniors and from whom he receives direction just as he gives to his living subordinates. This emphasizes Jemo, Kenyatta, said must not be seen as worship, for such gifts which an elder gives to the ancestral spirits as when a sheep is sacrificed to them... are nothing but the tributes symbolizing the gifts which the departed would have received had they been alive and which the living elders now receive.

When such a tribute is denied, the ancestors naturally got angry and may punish the elders of the clan. When misfortune strikes, therefore the service of a diviner is engaged to discover the cause. If the ancestors are found to be responsible appropriate rituals of reparation are made.

ANCESTRAL CULT OF THE LOVEDU

The ancestors of the Lovedu of South Africa, can influence their own descendants for good or evil. The Chief's ancestors however look after the affairs of the entire nation. A man will always say that as long as his ancestors are watchful, nothing will happen to him. It is believed that witches cannot penetrate the village to kill a man, nor can he be affected by charms if his ancestors are watchful. So that when evil befalls a person the Lovedu say that his ancestors have had an accident, implying that he has temporarily been deprived of their protection.

Ancestors are appealed to and thanked for good crops, fertility, plenty and all manner of good fortune and success. They may cause sickness or bring misfortune to descendants who neglect them. Ancestors are sometimes seen as capricious, because for almost every misfortune, divination points accusing fingers at them and present a list of exorbitant demands made by ancestors.

MAGICAL FORCES OR MYSICAL POWERS

According to Dhavamony, magic is a belief and practice according to which men are convinced that they may directly affect natural powers or forces and each other among themselves either for good or for evil or their own efforts in manipulating the superior powers. Therefore magic as such is a neutral activity in the sense that by itself it could be seen for either a good or evil purpose. Thus, it is an art or craft or even technique of commanding the unseen supernatural powers/forces by those who possess the necessary secrets and hence can control, harness and explicitly directing these powers towards achieving their desire goals. In these rituals, material substances often with characteristics or origin symbolically related to the objectives desired are used to accomplishment of verbal formulae. Thus basically, we have two main types of magic, namely: homeopathic magic, whereby the magicians make use of effigies or images

which the second type of magic is contagious magic which is a belief that anything that one comes into contact with a person if magical rituals are performed on such items, for example thing like a piece of cloth, nails, hairs, etc. The resultant effect will be on their owners.

Therefore, people tried to obtain such objects believing that they have mystical powers like charms, amulets and so forth from different traditional specialists like magicians, medicine men; for various purposes like protection, prevention, good luck, productive etc. However, it is not our concern in this course to discuss these purpose in details. Names for these magical or mystical forces in form of charms and medicines are identical in many African societies. For instance, the Akan call them 'Suman'; the Ewe call them 'Gbo'; the Baluba call them 'Nwanga'; the Lele of Kassia 'Nengu'; the Tiv people of Nigeria call them 'Akombo' and so forth. So in African Traditional Religion, there is hardly any distinction made between medicine as a pharmaceutical preparation and 'medicine' as a charm or purveyor of a mystical power. This again bears out the fact that the material and the spiritual merge in African worldview.

MAN IN AFRICAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Man in African Religion can be viewed from different standpoints. Viewed from the standpoint of this origin and final destiny, man is best understood in relationship to God, his creator. Man comes from God; He has a definite mission to fulfill in God's plan, and he will eventually go back to God. Viewed ontologically, man is a force in the midst of other forces in the universe. He is a living force, active and interacting with other forces in the universe. Socially, the African doctrine of man strikes a balance between his personal identity as a unique individual person and his collective identity as a member of his society. We shall now elaborate on each of these aspects, and later illustrate them with examples from some African societies.

THE ORIGINS OF MAN

Man in African Religion is seen primarily as a creature of God. The way in which he is said to have been thought into existence may vary from one society to another but it is commonly held that God created man. The creation of man is the central theme of African cosmogonic myths. These myths variously emphasize that man is created directly by God, and that he holds a central position in the creative order. For example, in the Dogon myth, God (Amma) created and sent down in an arch, the four pairs of 'Nommo' who became the ancestors of the Dogon people; after he had created and restored order to the world. These subsequently cooperated with God in founding the human society, with its institutions and civilization. Similarly, the Fang myths was emphatic that Nzame (God) with the help of the divine beings Mbere and Nkwa, made the first man Fan, who like themselves was full of life and beauty.

Man enjoys a special relationship with God. He is endowed with freedom and intelligence. This puts him far above other creatures in the physical world and makes him like god. But God far transcends man both in power and perfection. This is well illustrated by the same Fang myth. Nzame (God) send Nzelan, thunder to destroy the first man Fan and his world, because puffed up by his superiority over the animal kingdom, he refused to worship God. The relationship between God and man is often defined in terms of father/son relationship. It is marked not only by submissiveness, obedience and resignation on the side of man, and unquestioned authority on the side of God but also rich with love, protection and care from God, and a feeling of security, trust and love on the side of man.

God is not seen only as the creator and father of the human race, but also as the creator of each individual person. A special intervention of God at conception brings each individual person into existence. Impregnation in itself would not be sufficient to

produce a new human being. This is why a young wife among the Banyarwanda, in the evening, leaves some water in a jar. Imana, it is believed, needs some water to shape the clay into a child in the womb. Then after birth, Iaman decides that life is to be for that individual, how much happiness or unhappiness, how much prosperity or misery, fortunes or misfortunes he should have. Nevertheless, it is believed that 'Imana' designs overall, are always beneficial for human beings, God's personal concern and direct intervention in the creation and care for man are further illustrated, by the belief common in West African that at conception God sends an 'emanation' or 'spark' of himself into each individual. This guardian-spirit holds in trust and dispenses the deposits of fortunes or misfortunes which God has destined for each person. Details of this belief are given below. Suffice to say here that it clearly illustrates the special position and regard which, each individual person is before God.

ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF MAN

Man ontologically is best viewed as living force in active communion with other living forces in the world. Every person is a nexus of interacting elements of the self and of the world which determines and is determined by his behaviour. Thus, the true concept of man is lost if he is considered in isolation. He is all the time interacting with other beings in the universe to whom he is linked by a network of relationships. Man in African Religious Philosophy therefore is best studied as a life force in the midst of other life-forces. This is very clearly seen in the African doctrine of man.

African doctrine of man does not admit the dualism which is characteristic of the Greco-Roman culture. Man is not split into two conflicting principles the body and the soul. The body is not the 'prison house' of the soul. Rather, African anthropologies generally conceive man as one unit. There are indeed a number of principles in man. These far from jeopardizing the unity of man closely bind him together, and enable him

to relate with other entities in the ontological order. Some African anthropologists identify four such principles in man. Each principle links man to a different category of beings in the ontological order. There is the 'Breath' conceived as vivifying principle, a life-force which links man with other life-forces in the universe and is in vital relationship with them. There is the destiny soul, conceived as an 'emanation' or 'spark' of the creator inside man. The term 'Soul' used here is hardly adequate. This principle is variously conceived as the personification of human destiny, a personal deity, or a guardian spirit (Angel). It comes from God, and subsists and goes back to God after death. But it is not a vivifying principle, or is it a part of fraction of man seen as a composite being as in the Western Concept of the soul. This concept of 'destiny spirit', as described above is found mainly in West African societies. In some societies especially among the Bantus, the destiny spirit is identified or even replaced by the ancestral guardian often called the shadow. Finally, there is the human person himself, the unique individual person created by God.

Of course, different societies conceive of these principles and their relationships in different ways, but the conception of man as a unit and a life-force in vital relationships with other life-forces in the universe is a characteristic feature. The moral ideal is also generally the same, the harmonious integration of the self with the world.

Below is a diagram which illustrates the component element of man as called by different peoples:

COMPONENT ELEMENT OF MAN

English	Lugbara	Yoruba	Nupe	Igbo	Ashanti
Breath (Life Principle)	Ava	Emi	Rayi	Obi	Sunsun
Destiny (Guardian Spirit)	Adro	Ori	Kuci	Chi	Nkrabea Kra
Shadow (Self)	Endri Lendri	Ojiji	Fisingi	Onyinyo	Honhom
Body	Rua	Ara	Nakoh	Aru	
Personality (Ancestral Guardian)	Tali	Eleda	Kuci	Eke	Ntoro Mogyia

MAN IN THE UNIVERSE

The survey of African doctrines of man made above, shows some basic similarities. Each of the societies considered conceives man as a homogeneous integral unit. He is not a split entity. Nor is he a composite of two or more principle. Whether alive or dead, man, the real person, is one entity, a spirit which underlies the bodily manifestation of man. At the same time, each living man is a microcosm of forces. The person, the real man, is like the nucleus around which revolves a number of other forces -- the body the shadow, the personality soul or the destiny soul. These by themselves are individual life-forces which can and do relate with other life-forces in the universe.

But taken together, they form one undivided life-force namely man. Man in African thought, presents itself as a cell, wrapping into one with unit a number of life-forces all revolving around one nucleus, the self, the real man, which gives the whole complex both its name and direction. These component life forces are channels or tentacles with which man communicates with other forces in the universe. Man is at the center of the universe. Above all beings or forces is God; Spirit and creator. He gives existence, power of survival and increase to all the other powers. After him come the divinities/deities, and then the founding ancestors of the different clans. These, though one time human beings, dispose of great powers and influence because they were the first to whom god communicated his vital force, with the power of exercising influences on prosperity. They constitute the most important chain binding men to God. After them, come the ordinary dead of the tribe, the ancestors, then, come living man. Under man and subordinate to him are the physical forces in the universe – animals, plants, and minerals.

GOD AND MAN'S DESTINY

Existence for the African is communion. Man maintains a vital relationship with nature, God, the deities, ancestors, the tribe, the clan, the extended family and himself.

Each of the component life-forces in a man is a channel for maintaining this relationship. The world is bound to God by the ties of creation, God creates, sustains and cares for man. However, African thought also believes that God is ontologically linked to man through the guardian spirit 'the spark or emanation of God in each person' (Chi, Kwa, Ori) etc. This spirit of God in man guards, guides, advises, and administers his destiny. God's providence for man is not limited to the general world plan for the guidance of the universe. He has a worked out plan for each individual person and his own spirit remains with each person to direct its implementation. God's plan for man once sealed, is unalterable. Neither the ancestor nor the deities or any created force can interfere with man's God-given destiny. The ancestors and deities may temporarily withhold the realization of the contents of one's destiny. But the performance of appropriate rituals rectifies it. This shows the solicitude which characterizes the relationship between God and man in African religious thought. Man's omission on earth is to realize his destiny amidst the threats from mystical forces beyond the visible realm, and evil people from within his own community. To achieve this, he can count on the aid of the god spiritual beings like his guarding spirit, the ritually deities of one's clan and his clan ancestors. From the visible world, he can count on the support of his clan lineage and other social institutions. His adversaries are all the agents of evil both spiritual and human. His success depends on how he marshals the favorable forces through rituals, sacrifices, prayers, vows, offering and making good medicine to neutralize the machinations of the evil forces. Divination reveals to him the snares of his enemies and the correct ritual remedy to apply. Where one fails after exhaustion all these possibilities of working out his destiny, what he gets is his destiny, for says an Igbo proverb, 'where a man falls, here his destiny (Chi) pushed him down'.

Certain beliefs of the Tallensi of the Volta Region of Ghana illustrate this cooperation between god, the ancestral spirits, the clan, and the individual himself in achieving his own destiny. According to Fortes, the Tallensi believe that everybody has a prenatal destiny given him by God in heaven, which determines his success or failure in life. However, before a child gets to the age of maturity, he is under the influence of his parents destiny, especially his mother's. When he gets to adolescence and begins to assume a certain social identity, his own prenatal destiny, becomes stronger and exercises more influence. At this stage, with the help of indignation, he discovers which ancestors will help him to realize his destiny. He then begins to make offerings of food and drink to them because their help will determine his success or failure in life. Under their guidance, the youth's destiny changes. It becomes a good destiny, shedding its evil propensities and assuming more positive role. Thereafter, his own moral behaviour not his prenatal fate - will determine to large measure his personal success or failure. Sometimes, in spite of this, some evil inherent in the pre-natal destiny persists. For women this is usually constant sickness or death of their children. For man, this could be unavoidable physical or psychological infirmity, which prevents them from marrying or having children. In these cases, attempts are made to execrose the evils in the prenatal destiny; where this fails, nothing else could be done.

African beliefs about the Destiny-spirits thus shed some light on their notions about predestination and human responsibility. In African thought, predestination and human responsibility are conflicting but they are not diametrically opposed concepts. It is true that what one may hope to get out of life is only what has been predestined by God. But what one actually gets is his responsibility. He only gets what he has worked for. In other words, where a person is not resourceful a particular fortune in his destiny package may be lost. Since no one knows that contents of his destiny, he must keep

trying as if what he wants is there. The Igbo proverb, which says 'whoever says yes, his Chi (destiny) says yes, expresses this dialectic appropriately. Thus African view on predestination, unlike the Western concept of predestination does not imply that what is predestined by God must come to pass irrespective of whatever the individual does. Rather, it is like an award by God to the individual and held in trust for him by the guardian destiny spirit. The responsibility of obtaining the money or benefits of the award rests on him. He can get all the award or may lose a good part of it. But try as he would, he cannot get anything that is not included in the award.

Fortes explains this dialectic of fate and responsibility implicit in the African concept of man with the stories of Oedipus and Job drawn from Greek mythology and the Bible respectively. One vision of man as illustrated by the story of Oedipus (who killed his father and married his mother because it was predestined), presents him as fatalistic and amoral. Another vision and patience achieved God's designs for him, presents man as moral, responsible and free. But whereas in Western thought these two visions of man are irreconcilably opposed, in African thought they are combined in a dynamic vision of man. He is both subject of fate and free. He is at the same time a victim of restriction imposed by destiny and the architect of his own future. He is both innocent and responsible, both Oedipus and Job. In other words, human destiny in African thought is both unalterable and alterable. Viewed as a package sealed by God and given to man it is unalterable. Viewed as a resource to be exploited, it is alterable.

MAN'S INTERACTION WITH OTHER LIFE-FORCES IN THE UNIVERSE

Another component element in man namely the Breath, (Emi), Sunsum, Ava or (Obi) links man with other life forces in the universe. The breath as the vivifying principle permits man to grow spiritually, to be strengthened, weakened or even to die. It is itself a life-force which can influence and be influenced by other life-forces in the

universe whether they be deities, ancestors, witches, sorcerer or even ordinary men or animals. These are all living forces which can influence one another for good or for evil. This is illustrated by Spirit possession. The person on whom a certain Jok (Spirit Power) descends among the Dinka is called 'wun Jok' (the owner of Jok). His own being participates in the being of the divinity to the point at which, the spirit displaces his own personality. In this state, he can perform some activities which are quite beyond the capabilities of ordinary men. The interaction between the living and their ancestors is also seen in the supposed reincarnation of an ancestor in the new born baby of the clan. Reincarnation in this context must be understood to mean that the life-force of the newly-born has come under the vital influence or life-force of an ancestor, and must not be understood as Temples explains as a case of particular person being born again. The Bantu he explains, know that at conception God creates a new individual. But as he develops in the womb he comes under the vital influence of an ancestor or even a spirit. Even sometimes if there is some obstetric difficulties, and a diviner is consulted, he may attribute the difficulty to a dispute between an ancestor and a spirit about who is to be born in a particular child. This is further illustrated by the fact that the same ancestor may be born in two or more persons at the same time. The supposed reincarnation, according to Temple, can be better expressed by saying that, it is not a predetermined human being belonging to the clan who is reborn, but is his individually returning to take part in the life of the clan by means of vital influences through which the deceased gives individualization to the newly born. Similar beliefs are found in many other African societies. Cornelia reports on the Igbo, contain an account of a boy in whom the deity Anyanwu (Sun) is said to be incarnated. This should be understood to mean therefore that the boy was under the vital influence of the sun deity – Anyanwu.

Interactions between man and the spirits is not a one way traffic. The influence does not come from the spirits only. Men sometimes influence the spirits. Among the Kalabari the saying goes that 'it is people who make the gods important. The guiding spirit of any object can be built up into a power spirit-force by intensive invocation and extravagant offering. A troublesome spirit can be destroyed. Similarly, man can take the forms of the life-forces of beings below him, some people believe that man can change into some animal species, and some animals are totems of some clans and lineages.

MAN AND SOCIETY

African thought tends to define a person in terms of the group to which he belongs. A person is thought first of all as a constituent of a particular community for it is the community which defines who he is and who he can become. In traditional society, a man experiences life through his family, the lineage, the clan and the tribe. Even today, in an African village, an African is not asked: 'who are you?' But 'whose son are you?' and 'what lineage or clan do you belong?' Thus, from birth an African learns to believe that 'I am because I belong' An individual is a 'nobody'. The family makes the man. The family is made up of not only the living but also of the dead members and those yet to be born.

There is an ontological element in man linking him to his family, and through the family to the clan. This is not only the physical and biological element, but a spiritual element. For the Ashanti, it is not only Mogya (blood) but also Ntoro (spirit-force). For other societies, the ancestral guardian incarnate in each newly born, maintains the unbroken ontological bond between a man, his family, his lineage and his clan. A son's life is the prolongation of the life of his father and his grandfather, and the life of the whole lineage. Each new baby born to the clan makes it possible for the ancestors to come back to participate and strengthen the lineage. As its numerical strength increases

so does its life-force becomes stronger. Hence it is the greatest tragedy that can befall a man and his lineage for him to die childless. Hence, this Twi saying 'it is man who counts, I call upon Gold, it answers not I call upon drapery, it answers not, it is man who counts'.

Every segment of the African society is regarded as a family, the lineage, clan, the tribe. Even some kingdom or states which have incorporated various ethnic groups through conquests or immigrations are still organized and administered with the family formulae. The head of each group is not only the administrative head of the group but above all the spiritual head of the group. He is the head by virtue of his position as the link between the visible and invisible sections of the family. By the right of primogeniture, he has social as well as religious functions. Through his actions and words communion is renewed, discord is healed and the advice and powerful aid of the elders are enlisted. The lineage head relies on the lineage and organizes rituals before cultivating the communal land, building a new homestead, betrothal of a couple, naming ceremonies, remedy for prolonged childlessness, cases of illnesses or death in the family, etc. Similarly, the clan head or the child rallies the clan or tribe and oversees the rituals connected with matter of wider concern like the beginning of the planting season, annual festivals, prolonged droughts, wider-spread epidemics, the eating of the first fruits and so forth.

THE STRUCTURE OF AFRICAN WORLDVIEWS

A survey of the worldviews of some African peoples shows that they model the organization of their worldviews on patterns drawn from the observation of the world around them, or some of their cultural experience. Some societies use models drawn from the visible physical world e.g. the order of the planetary bodies, or the sky/earth dichotomy. Others draw their models from the ecology like the sea, desert, mountain,

valleys or the fauna. Still others find suitable models in the pattern of their social and political institutions. In some African worldviews, the spiritual beings are closely linked with important natural phenomena which they are believed to control. While others define the powers and functions of the divine beings in relation to the human needs which they are believed to procure. Published anthropological literature on Africa show that African worldview can be grouped according to the ecology of the region in which they are found. For example, many West African people who are settled agriculturists and live in large communities spread over densely populated areas; have a densely populated spiritual world. While most people of East and Southern Africa who inhabit more open country, and semi-nomadic pastoralists have less densely populated worldviews with simpler structure. The structure of Nilotc worldview fall somewhere in-between.

THE WEST AFRICAN WORLDVIEWS

Even among the societies in West Africa who recognize five categories of spiritual beings in their worldviews, one finds that the structure of their worldview display different models. The Ashanti of Ghana and the Kalabari of Nigeria use models drawn from their ecology. However, while the former use the rivers, lakes, and the sea which water lands of the Ashanti country, the Kalabari who live in the swampy areas of the Niger delta, use the creeks and the sea as modes for classifying their spiritual beings. The Igbo use the cosmic order, while the Yoruba who live in small urban settlements with centralized chiefly administration, prefer models drawn from their socio-political organization. But in this course we treat only the Kalabari, Ashanti and Tiv world views on the part of the West Africa. Then the worldviews of the Neur and Dinka of the Sudan.

THE ASHANTI WORLDVIEW

The Ashanti of Ghana believe that the world is full of spirits. The Supreme-Being called Nyame or Onyankupon, lives far up in the sky, but manifests himself through a pantheon of deities (Abosom). An Ashanti myth recounts the popular notions out of the basis for the organization of spiritual beings in their worldview. The myth says that 'Nyame' – the Supreme Being had several sons, whom He sent to the earth in order that they might receive benefits from Him, and confer them upon mankind. All these sons bore the names of what are now rivers, lakes, or the sea. There is Tano, the great river. There is sea, also a river. There is Bastwo, a lake and Gno, the sea. Other rivers and lakes of importance are also linked with some deities. The off-shoots or these rivers are in turn spirits said to be offsprings of the river deity.

The deities are called 'Onyankuon Kyeama' mouth pieces of God, because they are said to be his intermediaries. He placed each deity in charge of a different section of the universe or human need. 'Sea' is assigned the shady forest country, while 'Tano' is given the grassy plains. In some places 'Tano' is linked with thunder. The deity 'Ta Yao' is linked with iron, and consequently patron of spirits. He was closely connected with war in the olden days.

Just as the deities sprang from the Supreme Being so the spirit-forces spring from the deities. An Ashanti priest explained to Rattray that: 'As a woman gives birth to a child so may water a god'. The Spirit-Forces come the ordinary charms and amulets (suman) and evil spirits which include witches (Abiyifo), forest monsters (Sasabosam) and fairies (Mmoatia).

THE KALABIRI PEOPLE

The Kalabari people live in the tidal mangrove swamps of the Eastern Niger Delta. Linguistically, they are part of the great bloc of Ijo speaking people, though they

form a distinct sub-group both in dialect and culture. The traditional economy of most of these communities is based on fishing, with surplus fish exported to the hinterland markets and vegetables brought down on the return trip.

As time went on they engaged in trade with the European first in slaves and later in palm-oil brought down from the hinterland. Thus, as a result of the switch in economy, there developed New Calabar 'House' – a close-knit trading corporation and war-canoe team whose elected head had a high degree of control and large measure of power over its internal affairs. This house head was chosen above all for his abilities in trade and war, and might be quite a young man. He and the traders under him were constantly buying slaves for incorporation into the 'House', whose power in the community he aimed to increase thereby. To ensure their smooth integration into the community he aimed to increase thereby. To ensure their smooth integration into the house, the incorporated slaves and their descendants were given factional kingship ties to the buyers and their descendants. Hence, despite its actual composition, the house was thought of as a king of lineage, all of whose members were 'descended' from the trader who founded a kind of lineage. Any prosperous trader who accumulated enough slaves to paddle a thirty-man war canoe and hold another in reserve was qualified to found a house of his own, and wealthy house frequently budded off such new offspring.

At the community level, government was carried on by an assembly of the Amanyanabo or king, in council with all of the House heads. The amanyanabo was elected from among their number by the members of a royal dynasty usually after a tacit canvassing of public opinion. Normally, the amanyanabo's power was bolstered by a large House of his own, and also by the 'convey protection money payable to him by all European merchants before they opened trade. In addition to presiding over the internal

affairs of the community, the amanyanabo also commanded its fleet of war canoes in battle against trade rivals such as Bonny and Brass.

In these respects, the city states of New Calabar had a rather different kind of political system from the fishing villages. Nevertheless, a great deal of the old baseline culture survived its economic revolution. Ideas about the nature of the community remained the same and the contrast between community values and lineage values persisted. The individual's place in society was still seen in much the same terms. Trade was almost as subject to the natural hazards of sea and creek as fishing had been; and as with fishing, the ultimate source of fruits was the sea. Hence the conception of people's relation to their environment changed but little. As a reflection of these important communities, the broad view of the world supplied by religion remained unchanged in all essentials.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE KALABARI WORLDVIEW

The world in which Kalabari people find themselves has four great levels. The first and most immediate of these is 'tomi kiri' – literally 'the place of people'. Tomi Kiri includes all visible and tangible objects, whether human, an animal and vegetable or inert; and the greater part of the average man's experience is of events occurring on this level.

Sharply contrasted with things in Tomi Kiri are those which exist in 'teme' – 'spirits' which are normally invisible and intangible. Yet the diviners can go through a sense of rites which 'clear their eyes' so that they can see spirits at will. And these beings (spirits) sometimes materialize or manifest themselves in material objects in order to draw man's attention to their wants. But so far as the ordinary person is concerned, they remain by and large 'behind' the visible world, in which they are known only by their effects.

This, spirits have widely varying relations with the visible, tangible world. First of all, every person, plant, animal, and things has its own particular guiding spirit, which is in close and continuous association with it, and is sometimes even said to be 'in' it. The relation between a thing and its spirit is often compared to the relation between a canoe and its steersmen; for it is the spirit that controls and directs the things behaviour.

Then, over and above such spirit of particular people and particular material objects, there are three great categories of spirits which though lack their close and permanent associations. In general, these free spirits are more powerful and influence the whole masses of phenomena and whose generic label is 'Oru'.

The first of these categories is that the dead (duen) ancestors. Ancestors are in fact the spirit of once-living people that have parted from their bodies at death, and they are thought of as pursuing desires and values similar to those descendants, and in return expect to be looked after themselves. They reward those who enhance the strength of the lineage by observing kinship norms, and they punish those who spoilt the lineage by infringing such norms. The deceased heads of a lineage are of particular importance in the context. They are said to be in a very intimate relation with the living lineage head, who presides over the lineage 'in their name' and with their strength. In so far as the living head acts well, it is with their guidance. In so far as he acts badly, they have separated themselves from him and sooner or later will punish him. Wherever the rise and fall of 'Houses' or lineages is being discussed, the ancestor and their activities are likely to be brought in by way of explanation. This is because, the power and influence of every House is underpinned by the spirits of its deceased heads, or diminished by the anger of these spirits at breaches of the code of solidarity among fellow House members.

The second category of free spirits is that of amoru (village heroes). Like the ancestors and heroes once lived with men in their communities. But these are some

important differences, myths and heroes seldom talk of them as having been born and brought up in the village that gives them cult. Sometimes they are said to have come from a distant, non Kalabari community, or from some unknown place. Often they are said to have come from among the water people to live in their chosen villages, they did not just abide by the established customs, rather, they introduce new laws and new ways of life; and today each village traces those of its laws and institutions which are crucial to its identity to its various heroes. For instance, in New Calabar, Owamekaso, head of the heroes, was said to have introduced the trade with Europe. Okpolodo and Siriopubo introduced head-hunting; Ekineba introduced masquerade dancing, and Amakarasa brought communal purification rites. As the dead or ancestors underpin or undermine the strength of their Houses, so the heroes underpin or undermine the strength of the total community and of its institutions. Finally, instead of dying like the ancestors, the heroes disappeared into the sky or into the ground. They were not buried, and they left their descendants behind them.

Since their disappearance the heroes have existed 'in spirits'. Where the ancestors control the fortunes of their several lineages, the heroes control those of village as a whole. In return for worship, they strengthen the village and help it to survive in competition with its neighbours. In particular each hero is responsible for the laws and institution he or she founded. Each rewards those who enhance village strength by keeping his laws and punishes those who weaken it by defying such laws. As the ancestral heads of lineages are believed to be in close contact with the village head. If he plays his part well, they help him and increase his authority; but if he 'spoils his seat', they may punish or even kill him. For instance in New Calabar, old men are fond of remembering how the favour of Owamekaso made the nineteenth century King Abbi indestructible when he led the State's canoe fleet into battle. That is to say that before

embarking on the battle, the King went into Owamekaso's house to offer a libation and as he went down to the waterside in trebled violently for 'the power of Owamekaso was with him'. But of an earlier King whose violent and greatly reign had lasted only a few years, people said: 'The way he was spoiling the town, the heroes could not allow him to live long'.

The third category of free spirits is that of Owuamapu – the water spirit. These has never lived in villages with human beings; and they are sometimes said to have fabulous towns of their own under the water, where everyone walks decked in coral, gold, and rarest cloths. But although myths often portray the life of these towns in strongly anthropomorphic terms, the water people are equally thought of as being like pythons, and, they can materialize to men either in human guide, as pythons, as rain bows.

These water spirits are said to own the various rivers and creeks which surrounded the community. Whereas the heroes are guardians of the established social order, water-spirits are first and foremost forces of the extra-social. Thus, they control the environment of rivers and creeks with which Kalabari have to wrestle in gaining a living as traders and fishermen. They are also the forces, behind such human activity as is individualistic or deviates from the social norm; and they are held responsible for the acquisition by individuals of abnormal wealth and power, and for the actions of cultural innovators. Their activity is supposed to keep the water-ways open; and if they should leave their domains these will silt up and eventually dry out. Most important of all the water people or spirits control the weather and the abundance of fish in their creeks. Acting through the spirits of people, animals, plants and things, this triangle of free spirits is responsible for almost everything that happens in the immediate world of the Kalabari villagers. On the other hand, the villager himself can influence the balance of

forces in the triangle by means of rituals. Thus, regular rituals are performed for all three categories of spirit with the object maintaining their power. Occasional rituals are also performed on the instructions of a diviner either to solicit some special benefit or to appease a spirit whose rules for human conduct have been infringed.

Now, any spirit which has become an object of ritual is known as 'Oru', and the most general term for ritual is 'oru mie' – 'making oru'. This phrase carries a suggestion of human power over the free spirits which is borne out in many Kalabari sayings. For example, "tomi oru beremare" – It is people who make the Oru important and so if a spirit becomes too violent, they will tell him the stick or wood he is carved from. Literally, if a spirit's demand becomes too burdensome, the whole congregation can join together to destroy its cult objects and by this unanimous act of the rejection the spirit becomes powerless to trouble them further.

APPROACH TO THE SPIRITS

A single basic pattern is found in ritual for all the three categories of free spirits. In the initial phase of invocation and offerings is followed by a terminal phase of dramatic presentation.

In the initial phase, it is the spiritual portion of the invoke that influences the spirit invoked. Thus the invocation which is the central act of any ritual, and for the effectiveness of the invocation, a man is said to "put his spirit under his world's" and upon this depends their power as spirit facing spirit, man does not do this for the favours from a position of helplessness defiance: he asks from a position of some strength. That is for this influence to be exerted however, the spirit invoked must first be brought down to the same level as the spirits of the invoker. This is done by calling it temporarily into a sculpture which symbolizes it. There are praise-songs for the spirit. The invocation itself has to be impassioned and lengthy – the more so, the better. Finally, a succession of

offerings is made, starting with a fish and plantains, passing through a cock or hen and ending with a ram, a goat or a dog according to the identity of the spirit involved. Acceptance of the offering is signalized by the threshing of the animal's body in rigor mortis after the invoker has cut its throat.

If the offerings are accepted, the ritual moves into its second phase. The invoker or priest is dressed in special clothes symbolic of the spirits and once again the praise singers are summed to vigorous effort and the special dance-rhythms of the spirit are beaten on the drums. The invoker then comes forth to give a dramatic presentation of the spirit, dancing in the midst of the congregation during which he is possessed by the spirit. This appearance of the spirit in the body of his invoker is at once a dramatic assurance to the congregation of his presence and power and a final sign of his acceptance of the invocation and offerings made.

Broadly, then, the more people lavish offerings, invocations and festivals upon any spirit, the more powerful it becomes both to reward and to punish them. And conversely, the less they attend to it, the less powerful it becomes up to the point at which unanimous rejection results in complete loss of power.

Generally of course, a single man cannot reject a spirit at will. For while he is only one among a congregation of many, it will still have the power to punish him. Nevertheless, people do believe that a man whose own spirit is exceedingly strong can sometimes escape the consequences of flouting the prohibitions of Oru, whereas a man of weak spirit would become sick or even die in doing.

This view of man's relation to the free spirit is not surprising given the belief that every worshipper himself has a spirit which is something of the same order as the object of worship.

So before a person's spirit is joined to his body, it tells his tamuno (creator) what fortunes it wishes on earth or how it will live its life on earth. Thus, it says whether it will be successful or unsuccessful; whether it will get many children or be barren, whether it will be hated or popular or violent or peaceful. What the spirit says at this time is known as fiete boye - "speech before coming". This is accepted by tamuno, and the wishes in it become the individual's personal so - 'identity'. Hence forward, as his so, these wishes guide the entire course of his life. As we saw earlier, this life-course may be greatly influenced by the spirit's interaction with heroes, ancestors, water people or spirits, and the spirits of other human beings. But the concept of destiny covers the whole pattern of this interaction. Thus, whatever particular her or ancestor may do to a person through his spirit this is always something that has been willed by his destiny. For example, a person becomes the priest of one of the heroes because it has 'held' him; but at the same time, at the climax of certain rituals, we see the priest standing before the symbols of the hero and crying: 'My destiny gave you to me'.

Wherever there is some very distinctive feature in the broad pattern of a person's life, this future tends to be identified with his destiny. Thus, if a man loses all his money in a canoe accident, a diviner may trace this misfortune to the anger of a particular spirit. If something similar happens a second time, the anger of the same or another may be diagnosed. But if the man goes to a diviner and reveals a whole sequence of money failures, the diviner is more likely to turn to the man's destiny and to the pattern of poverty which it has laid down for its ward. Hence a typical case can be seen of man who went to one of the most powerful water people or spirit to ask for riches, taking with him a long history of money troubles. The oracle of the spirit said to him whatever you offer me, I cannot help you; for there is no money in your destiny.

So once a person's destiny has been spoken, it remains in the custody of his creator; and so if the diviner confirms that the man is struggle against a bad so (destiny), the latter may accept the fact and cut his ambition down to size or a diviner may recommend the owner to approach this being with a request that he change the old destiny for a new one, and there are ways of doing this. Thus a man may beg his tamuno to take back the 'word he spoke before coming', - calling back the mouth (bibi bari); and if his tamuno agrees, he can make fresh start in life.

Further, a person's destiny determines the time and manner of his death and death itself is always brought about his creator whether a person dies of old age, is killed by a sorcerer, or is struck by one of the free spirit, this could not have happened has his destiny not willed it and his creator brought it about. That is duly, whenever a person dies, the funeral drums always beat out the refrain: "His creator has brought him trouble, Creator, greedy one, kills, kills, but does not bury".

A second special manifestation of the Supreme Being is that concerned with the House or Lineage, and referred to as wari teme so – "so that made the House", or Polo teme so – "so that made the compound – That is "lineage destiny" – is a being who determines the entire pattern of lineage history, including relations of the living lineage with its ancestors where members of a lineage are thought to share some distinctive character trait, for example, cunning, secretive or introversive type of person; and another lineage or boisterous, or violence and indiscreet type, this too is identified with their lineage destiny. So if ask why such a distinctive pattern, the answer is, it is because their polo teme so are different.

As with the lineage of House, so with the village or community. Although there is no concept of village creator, yet, there is a well developed concept of ama teme so – 'village destiny' or the 'so that made the community'. The ama teme so of a village or

community both determines its history and shape the 'national character' of its inhabitants. Thus, the men of New Calabar see themselves as people who are slow to act in a crisis, but who win in the end by meeting superior numbers with intelligence, cunning, and bluff. This is at once a distinctive theme of their history which they can illustrate with many ancient examples, and a pillar of their present character. "This is how our ama teme so is", they say in explanation. The idea of the total culture or 'way of living of the village', is almost inseparable from that of ama teme so.

The fourth and final level of Kalabari reality is that of tamuno conceived as creator of the entire world. To distinguish this concept from that of the individual's creator, Kalabari generally speaking of onu tamuno - 'the Great Creator'. There is no elaborate world creation myth in this culture and the Great creator is simply said to have formed all things in the world out of mud.

In traditional thought, tamuno is female. But she has no husband; and although the lesser spirits are sometimes talked of as her children, the more general view is that she simply created them as she created everything else in the world and ultimately nothing can happen in it which she has not willed. Sometimes she is talked of as being 'in the sky' which she also created. Indeed so - the sky or 'heaven', is closely associated with her that it is often used as her synonym of the two terms, 'tamuno' seems the more appropriate when the original creation of the world is mentioned, while 'so' seems more appropriate when subject is the behaviour of what has been created. Thus, while people speak of tamuno as having created everything in the world, maintains their forms, and finally destroys them. On the other hand, they tend to use so where the connotation is that of an agency who controls the behaviour of created things - 'everything that happens comes from so'.

Although rather subtle distinction may not become fully created until a later stage of the analysis, perhaps the following example will give a preliminary idea of what is involved. When Kalabari explain the physical differences between the various human races – for example, white skins and long noses versus dark skins and wide noses – they say ‘that is how tamuno created them’. On the other hand, when they explain differences of custom between the British and themselves, they say ‘so made them different’. Between them tamuno and so provide the ultimate and most embracing explanatory concepts available to Kalabari.

In conclusion therefore, in traditional Kalabari practice the Supreme Being considered as unity, receives neither invocation nor offering. Ritual approaches are always made to one or other of its special manifestations. Thus in Kalabari thought, Tamuno, so, and their aspects or manifestations are beings of a very different sort from the other spirits earlier discussed hence, there is no elaborate myths defining their character, and although they are treated personally, their personality is of a very restricted kind. Thus Tamuno is said to be female and one may address one’s personal tamuno as ‘my tamuno’, or ‘my mother’. But unlike the spirits, tamuno has no spouse and no children. And for so, it is neuter. Consistently with all this, tamuno and so have none of the anthropomorphic sculptural representation given to the spirits. Nor, since they are beings of a different order from human spirit, can they imitate heroes, ancestors, and water people in displacing this spirits from a man’s body and so possessing him.

Although people approach their individual tamuno and the so of their groups with offerings and requests, these seem to have a very different basis from offerings and requests to the spirits. Thus, the traditional offering to one’s tamuno is the small ‘abila’ fish or ‘fornma deke’ (a small black fish) presented with the pounded mixture of yam or plantain – ‘onunu’, which Kalabari say i.e. something that any man gets. For instance,

every boy or girl, on reaching puberty, is given a small bowel as a symbol of his or her tamuno; and a portion of any offering made is placed in this bowl. But Kalabari insist that this is something quite different from the sculpture of a spirit. It is just a 'sign' of tamuno, not something that can be used to control him or her. Secondly, the owner of the tamuno do not carry out this ritual himself. Usually, he call on an old woman who is past the menopause and therefore pure, the woman wears none of the usual garments associated with rituals for the (free) spirits e.g. white bat apron, red cap eagle feather, chalk marks on the eyes; some people say she can wear anything she likes. The traditional offering to one's polo teme so or ama teme so is a simple libation of gin or palm wine. Here we find none of the large and elaborate offerings of fowls or goats given to the spirits, not any idea that the bigger the offering the more effective the rite. None of the sayings about the power of men over the spirits are even applied to these higher beings. For instance a village cannot escape from its ama teme so by withdrawing worship from it nor a man from his tamuno.

So such contrast follows from the place of these higher beings in the total scheme of things. For when the human spirit act upon one of the free spirits in ritual, it is trying to influence a being that exists alongside itself and is of the same order. But when the same human spirit approaches tamuno or so, it is approaching a being who already determines its fortunes – a being of whose will every action is a manifestation. Although, it can pray to such a being and make offerings in the hope of future happiness and comfort, there is a sense in which it cannot really affect the outcome. And this is what Kalabari means when in moments of resignation they say of their tamuno. 'The creator never loses a case'. For example, as one man put it: "if you look at someone else, you may wish for all the things he has and you have not, but you cannot make a case with

tamuno about it. All you do is thank him for what he has given you: you cannot go away and take him to court over it, so it is better just to thank him and be cool.

Finally, from the above discussion, we have seen that at the lowest level, we have the world of men; at the next level, the various spirits, at the next, aspects of tamuno and so, and finally tamuno and so considered as unities that provided some sort of interpretation of the creation and life-course of the world seen as a whole; and though Kalabari were aware of a wider world surrounding their own little enclave, it did not greatly impinge on their activities and they found small cause for coming to terms with it. This view of the matter is supported by subsequent Kalabari readiness to identify their unitary tamuno with the Christian God and to give it active worship in such a guise. For Christian evangelism coincided with a growing eruption of the wider world outside into the narrow enclave of village life, and hence with a growing need to come to terms with this wide world, however this is not our concern in this course.

THE TIV PEOPLE

The Tiv of Nigeria provide an example of a West African group whose worldview differs significantly from the usual West African models. However, it is well known that the Tiv who are semi-nomadic shifting agriculturists along with their immediate neighbours the Boki, Ekoi and Nembe tribes speak Bantu related languages and share some Bantu cultural traits hence their spirit world shows a close resemblance to that of the Bantu.

The Tiv live in units no longer than small hamlets made up of a collection of huts of a partrilineages joint family of at most four generations in depth. So their social organization based on kinship system which joins a group of people to settle in one area to the formation of the social structure on four basis. The 'Tar' council, Ityo (clan) council, 'Ingyor' (kindred council) and the 'yar' (compound) headed by the various

political heads as well as the organization of their spiritual world displays a very simple structure. Thus, the Tiv world view is influenced by their natural, cultural and human needs.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TIV WORLD-VIEW

At the apex there is the belief in the Supreme Being called 'Aondo' immediately below are the magical forces/spirits and ghosts and finally witchcraft known as Tsav.

Aondo-Supreme Being

The Tiv people in Aondo – the Supreme Being, a creator who is linked with the sky as well as heaven or firmament which has been described as the vault of heaven with its clouds and stars, thunder and lightening, winds and rain, cold and heat. The Tiv believe that God resides in the sky and the clouds are his 'abeam' (sports) therefore, anything that emanates from about is Aondo's power that is functioning. Thus, Aondo (God) displays far less personal qualities in Tiv worldview than other West African Supreme Being. However, in the Tiv man's daily talk, he would make reference to God frequently but the immediate solutions of his problems revolves around the 'Akombo' which are mystical or magical forces which we shall discuss later. Nevertheless God to the Tiv is the final answer or solution to their problems where these other forces fails to satisfy them; just like the Malawi, whom John Taylor tells of the leader of a hunting expedition who after two weeks of unsuccessful hunting, exclaimed that, "I am tired of asking the spirits, let us pray to God".

The Tiv concept of God (Aondo) therefore is that, he is the force behind nature and he transcends throughout the universe. He thus regarded as the creator provider and sustainer of all that is in existence. This is confirmed from the fact of his various attributes like Gbaaondo – God the carpenter, 'Gha' means crate or carve while Aondo is God as earlier mentioned. Also the Tiv call God gbayanga – God the creator of the sun.

God is also seen as the provider and sustainer of the Tar world. As a provider, God ensures the fertility of the land, cattle, women and every other living thing; hence he is believed to be the giver of rain, so when it is raining the Tiv man says: Aondo nga noon' and on the other hand, when it is sunny he says: Aondo ta inyanga and so on.

There are also personal names which express Tiv views of God like Aondohemba: God is the winner, 'Aondongu' – God exists; 'Aondona' – God has given, Aondolumun – God as agreed; 'Aondoakaa' – God has spoken, etc. To the Tiv people, there is no one who is righteous except God (Aondo) hence they would say; "Ormon ngu pers pera ga saa Aondo tesegher". However, it is not only the positive side of God that is seen. Tiv also believe that God afflicts punishments on people when they disobey Him just as the Hebrew's belief that Yahweh (God) punishes the Israelites in the face of disobedience with misfortunes like: Sterility, impotence, disasters, accidents, leprosy, smallpox, sores, pests, droughts, struck by thunder and lightning and even death. Thus, the Nuer and Chaga and some other African people too have a similar belief that God, the Supreme Being can cause fortunes as well as misfortunes.

THE WORSHIP OF AONDO (GOD)

There is no organized worship of God in Tiv religion like the Yoruba of Nigeria and the Ngombe of Congo contrary to the Ashanti of Ghana who have organized public worship of God on Fridays and the Igbo. The Tiv pray either individually, congregational worship is rarely found in Tiv traditional religion. Their prayers to God is mainly at the times of distress and threats of wars, calamities and catastrophes etc. Thus, official laud prayer is offered by the old wise men of integrity, wherever storm, thunder and lightning threaten the community. At the same time, the old wise man who needs not be a priest goes out of his hut – 'ATE'... a common room which is located at the center of the compound and 'cries out saying;



OOO Aondo, OOO Aondo!

Aondo U Abaverjua!

Aondo U Iyookoo!

Aondo U Ishankyura!

Aondo tile jijigh!

When translated into English, it means: Oh! God, ohm God, God of Abaverjua, God of Iyookoo, God of Ishankyura and God be calm. Thus, Abaverjua, Iyookoo and Ishankyura are names of some famous Tiv people, who in olden days were said to be able to communicate with God and got immediate answers from God like the case of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Judaism. Hence the Tiv people directed their prayers through these people with the belief that it will be answered immediately.

Although the Tiv hold God in high esteem, they do not have temples or shrines erected for him nor do they offer sacrifices to him directly or even organize festivals in his honour as well as having priests who are dedicated to his services unlike the Ashanti of Ghanta and Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria who have alters, shrines, and direct sacrifices to God.

From the above discussion, the Tiv people therefore conceived God as being spiritual, eternal, Almighty, omnipotent, merciful, loving and above all righteous. He is the creator, the life giver, the beginner, the controller, provider and sustainer of the universe. Thus, having created the world (universe) and all that is in it, but due to human folly which is found in African mythology, God withdrew. But before God withdrew, according to the Tiv, He created some magical forces called 'Akombo' which could be manipulated by the responsible members of the community for the good of the society.

AKOMBO MAGICAL FORCES (RITES)

'Akombo' are magical forces composed of material objects, that influences events. These objects may be plants, stones, carvings, pieces of pottery, bones, feathers, etc. set up in specific spots called Inyagenvu: guardian emblems. The Tiv believe that life, good health and good luck can naturally proceed in an unbroken straight line, if not disturbed by evil. They possess innumerable cult emblems: Akombo whose propitiator is essential for the furtherance of their aims.

There are certain rules attached to the possession and performance of every Akombo and these are carried out to the latter by the performer of the rites. Thus, disregard of certain taboos attached to the ritual or the breaking of specific rules leads to the violation ("pev") (liberally means, pierce) akombo. An offender is inflicted with more which is expressed as 'akombo kor' -- magical forces has caught the violator and produced specific calamities. To restore this unfortunate state of affairs to normalcy, the violator would have to purify the polluted akombo and the land by sacrificing an animal or human victim as the case may be, as well as libations of local beer i.e. 'burukutu' over the guardian emblems.

To obtain mastery over an 'akombo', one must 'kor' catch or be initiated into it, after he must have satisfied certain rituals requirements. However, requirements for each akombo, depends on its gravity. Thus, to be initiated into one of the greatest Akombo which is the 'akombo a ibiam', requires an applicant to possess tsav, witchcraft powers hence to be able to offer human sacrifice.

Broadly speaking, Akombo, is divided into two categories, namely: 'akombo a tatem' - great akombo and 'akombo a kiriki - lesser akombo. The great akombo are meant to put or set the land right - 'akombo a soron tar'. Hence they are directed to the welfare of the whole clan or the community at large While 'akomo akirki' lesser akombo

are held privately or by a lineage. These lesser akombo are usually housed in a Tiv native pot or gourd in the 'ate' - common room in the center of the compound used by the head of elders of the family to receive visitors. This pot is called 'laugh' and it is a sacred object touched only by the elder who owns it on behalf of the family lineage. Therefore, any member of the family who touches it is said to have violated the Akombo and so must go through the usual ritual of propitiating and purifying the pollution through sacrificing an animal victim as the case may be.

The lesser akombo could be further classified according to the functions they perform hence we have the following: Akombo a ange - magical rites for illness, akombo a mar, Akombo for child bearing, Akombo a ikor, akombo meant for success in hunting, akombo a vaan - akombo which makes the arrows, efficacious, akombo for protection and akombo a ngoho ishima ikwase' - akombo for winning a woman's love etc.

There are also other akombo known as akombo a laugh and swande which deals with taboos such as killing of human, some animals like 'Ikarem' - green snake, further akombo dealing with diseases or abnormalities like akombo ahina, akombo for twins, it causes serious cough when violated. Akombo a ikungu, akombo for people with epilepsy - akombo Agashi - skin disease which affects the nose by chopping off a victim's nose leaving him with half nose or without nose at all.

There is the woman akombo called ingbian ijou, female spite. It is believed to protect virgins from illicit intercourse before marriage. Thus, a 'ikoor' - a large snail shell is being sor - consecrated by an old crone who pours the blood of a chicken into the orifice of the shell and the blood is then drunk by the virgin after which the shell is worn around her neck as a sign of her virginity. The shell is only removed whom she is married. Before then any attempt by any male to seduce her will end in the virgin's sogh

touting him saying that her inghian ijou – her akombo to preserve her virginity will curse him. Moreover, it is believed that such a male who has sexual intercourse with such a lady will eventually die. Hence this particular akombo helped in controlling the morality among the Tiv people in olden days.

It is worth noting that these lesser akombo are many in number and covers nearly every aspects of life, yet, they do not need such rituals or ceremonies to be performed before obtaining it unlike the great akombo. The possession of the lesser akombo by individuals can either be by hereditary or through purchase from its custodian. Therefore, the most important and great akombo include the 'akombo a igbe' and 'akomo a biam or ibiamegh. Nevertheless, according to Bohannan, 'The Tiv have no ancestral cult in the usual West African sense of ancestors as beings to whose intervention, illness, misfortunes or anything else can be attributed. In place of deities and ancestors the Tiv have a collection of magical rites (akombo). Besides the SB there are just a number of rituals linked with the spirits of the dead.'

AKOMBO IGBE

This is one of the most important and great akombo in Tiv land, the process of acquiring it is a little bit complicated. However, one who acquires it displays the neck of the broken pot in which the Akombo is in outside the Ate and one can violate (pev) the akombo igbe if one consciously or unconsciously eats anything in which Igbe emblem is placed. In fact, the Igbe emblem can be placed on anything in order to protect such a thing he (pev or violates) the akombo and terrible effects of Igbe follows shortly or immediately.

Thus, Akombo igbe are prominent, popular and delicate in Tiv land. Igbe is thus characterized by dysentery, vomiting, headache and diarrhea. In women when Igbe is violated, the following characteristics are observed. Miscarriage, irregular menstruation

of bleeding and it is also believed that it could make men impotent. There are several types of akombo igbe: Anyam Igbe; Chile Igbe; Chicaver Igbe; Igba ambe; Igbe iharev and Igbe anange but it is not our concern in this course to discuss them in details.

AKOMBO A TAMEN (MAJOR AKOMBO)

This is such divided into two, namely: Akombo Swem and Akombo Biem or Ibiamagh. Swem is very important to the Tiv and it has a long history. It is both a place and symbol for peace, fairness, justice, unity and the symbol of the indivisibility of the Tiv people. Swem is therefore prepared in a native pot of clay filled with ashes, the length of gbaaye (iron wood) and oyande – stalks and leaves of a small palm like shrub (Marantochloa flexuosa) and 'ikula I nomoso' literally male leaves on top, an axe from heaven (ijembe Aondo) is set. This pot of Swem is kept by the eldest person or a reputed character in the community.

The ashes symbolizes envy and jealousy, so if anyone is jealous of you and you swear by swem, he will do you no harm. The length of gbaaye means strength hence the swem gives strength to anyone who swears by it truthfully. The ayande symbolizes peace. That is why in most Akombo rituals of purification, ayande are used. While Ijembo Aondo is a symbol of justice. Therefore, the swem will judge and kill anyone who swears by it falsely using the axe of heaven.

Being a symbol of right and justice, it plays both the religious as well as political roles in the life of Tiv. Thus, it is used for oath taking up to this time for various problems related to people's lives and property. In it, justice is sought from Aondo, Adzov, Akombo, Mabveseen – elders in this may be both the individuals or families or used in the Law Courts particularly (customary courts) side by side with the bible in

cases that involve adherents of traditional religionists who have to swear by swem before they are allowed to testify or bear witness in a law court. It is generally believed that if one swears falsely, by swem, he will eventually meet his Waterloo.

As a result of this, every new chief or traditional ruler (Tor Tiv inclusive) must take an oath of office by swearing by swem to be of good conduct. And if for any reason he fails, he swears by it, therefore, swem will seize him, swell up his legs and stomach and such a person will suffer from acute headache and eventually will die. Thus, the akombo swem helps one to justify his innocence in cases where one is *falsely accused* or if a person is severely ill and suspects that his sickness is caused by someone or people, he would make use of his swem oath and it is believed that if he is *innocent*, his sickness will be healed but if on the other hand the sickness is as a result of his own mischief, the swem will kill for his fallacious declaration.

Finally, therefore, Akombo swem is seen as one of the greatest akomo in Tiv land. This is because it is believed that it can ward off misfortunes caused by Mbatsav, famine, or epidemic etc. It is also an akombo of peace, love, mercy, justice, forgiveness, unity and a symbol of the indivisibility of the Tiv people.

AKOMBO BIAM OF IBIAMEGH

The akombo biam or ibiamegh as they are sometimes called are seen as the most supreme akombo in Tiv society. It is believed that only well to do people are initiated into this type of Akombo; this is because the price to be paid is very costly. Thus, one has to pay both in kind and cash. Items such as chicken, goats, cows and even human heads are given and the preparation for such rituals or situation usually take a very long period.

With this particular akombo, the poor/bin was erected on six poles. These six poles (mtom) were believed to represent six human lives. Hence, it is believed that no

one could establish a poor without giving six 'mtomn' – six human lives. The place of poor is normally in the center of the compound and the choice of the builder is not restricted by taboos. So any good craftsman can construct it after which it is made a sacred thing. It is then decorated with figures of men, snakes, monkeys, leopards, lions and hippopotamus.

The things kept in the poor include 'itiogh ki ayu' (skull of a manatees) Oho Ibiam (the Ibiamegh knife). It also housed the skulls of the founders of the group as well as succeeding elders. Other things kept in the poor include 'Imborivungu', the head of a young cob (ikpam) and the head of a young boar for some clans. It is however important to note that the things kept in the poor differs slightly depending on the part of Tiv.

It was a taboo to look into the poor or see the exposed relics. Only the elders who had been initiated into the Akombo biam could look into the poor. So if an ordinary person dear look into the poor he was asked to give a human life to 'sor' (propitiate) the poor; it could even be himself if he has no person to offer. It is therefore only the elders, the founder of poor who was in charge of poor and it is only this elder who would be initiated into the akombo biam. The akombo biam was actually the most supreme and significant ritual in the agnate group (ityo) which was the center of Tiv socio-religious life. The elder was seen as the living link in the family thus, he was the custodian of the skulls of the founder of the group and these of the following elders, including the 'Imboriungu' and the other ritual equipments. Such an elder was given a grand funeral on his death and his skull would in turn be added to the ones already kept in the poor after the appropriate rituals are performed.

ADZOV: FAIRIES OR SPIRITS

Although the Tiv people do not worship spirits, however, there is a widespread belief in the existence of Adzov (spirits, fairies or ghost). These are invisible spirit forces

which the Tiv people believe can manifest themselves in form of human beings but before one could realize their presence, they miraculously disappear and leave one in total dismay and fear. They live in human like communities around and in the underworld and are believed to be white or fair in colour. The Tiv people have a strong belief that Adzov are found everywhere in the world and so one should not carelessly throw something out of the door, lest he struck the adzov to anger. The Tiv people believe that there are two types of Adzov (the red and black fairies) and of the two the red ones are the most wicked. Yet Adzov interact with human beings to improve the poor condition especially of the neglected orphans and to avenge on behalf of the oppressed people, particularly the injustices caused by the Mbatsav – witchcraft. In this way they act as a means of social control. Akiga links the origin of the adzov with the anti-mbatisav movement when the mbatisav became rapacious in their lust for human flesh and personal power.

Thus, the ijov as an organized movement or religion began as an anti-witchcraft movement in Tiv land in the early sixties but became prominent in the 1970s. This movement has now become a religious one which involves healings, prayer and other religious activities under different sectors named after each founder. For example, most popular ones are Area Iber, Ijov Aondo, Alambijov, Ghasha Jov, Ijov Burugh and Ijov Ugbe. Members of the different sects used various emblems to identify themselves according to the sect which they belong. All these sects believe in the existence of Aondo and Adzov as next in power. They equate mbagav with Satan – the devil. At present, the belief in the existence of adzov has continued because of the fact that they play both socio-political, economic and religious roles in Tiv society.

Socially and politically, the laws of adzov prohibits adultery, witchcraft, theft, cheating and all immoral acts. It is believed that when these laws are obeyed, peace and

The quality of the land is enhanced and there is consequently abundance of food and wealth in the society. Economically, the adzov laws encourage hard work among its members so that, they will be able to have abundant food to give out alms as the members are supposed to carry out humanitarian activities among the sick and the poor. So the claim that adzov has given them wealth which is strongly affirmed by most members and which manifest amongst them has lured some Christians into joining them in order to derive such benefits. On the other hand, some of their members are converted to Christianity.

THE CONCEPT OF GHOSTS AMONG THE TIV

Ghosts are believed to be spirits of dead people who roam about carrying out wicked activities against their living families. It is believed that they are usually white or fair in complexion, very tall and slender like a stick, and that they appear only in the night with the main aim of haunting people. It is also believed that if they touch a person, the victim dies instantly.

Even though these spirits are known to be more powerful than men mysteriously however, man's knowledge surpasses them. Thus, man uses his knowledge to manipulate and exploit them and their mysterious power to his own advantage. This can be done through the performance of certain rituals (rites) in order to neutralize their effects.

THE TIV CONCEPT OF 'TSAV' (WITCHCRAFT)

The Tiv of Nigeria is another one African society which is obsessed by the presence and activities of witches in their societies. Thus, the Tiv beliefs about witchcraft centers around a vital and mysterious power or force called 'Tsav'. Tsav to the Tiv is believed that it is a vital power that exists in men, that can be employed for either strengthening life and ensuring prosperity or for the destruction or weakening of life. Hence Tsav may be used malevolently by malevolent people as well as benevolently by

benevolent people though its genesis was not vicious. Tsav was rather a cosmic potency internalized in man and thus formed one of his qualities as part of his personality. Tsav is therefore a power by which a man can achieve that which is beyond his normal faculties to accomplish and is this equivalent in many respects to the conception which has become familiar under the names of mana and tabu etc.

According to Bohannam, tsav can be explained a witchcraft substance, power latent and ability. Tiv would say that it grows around the heart as an actual substance and thus forms distinct edge of claws and in sizes depending on the degree of its existence. Hence an autopsy shows according to the Tiv, a witch substance appears like a claw while that of constitutional witch, appear like a ring around the heart. So the virtue of ma's tsav could thus be exposed by looking at the heart during this postmortem operation. For instance, in some cases, it may become necessary to perform this operation to determine whether death has been caused by 'cosmic retribution' against the many evil use of tsav or whether the victim was an object of foul play, or there may have been no tsav growing around the heart at all; in which case such a person is referred to as one of the empty-cheated person (or-vanger ghilin). While those with tsav substance are called Mbatsav (possessors of tsav) but for an individual is called ormbatsav.

Thus, since tsav can be used for either good or evil, it is logical that the Tiv who use their tsav for good purposes only have been designated by many writers as 'constitutional mbatsav' are usually elders and the family heads of the community who use their tsav and the accumulated tsavs of the society to put the land right (i.e. sor tar) so that the society can prosper and also to guard against evils, that may threaten society especially the attacks of the evil 'mbatsa' (witches). They can do this through the performance of appropriate rituals called 'akombo' which we have earlier discussed.

On the other hand, a person with the bad tsav joins the evil club of the witches (mbatsav) through 'gba kpindi' (flesh debt) contracted with witches, obliging one to supply lives from his own family in turn with the others for consumption by the Mbatsav during their night meetings. A man may contract the flesh debt voluntarily or involuntarily when the mbatsav enslaves him by offering him portions of the flesh of their victim. If he accepts this flesh, he contracts the flesh debt which he has to pay back when his turn comes. Although Tsav, the Tiv believe is innate but could also be obtained through the following means:

By purchasing it from those who possess it in abundance, in this case, they can buy the oral pine known as 'imborivungu'. Through hereditary means, a father who possesses tsav can pass it to a loved son before he dies or if the father dies when the son is too young, the elder of the clan will perform this ceremony on behalf of the father.

Finally, the elders can simply choose any young man and initiate him into tsav which in most cases could be through the earlier mentioned contract. The witches though human beings usually operating outside their bodies so, it is very difficult if not impossible to identify them except through divination or ordeal methods when they are alive or through an autopsy to inspect their heart after their death. Suspects however are sought among members of the family who are aspiring to power and wealth through tsav and therefore, the over ambitious or people who have entertained some grudges or malicious motives or descendants of a known witch. Since tsav is also connected with strive for leadership in the community, the Tiv witches are for most part men. This is a variant from the usual African model that the woman is the witch.

Otherwise, Tiv tales about witches reassemble those from other lands. The Tiv people believe that Mbatsav have several instruments which they use to achieve their aims. Some of these include "Nyinya utugh" (night horse), 'Igirgi utugh' (Night aero

plane), 'Agugu utugh' (Night motorcycle), night bicycle, 'Asan' (stars) for light; witches lamps which burn with human fat, 'Imboriungu' etc. At their meetings it is believed that they perform with dances and settle to share human flesh. Thus, a person is usually attacked when he is asleep. He is usually unaware of it. Usually it is said that a witch attacks by shooting out a substance from himself on his victim or his property. Hence the common expression the mbatsav have thrown air on him', by bewitching him (tambe).

Generally therefore, according to Dhavamony, witches represent a fast conspiracy of ill-defined but definitely malignant beings that seek to destroy a people civilization by attacking the half of its members. Witches dispatch to what is called the spirit or soul or substance of the witchcraft to cause damages to others. As this happens, the witch may be laying himself or herself in bed, while the spirit or soul travels to the victim in form of owls, bats, rats, cats, and other animals to harm their victim. Some of these witches in animal form may even operate in day time, and it is believed that if such an animal is killed, or harmed, the owner of the soul or spirit dies or is harmed and so suffers. Witches are greatly feared and the acquisition of witchcraft bring much conflicts and quarrels. However, some witches may not know that they are witches until accused.

Finally, for most Africans, witchcraft is fundamentally evil and unjust. Witches attacks are always considered unjust aggression. Thus, in the words of Monica Wilson, "The witch in Africa was the embodiment of evil in Africa just as the devil was in medieval Europe."

THE NILOTIC WORLDVIEWS

The Nuer are a cattle-herding people dwelling in the swamps and Savannah of the Southern Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The Nuer of Sudan derived the models for structuring their worldview from both the cosmic order and social relationships. According to Evans Pritchard, An imagery taken from the physical universe, God (Kwoth) is symbolized by

the sky, manifest and reveal himself divine in sun, moon, rain, rainbow and even blows in the wind. However, the Nuer do not regard the sky or any celestial phenomenon as God. They made distinction between God and the sky and this could be seen in their expression of spirit of sky and spirit and spirit who is in the sky. Although God is everywhere in Nuer religion, He is thought of as being particularly in the sky and Nuer's generally think of Him in a spatial sense as being on high because of this anything connection with the firmament is believed to have associated with Him.

Thus, in Nuer creation myth God is said to have created spirits and everything in nature, in culture, in society and in men. Kwoth is the giver and sustainer of life and he is the one who brings death.

With regards to social relationships or social order, (God) is seen as father of men in the sense that he is their protector and a friend: For instance, God is 'Kwoth majale kaji'. Meaning, God who walks with you. It is in this vein, the Nuer are totally dependent on him which depict their helplessness without His aid. For example, an aspect of this belief is the concept of 'Cuong' meaning god is always in the right and that whatever calamity and misfortune befalls them is the will of God. So in their petition the Nuer ask God to liberate them from the sufferings and evils which beset the life of man. Yet they still have a strong trust in God, they believe God gives and takes. For example, when a man dies in Nuerland, they say that God has taken his own that they must not complain. Thus, Nuer's attitude could be compared with the attitude of the Hebrews in the Old Testament, particularly in the book of (Job 1:21) which says 'the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord'.

Father, Kwoth is thought of as a judge who reward the good and bring misfortune to those who are at 'duer' meaning fault. Therefore, the Nuer believe that when a man does wrong, that he could be punished by God through sickness. Hence they believe that

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sickness cannot only be caused by a biological breakdown but that it could also be linked with the spiritual world. So the Nuer have the belief that if a man does right things, he does not break divinely-sanctioned interdictions, so also does no wrong to others and fulfills his obligations to spiritual beings and the ghosts, no sickness and misfortune will befall him. Therefore the Nuer are of the view that for man to be in the right relationship with God, he must first of all be in the right relationship with his fellow man hence he must subordinate his interest as an individual to the moral values of the society.

Immediately after the Supreme Being (Kwoth) God, the Nuer worldview recognizes two broad categories of non human spirits called the spirit above and the spirit below.

THE SPIRIT ABOVE (KUTH NTIAL)

The spirit above (Kuth Ntual) which are regarded as Kurthwanga – spirits of the air are called “sons of God” and are thought to be more powerful because they are specifically nearer or proceed directly from God. Prominent among them are the spirit *air spirit* ‘deng’ which is regarded as the greatest of all the spirits of the air and it is particularly associated with sickness. Ten is another spirit of the air, and it is said to be the craft man of God who fashions human bodies. The spirit will is another, it is the spirit or deity of war and thus associated with the sacred spear. Will is also associated with thunder. ‘Col’ is associated with lightening and rain.

Buk, is the female spirit associated with rivers and streams and is seen as the mother of the air spirit, deng. She is said to have two daughters *(canit and Nyalien)* *daughte* associated with streams. It is known as Kwothyier, which means a rive spirit in Nuer language. Nuer people sometimes offer first-fruits of their millet to the spirit and make libations to it in streams in times of sickness. They sacrifice animals to the spirit in bank of rivers. They also throw beer and tobacco into the alter as offerings to the spirit, when

They take their herds across rivers or when they engage in large scale fishing, praying that they may be protected from injury by crocodiles, water-snakes, bones of fish, sharp shells and lost fishing spears.

The other category of spirits that make up the spirit above are the Colmic Spirits. These are spirits which were once human beings and these include those persons struck by lightening and then disappeared in a whirlwind and persons found dead in bush without the cause of death being apparent. The Colmic spirits could be acquired in two ways: One is by being possessed and made sick and by inheritance. In the possession it may be temporary or permanent; while in the later case, the person becomes a prophet.

Finally, to the Nuer people, the spirit of the air have a more general significance than the totemic spirits, which are important only to certain lineages, whereas the spirits of the air are not tied to a particular social groups hence, to the Nuer, one spirit of the air is distinct from another and moreover they have different names. Some of these spirits of the above are regarded as inferior to others.

THE SPIRIT BELOW

The contrast to the spirits above, there are spirits below (Kuth Ping), which are regarded as lesser spirits. These could be broadly classified into the totemic spirits, nature spirits and fetishes. The totemic spirits are spirits who inhabit animal species or plan which are regarded as having a mystical relationship to a social group hence, they are seen as totems of social groups. Totemism simply put emanates from the belief that a people descends from a particular totem, hence the clan and member of the totem species are brothers. Hence the totem is considered as a symbol of protection of a clan or tribes, in which case it becomes the clan symbol of oneness and unity. Thus, the group (clan or nation) concerned for instance the Nuer enforce prohibition on the killing and eating of such a totem or specie. Instead, they would perform "increase rite" to effect the

multiplication of the totem species. Thus, totemic and galvic spirits are conceived in tutelary relationship to lineages and families which they belong.

Plant totems among the Nuer are respected by some lineages hence, they would neither cut nor burn their wood. They believe that the spirit or force that inhabit those trees are called by different names depending on the clan, and moreover that these trees themselves do have a personal soul or spirit but that they are emblems or abode of the spirits.

Nature spirits are spirit-forces, which manifest themselves through certain material objects which may be purchased by anybody who upon the performance of the ritual may obtain blessings and other benefits conferred by the rites. While fetishes are said to be ordinary charms, amulets, talisman, etc which could be manipulated for good or for evil depending on the intention of the owner.

DINKA WORLDVIEW

The world views of the Dinka, neighbours of the Nuer also recognize a Supreme Being and two categories of subordinate 'divinities'. The Supreme Being which is known by the Dinka as 'Nhialie' is thought to be universal and known by various names to various people. Below Nhiale are the 'Free Divinities' who can manifest themselves by possessing individuals who then become prophets or diviners; and the 'clan-divinities' which are tutelary spirit protector of different clans and lineages. Lowest in the hierarchy of spiritual beings are the magic bondless or charms.

The Nilotc worlviews (Nuer and Dinka) which we have examine above therefore show a striking similarity to its West African Counterpart. Both worldviews show that broadly speaking, there are five categories of spiritual beings – The Supreme Being, the Deities or Free Divinities, the Spirit forces of clan divinities, the ancestors and magical powers. However, some differences can be noted. The most remarkable is that the Nilotc

supreme Being, unlike the West African counterparts have prophets. Also the cult of the divinities are less developed among the Nilotics than in West Africa. Moreover, the West African highly institutionalized cult of the Deities and ancestors with large organizations which wield far reaching social, political, economic as well as religious influences is absent among the Nuer and the Dinka. However, this apparently is replaced by the cult of totemic spirits which is strong among the Nilotics. This is because where totems are found in West Africa, they do not have the cultic emphasis given to them unlike the Nuer and the Dinka of the Sudan.

WORLDVIEW OF BANTU AREAS

The worldviews of Bantu speaking areas of Eastern, Central and Southern parts of Africa differ in many respects from West African and Nilotics models. Generally speaking, there are three categories of spiritual beings instead of five. One simply finds a belief in the Supreme Being and the cult of ancestors, along with belief in magical powers. There is a marked absence of the belief and cult of nature divinities and clan divinities. However, in some places associated with the ancestral cult, is belief in spirits, who are for the most part anonymous spirits of the dead and mythic figures who are generally believed to bring misfortunes to the living. 'Nature-worship', writes E.W. Smith, is not characteristic of the Bantu in the sense that the people natural objects with reverence non-human spirits. If they regard certain areas, woods, mountains, rivers with reverence it is because these are the abode of spirits that were human.

The Bantu of Southern African whom E.W. Smith studied including the Xhosa, the Zulu, the Swazi, the Thonga, Tswana, who have absorbed much of the culture of their Bantu neighbours, have on beliefs in a Supreme Being, and ancestral cults besides magic. Besides, it has been noted too that the concept of the Supreme Being is vaguer among the Bantu than among either the West Africans or the Nilotics. Thus with the

absence of cult of nature divinities and the tutelary divinities and ancestral cult remains the main feature of Bantu religion.

The Lovedu for example believe in a creator God, Nhuzwane, who is believed to be identical with Modimo the Supreme Being of the neighbouring Sotho and other neighbouring tribes. He is therefore creator and Lord of the entire universe who a far as the Lovedu are concerned is equivalent to the Christian God and Muslim, 'Allah'. However, Khuzwane considered too remote to be of any concern to man. Instead, it is the ancestors who are believed to influence the course of nature which affects the day to day life of the Lovedu. Besides, the Lovedu have complicated notions about magic and mystic powers, especially the rain making power credited to their queen.

Similarly, the Pare, a Bantu-speaking people living in north-eastern Tanzania, have two central religious concepts, namely, the idea of a creator (Kiumbi) who created the ancestors and all the things man needs, and the position of these ancestors as mediators between God and the living members of society. Occasionally, they do address direct prayers to God, but more regularly they would offer beer at the central pole of the house, while addressing prayers to 'Kiumbi' through the ancestors.

Variations of course occur within the typical models of Bantu worldview. The Abaluyia, a Bantu-speaking people, living in the Nyanza Province of Kenya believed that along with the creator God, called Walle, there is a principle of evil. The creator is the author of all that is good in the universe, and principle of order. While all evil and disorder are said to emanate from the principle of evil. The Vugusu, go as far as describing the principle of evil as 'the black god' in contrast to Wele, 'the white god', though other Abaluya tribes would not credit the principle of evil with a distinct personality. Beside this peculiarity the Abaluyia, like other Bantu, would believe that the affairs of the universe are controlled by the Supreme Being and the ancestral spirits. But

God is thought to be more involved in human affairs than other Bantu Supreme Beings. God is thought to be the author of certain moral norms, and would punish those who transgress these norms. While clan and tribal ancestors are thought to be guardians of only tribal laws and customs.

The Lele of Kasai Province of Zaire, believe that along with God, Njambi, and the ancestors, the spiritual world is also populated by a host of non-human spirits called 'mingebe'. There are of the nature of spirits and globins who haunt the deep forests, and streams. They can be sources of misfortune or fortunes depending on how they are controlled. Secrets of their powers are the preserves of diviners and their devotees.

AGENTS OF EVIL IN AFRICAN RELIGION

Broadly speaking, evil includes both the physical and moral evils. The former is conceived as any misfortune which befalls an individual or community. While the later is any voluntary anti-social behaviour or any infringement of the decrees of God, the deities or the ancestors. So the term 'Agents of evil, in the sense it is used here applies both to agents of physical evil as well as beings who while people to do moral evil. One being can combine the two qualities. Thus, evil emanate from the spiritual and non-spiritual beings. Therefore, in the African concept of evil there is what we call 'good evil' or fundamentally good and just, while others are bad evil or fundamentally unjust and evil. God, the deities, and ancestors belong to the first category, while evil spirits, witches and sorcerers' belong to the second category. Among some people, misfortunes may be interpreted as the work of evil spirits, witches, or sorcerers, but they may also be attributed to the evil eye, broken taboos, perjured oaths, or even to the Supreme Being, the deities or ancestors. So when good spirits like Supreme Being, the deities or ancestors inflict some physical evil. It is as a premonitory corrective or punitive measure. They are believed to be committed to the overall good of the individual and the

community, so that when they send a misfortune it is for the welfare of the sufferer or his community. Like a father they punish in order to save. Good spirits generally are not associated with moral evil. They do not commit morally evil deeds nor do they incite people to commit them. This is because they cannot act against the interests of men and society which by nature they are supposed to foster.

God as Creator and Father, is believed to be all good, and yet some misfortunes are believed to come from God. Arinze's contention that Chukwu is good and does harm to man hence no need to worry about him. This can be seen from the lamentation of an Igbo mother who had successively lost eight children, hardly bears out his contention.

"Why does God allow others to bear girls and keep them and see their daughters, prosper in the world, and she only suffers from time to time? What bad luck had she brought into the world, and what harm has she done to him? i.e. God.

Although the Rwanda and Urundi people see Imana (God) primarily as creator, friendly and parent who protects and blesses his children yet his name is often employed in curses. The phrases 'may you be killed by propitious Imana' are sometimes pronounced. Also the people of Dinka like many Africans, accept that God. Brings man up as a father brings up his children. He protects, provides for, and sometimes pushes his reason, but he does not pretend that he knows what these reasons are in every case.

Deities and Ancestor operates within a specified area of jurisdiction. Apart from offering protection, confer or benefits, they sometimes punish. And it is known that their punishment is sometimes more frequently and more harshly than God. Many of them are therefore feared rather than loved. Some of them are associated with one form of misfortune or the other, when they visit humans, they bring in their wake either sickness, some natural disaster or even death. Yet, they are not intrinsically evil. Rather they are seen as agents employed by God to execute his punitive measures on recalcitrant

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offenders Typical examples that readily come to mind are the small pox deities and the thunder deities in many parts of West Africa, Sopona, the Yoruba small pox deity, Amadioha, Igbo God of thunder, etc.

Evil spirits, among different African people are found. Other spirits are believed to be inherently evil. Some of these are disincarnate human spirits, others are non-human spirits, some are believed to be groups of anonymous spirits who they attack, individuals, families or communities. Others have the status of a deity.

For example, we have the Macardit, a divinity among the dinka, that is bad. Macardit kills people hence he is never invoked for help but sacrifice are usually made to him so as to propitiate him and keep him at a safe distance. So macardit and sufferings which cannot be reconciled with the Dinka concept of divine justice. Also we have Ulu Ch, destroyed of fortune among the Igbo, Ogbanje or Abiku i.e. born to die children, who are most feared by young mothers.

Others include the evil spirits of the dead like the 'Umu Aro' – evil spirits of the dead children, 'Ogbonuke' – evil spirits of the dead young men, and the 'Akalogeli – evil spirits of adults who died without children or offspring.

HUMAN AGENTS OF EVIL, WITCHES & SORCERERS

The term witchcraft can be defined as a mysteriously and spiritually attacking the soul of another human being. Witches have supernatural, metaphysical hyper physical and transcendental powers. According to Dharameny, witches represent a first conspiracy of ill defined but definitely malignant beings that seek to destroy a people's civilization by attacking the half of its members. Therefore, witches dispatch to what is called the spirit or soul of the witchcraft to cause damages to others. As this happens, the witch may be laying herself in bed, while the spirit or soul travels to the victim in forms of owls, bats, rats, cats and other animals but may operate in day time in form of animals.

It is believed that if such an animal is killed, or barmed, the ornwe of the soul dies. Or is harmed and suffers too, witches are greatly feared and acquisition of witchcraft bring much conflicts and quarrels. However, the witch may not even know that he is a witch until accused. Witchcraft for Africans is fundamentally evil and unjust. Witch attacks are always considered unjust aggression. In the words of Monica Wilson, "The witch in Africa was the embodiment of evil in Africa just as the devil was in medieval Europe.

Nevertheless, witchcraft and sorcery are two closely related systems of beliefs land side by side in many human societies in and outside Africa. Common to the two systems is the cardinal belief that certain members of the community harm their fellow men, illicitly through supernatural means. In most English dictionaries, witchcraft and sorcery are mostly synonymous. In fact, in popular usage witchcraft, sorcery and magical practices are used interchangeably. But thanks to the Azande, an African tribe, studied by Evan-Pritchard, the two names share acquired distinct meaning in anthropological literature. According to Evan-Pritchard, the Azande distinguish clearly between witches and sorcerers. Against all both, they employ diviners, oracles and medicine.

WITCHCRAFT AMONG THE AZANDE

To appreciate the Azande distinction between 'witchcraft' and 'sorcery' now adopted by most anthropologists, it is first necessary to define 'magic' as such is a neutral activity in the sense that by itself it could be used for either a good or an evil purpose. It is a craft or technique which a person who is duly attained acquires. His craft consists in performing sets of rituals aimed at controlling impersonal supernatural forces and directing them towards achieving desired goals. In these rituals, material substances often with characteristics or origins symbolically related to the objectives desired, are used to the accompaniment of verbal formulae. We are here in the sphere of magic or

homoeopathic magic. Although every African society usually has its expert magicians, many forms of magic are available to its ordinary members, and the equivalents of do it yourself kits may be inherited, bought or borrowed. In fact, a large collection of such magical practices are within the reach of everybody in the community. For example, in my village, everybody would put a bundle of certain kinds of herbals on his fruit trees. This is believed to cause rashes to trespassers. This is socially recognized as good magic. Sorcery stands for the employment of magic for anti-social purposes, whether it involves putting poisonous ingredients into the food or drink or someone, or performing some magical rituals which may bring some misfortunes on him.

According to the Azande, the main difference between a sorcerer and a witch is that the former achieves his evil ends by magic, whereas a witch (often though not invariably conceived of a woman) achieve hers by some mystical power inherent in her personality, a power that does not require the help of magic. As to motive, witches are considered to be slaves of aberration and addition, and thus conceived are weid, sometimes tragic fixtures. Sorcerers on the other hand are considered to be ordinary people driven by understandable, even if disapproved urges such as malice, envy or revenge, which are part of everyone's experience.

For the Azande, at the basic of witchcraft, it is what they call mangu (witchcraft substance). Mangu is a biological substance found in the stomach which is like an oval blackish sack which is said to contain various small objects. A magical operation may reveal it in the abdomen just below the breastbone. It is therefore a physiological fat, and its functioning needs no use of the material substance of medicine, the spell and the rite. Mangu is inherited from one's parents. But while only the sons of a male witch may be witches only, the daughters may inherit their mothers' witchcraft, for a girl is believed to partake of the spirit Mbisimo) of the mother a boy the (mbisimo) of the father.

A with attacks by dispatching the spirit of his "Mangu" to capture and eventually devour parts of the spirit of the victims flesh. This happens even while the witch is asleep in his hut. The eating of souls of the victim or sucking of his blood is a spiritual one. It is the spirit of 'mangu' which removes and devours the soul of the victim. Some nocturnal birds and animals like owls, rats, or bats are associated with witches as their agents. The witch may incarnate into one of these to effect her mission. Witches are believed to belong to a witch club. They plant their attacks in concert and later share their booty in a ghoulish feast.

There is no niche of corner of Azande culture into which witchcraft does not find its way. Failure of crops or a hunting expedition, a protracted illness, an unsuccessful business, barrenness, death, an accident, any misfortune at all could be blamed on witchcraft. However, the all pervasiveness of witchcraft does not mean that Azande indiscriminately attribute every misfortune to witchcraft. Witchcraft does not exclude natural causation; technical or human responsibility. It is only when all techniques have failed, and there is no other explanation found that witchcraft is invoked. The only explanation that the Azande would hardly ever evoke is blind chance. Even an accident could easily be blamed on witchcraft. They would argue for example that something is behind a tree which would want to fall at the very time when a particular individual is passing through a path which everybody frequents. Why, would a tree be selective, they would ask if not for 'mangu'.

TIV CONCEPTS OF WITCHCRAFT

The Tiv of Nigeria is another African society which is obsessed by the presence and activities of witches in their communities. The Tiv like the Azande make a clear distinction between witchcraft and sorcery. The witches are the 'mbatsav' (literally men who make bad 'Ichighi' – medicine).

According to the Tiv, medicine Ichigi may be used for good or bad purposes. Medicine could be concoction made of things like herbs, barks of trees, hones, bat's wings, frog's legs or other material substances. A sorcerer may put harmful medicine in a victim's food or drink, or bury it near the house or in the farm of the person he intends to harm or the path through which he will pass. He may also perform some rituals over anything that has come in contact with his intended victim, his nail pilings, his hair, a piece of his cloth, (contagious magic). Or he may perform the ritual on something that resembles his (homeopathic magic). Protection from these sorts of medicine can be obtained from the use of magical weapons such as porcupine quills which are believed to give the effect of magical arrows shot at the bad medicine. There is nearly always some charm hanging under the roof near the door of the hut to ward off witches.

The Tiv believes about witchcraft centers around a vital and mysterious power or force called 'Tsav'. Tsav is a vital power that exists in men that can be employed for either strengthening life and ensuring prosperity or for the destruction or weakening of life. The bases of Tsav power like the azande 'mangu' is a biological substance also called Tsav. An autopsy shown the Tsav as growth around the heart. But whereas that of a witch appear like a claw, that of constitutional 'mbatsav' (explained below) is like a ring around the heart.

Literally, 'mbatsav' means people with tsav. Since tsav can be used either for good or evil, it is logical that the Tiv (unlike the Azande) would recognize that there are some people who use their tsav for good purpose only. These are also called 'mbatsav'. Writers have designated them as the (Constitutional mbatsav); to distinguish them from the witches who also go by the same Tiv name, mbatsav. The 'constitutional mbatsav' are the elders and the family heads who use their tsav and the accustomed tsavs of the society to put the land right so that society can prosper and also to guard against evils

that may threaten society especially the attacks of the evil 'mbatsav' (witches). They do this through performing appropriate rituals 'akombo'.

On the other hand, a person with tsav joins the evil club of the witches (mbatsav) through the 'kpindi' (flesh debt) contracted with the witches, obliging one to supply lives from his own family in turn with the others for consumption by the 'mbatsav' during their night meetings. A man may contract the flesh debt voluntarily or involuntarily when the mbatsav ensnares him by offering him portions of the flesh of their victim. If he accepts his flesh, he contracts the flesh debt. Hence it is said that the man who incurs the debt may know nothing about it.

The witches are human beings usually operating outside their bodies, so it is impossible to identify them except through divination or ordeal when they are alive or through an autopsy to inspect their heart after death. Suspects however, are sought among members of the family who are aspiring to power and wealth through tsav, and therefore, the overambitious or people who have entertained some grudge, or malicious motive or descendants or a known witch. Since tsav is also connected with the strive for leadership in the community, the Tiv witches are for most part men. This is a variant from the usual African model that 'the woman is the witch'.

Otherwise, Tiv tales about witches resemble those from other lands. 'Going Tsav' means going out at night to be witch people. The witches' lamps burn with human fat, they have their own kinds of houses, pipes, even bicycles and cars. At their meeting they perform with dance and settle to share human flesh. A person is attacked when he is asleep. He is usually unaware of it. Usually a witch attacks by shooting out a substance from himself on to his victim or his property. Hence the common expression 'the mbatsav have thrown air on him'.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY

1. Each is known by different names. For example, the Tiv call witchcraft Tsav. While the Azande call it Mangu. The Tiv call sorcery had medicine 'Ichighi'. Yoruba - witchcraft AJE. Sorcery - OLOGUN BUBURU.
2. It is generally believed in Africa that witches are predominantly women. But among the Tiv people men are known to be more witches since it is linked up with aspiration to leadership in the community. And it is mostly men who aspire to leadership.
3. Sorcery is the use of bad medicine or bad magic. Thus, a sorcerer makes use of both contagious homoeopathic magic thereby manipulating objects to set things in motion and bring about evil or use of poison in food for another person(s) unconsciously, while witches possess innate psychic malevolent powers. Hence witches are distinguished by their infernal/nocturnal operations or business.
4. Sorcerers possess their magical powers through learning or training apprenticeship. While witches power are inherited through the genus or through food.
5. The sorcerer is very conscious of his actions and his attempts are deliberate and can even sell his services to people whereas witches may not know that they live evil lives after their normal working hours. And even if they do they may be driven by an uncontrollable urge.
6. A sorcerer works sorcery on people for specific reasons which includes envy, jealousy, anger, hatred wickedness, malice or spit. Enmity, urge for personal enrichment or domination etc. Whereas, witches are considered to be slaves of aberration and addiction. And thus conceived as weird sometimes tragic futures or their powers operate automatically.

7. Sorcerers make use of material substances or specific verbal magical formula. Whereas witches make use of supernatural machination which baffles ordinary people.
8. Witches have guilds or clubs to consort with are another's cooperation murder to capture victims; while sorcerers have none. Except what they can belong to the association of medicine to men. Traditional healer or herbalists.
9. A man may cease to become a sorcerer when he repeats by confessing his wickedness. But it has not been easy for a witch to abandon witchcraft.
10. Sorcerers activities can be experienced physically. Witches activities are usually spiritual and connected with the soul or spirit.

WITCH HUNTING AND DETECTION OR SORCERERS

Different methods of detecting witches and sorcerers are used in different African societies. The commonest method is tribal by ordeal. That is making an accused witch or sorcerer drink a concoction extracted from Sasses wood e.g. this method is very common among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria and the Tiv people though other people too use it.

In some societies organized mass hunt and physical distraction of witches are carried out from time to rid the society of persistent attacks from witches.

Divination is another method used.

Secret societies are also used.

Autopsy, that's the method where dead people are operated upon in some societies if they are accused of being sorcerers or witches to confirm whether they are or not.

Again waves of witch hunting movements are found in various areas of Africa. Many claims to be new ways to rid the societies once and for all of witches and their menace. For instance, prominent among the groups of witch hunter are:

The Bamucap, Society of Malawi founded by Kamwende (in South East Africa). The founder and his followers claimed to have gained the new anti-witchcraft medicine roused from dead. This movement swept through Malawi, Zambia, and Central Zimbabwe in the mid 1930s. The Bamucap who were mainly young men dressed in European clothes toured the countries in groups of two or three; in every village they visited, they would get a village chief to line up the people in a row, men separately from the women. I.e. people stand in rows according to their sex. Everyone then had to pass in turn behind the witches either confessed or consisting of a concoction made of soapy medicine. This, it was believed, would clear the whole area of witchcraft.

Subsequently they were made to surrender their witchcraft horns. On examination and close analysis, it was discovered that the horns submitted contained practically nothing and where anything was found. It was one sort of protective medicine or the other. The group created such a danger among the people that even the accused witches desired to submit something to clear them publicly and to drink the mixtures which guaranteed their own protection.

The Bamucapi sold out protective claims and perusers against all sorts of dangers and ill-fortune. The organization which was basically opposed to Christianity had tremendous success because of their new and modern method of dealing with the problem of witchcraft; for example, they were young people and they sold their mixture in clean bottles like the modern chemists and preceded their operations with a sermon about their origin and the potency of their method, which made them acceptable to the people. The organization did not live long, but it is an example of a well-organized group of witch-hunters.

Another group emerged in West Africa, after the Second World War it originated in Northern Ghana and toured Togo land Dahomey and Nigeria. It was called Ainga

(Probably a Correct form of Wona Tonga, its original name) and operated on the same lines as Bamucapi Society.

Atainga group operated in open places where they built an altar and danced wildly to drums beaten rhythmically, eventually falling into trances to discover witches. They prepared mixtures of blood and water and kolanuts. They made accused witches drink the mixture and sold pieces of the nuts to people for protection.

The accused witches were made to give up their tools - usually a spot with their (invisible) bird familiar stubborn accused witches were tortured and made to pay fines to test their innocence. A fowl was provided by the accused, and the fowl was half-slaughtered and allowed to run about till it died eventually.

It was the way the dead fowl lay that claudicated the innocence or guilt of the accused. It has a lie facing upwards if the accused was innocent and this was practically impossible. Its second trial was allowed on the payment of more, fees and bottles of gin. Unyielding accused witches were then beaten to death.

When the group was blamed by the government in 1951, there were protests from different quarters. The people felt the government should have allowed them to continue to operate, since they had expected them to help wide out once for all the institution of witchcraft. Since witches, against which they worked were seen as enemies of society. The ban they felt also brought about economic loss to many who had brought them secrets and were establishing their own practices.

Other ordeals used to detect sorcerers for example among the Igbo, where sorcery results in the death of the victim, the suspected sorcerer is made to drink the water used to wash the corpse of the victim. This practice spell continues today and is quite common since very few deaths are believed to be natural deaths. In cases where the identity of the sorcerer is unknown, the only believe left to a victim is to perform some rituals handling

the culprits to the judgment of the thunder deity or earth deity where it is believed that one day he will be struck by thunder bolts or be inflicted with a protracted illness which will eventually force him to confess his crimes. It is important to note that witches dead bodies and disposed off ceremonially by diviners witch. Doctors and local priests.

The psychology of witchcraft.

The foregoing gives us most of the facts about witchcraft and these presuppose that witchcraft is an obvious reality. We shall now consider it necessary to examine some of these beliefs very critically, in order to try to see how logical and acceptable they are and how some can be explained away psychology. We shall therefore discuss briefly the case of different types of people commonly accused of witchcraft in order to discover what motives maybe behind the accusations leveled against them.

Thus, people usually accused of witchcraft the women generally – This may be as a result, mainly of what Parrinder calls a deep rotted sexual antagonism. Witch hunters are usually men, in most cases celebrates which makes it logical that accusations of witchcraft are the direct result of this antagonism. Again, women generally are regarded as inferior to men, and that, for their part, they try to remove this social stigma, by identifying themselves with witchcraft associations and so the witch hunt is an attempt to bring them back to their natural position. This argument will make sense to us, if we try to ask ourselves why it is women who are usually accused and why this is universal.

Close Relatives: Here it is important to note that witches are regarded as our enemies and the enemies of society as a whole. They bring misfortune and cause serious diseases. So, when a man suffers from any of these, he nurses the belief that some witches have caused it. His mind goes immediately to people who have some grievance against him and naturally such people are those with whom he has close social contact, his own relatives for that matter. more so, Diviners and local prophets, (unfortunately in

our modern societies), strengthen has suspicion by telling that his close relatives have caused his misfortune or illness. This explains why accusations of witchcraft are very sadon leveled against distant, acquaintances. There is, for instance, the saying that: A man does not perish by the hands of distant enemies unless his own relatives lend them a hand; and many other sayings.

Mothers and daughters-in-law: A woman whose child dies for instance usually accused her mother-in-law of being responsible. We can recognize from the logical point of view the envy that naturally exists between the wife and her other-in-law. The wife is regarded by her husband's mother as a usurper who has robbed her of the affection of her son, while on the other hand, the wife harbours the feelings that her mother-in-law is making it difficult for her to enjoy the unalloyed love and sympathy of her husband. This is quite understandable in the Yoruba system for example where the son's affection for his mother is usually great so that he often retain her in his new family, lavishing much care on her.

Thus, friction exists between the two women, each accusing the other of wicked deeds and in extreme cases, of witchcraft, if the wife falls sick, she believed that it is her mother-in-law who is bewitching her so that she could have all the love of her (mother's) son for herself if the husband falls sick, his mother immediately accuses her son's wife of bewitching him. The man might accuse his wife of playing witchcraft games on him.

Co-wives. In a polygamous house, co-wives are frequently accused of witchcraft. This again has its root in jealousy. Whatever the pleasure that may exist in a polygamous home, there is always the continuous absence of peace. The various wives are always vying for the exclusive love of their husband. Accusation of witchcraft by one wife against another are therefore very common.