

What is striking is that these social relations and moral rules, rendered visible and literally embodied by the participants, are precisely those features setting the Northern Anga, Baruya, and also Sambia (Godelier 1986; Herdt 1981) radically apart from their neighbours in the south or the southwest, who in turn are characterized by a spectacularly low level of cooperation. Thus, a garden fence is a way to evoke a series of institutions, actions, and social representations in a non-verbal way.

In this first example, the aspects of a culture are demonstrated in a technical activity. The actual construction of the fence and its mechanical as well as visual sturdiness are often explicitly emphasized in various circumstances: in discourses during male initiations or inside the men's house; each time brothers-in-law comment on their good or bad relationship; each time women are scolded by men. By contrast, in the following case study it is hypothesized that the manufacture and use of the artefact in question is a way to evoke aspects of culture that may not be verbalized. The artefact, a mortuary hand-drum, is used by another Anga group, the Ankave, who live five to seven days' walk away from the Baruya.

13.4.2 A drum that does far more than produce sounds

About once a year, the Ankave, a small group of forest horticulturalists, drive away (completely, they believe), the marauding ghosts of those who have recently died (*pisingen siwi*), during a ceremony called *songen*, named after the drums which are beaten for several nights in a row. These drums look like hourglasses, made of two long, tapered cones joined at the tips and sometimes surmounted by a handle (Bonnemère and Lemonnier 2007: 192–204; see Fig. 13.2).

p. 309 These *songen* ceremonies are the most visible part of a thought system revolving around vile, man-eating beings, invisible and deeply hostile to humans, known as *ombo'*, which the Ankave hold responsible for most fatal illnesses. The *ombo'* make up a band of invisible cannibals hosted inside seemingly ordinary human beings. ↳ The *ombo'* attack, devour, and share between them men, women, and children who are believed to have refused to share things themselves. The obligation to acquiesce to all requests for food or objects is a pillar of Ankave social order of which the *ombo'* are a constant reminder.

Figure 13.2.



Among the Ankave, making and beating the drums that funnel the spirits of the recent dead into another world amalgamates myth, technique, and ritual, and results in the non-verbal communication of a series of key values and aspects of their social organization and system of thought.